

U.S. launches ‘practice’ nuclear bombing of Europe

written by Gary Wilson
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Above, F-16 fighter jets take part in the NATO Air Shielding exercise near the airbase in Lask, Poland, on Oct. 12, 2022. NATO's 'practice' nuclear bombing mission, called Steadfast Noon, is from Oct. 17 to Oct. 30, 2022.

On Oct. 17, NATO aircraft and personnel started a "practice" nuclear strike mission in Europe, code-named Steadfast Noon. Aircraft armed with "disabled" U.S.-made B61 tactical nuclear bombs — similar to the roughly 150 B61 nukes the U.S. currently has on bases in five European countries — are on a training mission to practice dropping these bombs over Europe. At the same time, President Joe Biden talks of a nuclear "Armageddon."

On Oct. 6, Biden warned of a nuclear Armageddon, saying the risk of nuclear war is the greatest since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. NATO's B61 nuclear bombs are 20 times more powerful than the atom bombs the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In 1990 during the first U.S. invasion of Iraq, Gen. Colin Powell recalls in his memoir, he was ordered to draw up plans for a nuclear strike to "destroy a division of the Iraqi Republican Guard." Dick Cheney, who was Secretary of Defense at that time, dismissed Powell's expression of concern about a possible use of tactical nuclear weapons, saying the plan was never implemented.

The U.S. is the only country to use or even threaten to use nuclear weapons in warfare.

What Putin said

The reports that Vladimir Putin made nuclear threats are deliberate distortions and fear-mongering propaganda.

What [President Putin said](#) was in response to threats from Western politicians that

they could use nuclear weapons against Russia:

“To the statements made by some high-ranking representatives of the leading NATO countries on the possibility and admissibility of using weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons – against Russia.

“In the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of our country and to defend Russia and our people, we will certainly make use of all weapon systems available to us. This is not a bluff. [To] those who are using nuclear blackmail against us.”

This is not a threat of a nuclear first strike and makes it clear that it is a response to a threatened strike on Russia.

Nuclear force ‘undergirds’ U.S. priorities

On Oct. 14, Biden released a [National Security Strategy](#) that directly targets China and Russia with “integrated deterrence.” That is an expanded military integrated across the U.S. economy — “Integration across domains ... military (land, air, maritime, cyber, and space) and non-military (economic, technological, and information).”

“Our military power continues to grow,” the document says. The goal is to “modernize and strengthen our military so it is equipped for the era of strategic competition.”

The document declares: “We will modernize the [U.S. military] to be lethal, resilient, sustainable, survivable, agile and responsive, prioritizing operational concepts and updated warfighting capabilities. The war in Ukraine highlights the criticality of a vibrant Defense Industrial Base for the United States. ... An effective nuclear force undergirds our defense priorities.”

For socialist workers and progressives to focus on a so-called nuclear threat from

Russia is to be manipulated by the capitalist media. U.S. finance capital is based on an empire of oil and other resources. U.S. finance capital is totally committed to a military and political drive for global dominance.

The existence of a recession with increasing inflation is now openly discussed in the capitalist media. The hope of the military is that the proxy war in Ukraine against Russia and the massive maneuvers against China will divert the oncoming economic crisis and set in motion a new upward phase in the capitalist cycle of development. But this ignores the entire history of wars and capitalist development.

The recession and inflation must be answered with organized resistance. Tens of thousands are [marching in the streets of France](#) in response to the “cost-of-living” crisis, demanding higher wages and an emergency freeze on the prices of groceries, rent and energy. France’s largest labor unions called for a one-day general strike on Oct. 17.

In Britain, Prime Minister Liz Truss’s proposed budget, which was a massive tax-cut giveaway to the rich, was met with [mass protests](#) over rising energy and living costs. Truss’s budget proposal has been stopped.

