

NATO's top military official says it's time to shift to a 'war economy'

written by Gary Wilson

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The cost-of-living crisis has sparked a working-class upsurge. On Jan. 31, around half a million workers joined a mass strike in Britain.

The chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, called for members of the U.S.-led military alliance to shift to a "war economy" in order to "increase the production in the defense industry."

Left unsaid is that a "war economy" means austerity. A "war economy" is the NATO countries' answer to the cost-of-living crisis sweeping Europe.

"We have to increase defense industry production and there are already more and more talks on the subject at the national level. This could mean prioritizing certain raw materials, certain production capacities needed for the defense industry rather than the civilian one. Those priorities should be discussed about, partially, a war economy in peacetime," [Bauer said](#) in an interview with Portuguese television RTP broadcast on Jan. 28.

To carry out a war on Russia, Bauer continued, "we need to increase the production in the defense industry," citing the wartime measures taken by the United States during World War II.

Bauer added: "In the first four years in the United States in the Second World War, in the Ford factories, there was no civilian cars made, but only military production. ... And that is, in a way, talking about a wartime economy,"

The war buildup was also reflected in the Czech Republic, where retired NATO General Petr Pavel has taken over as president. The [BBC calls Pavel](#) "a firm advocate of Czech membership of NATO and the EU."

Bauer's "war economy" tirade came just two days after U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland testified at a Jan. 26 Senate hearing. Nuland positively celebrated the destruction of the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream

2 natural gas pipelines due to a sabotage attack on Sept. 26 last year.

Replying to a question from Republican Senator Ted Cruz, Nuland said: "Senator Cruz, like you, I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea."

Many believe that the U.S. was behind the destruction of the pipelines. For example, a top U.N. adviser, Jeffrey Sachs, the director of the Center for Sustainable



Development at Columbia University, said of the attacks: "The main fact is that the European economy is getting hammered by this, by the sudden cut-off of energy. And now, to make it definitive - the destruction of the Nord Stream pipeline, which I would bet was a U.S. action, perhaps U.S. and Poland. ...

"I know this runs counter to our narrative — you aren't allowed to say these things in the West, but the fact of the matter is all over the world, when I talk to people, they think the U.S. did it. "

NATO: an imperialist alliance

When Lenin wrote his pamphlet "Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism" in 1916, the world had a handful of imperialist countries — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Japan. Britain was the leading imperialist power then, the empire on which the sun never set.

Since 1945, world capitalism has been politically and militarily dominated by the U.S. empire. Now they say the sun never sets on the U.S. empire. In addition to the

United States, there are the imperialist satellite countries — Britain, Germany, France, Japan. As in Lenin's time, these satellite imperialist countries extract super-profits from the oppressed countries.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the original basis for the NATO alliance no longer exists. The European satellite imperialists don't need NATO. But the U.S. needs NATO. U.S. finance capital needs NATO in order to assert its interests on the European continent.

"The war in Ukraine is a lucrative cash cow for the U.S. 'merchants of death,'" writes Professor Joseph Siracusa.

"European officials are accusing the U.S. of making war profits from the conflict, especially in the energy and defense sectors," Siracusa continues. "All the while, they say, Europe is suffering."

Politico reports: "Top European officials are furious with Joe Biden's administration and now accuse the Americans of making a fortune from the war, while EU countries suffer.

"The fact is, if you look at it soberly, the country that is most profiting from this war is the U.S. because they are selling more [natural] gas and at higher prices, and because they are selling more weapons,' one senior official told Politico."

The U.S.-NATO proxy war on Russia, Politico adds, "is tipping European economies into recession, with inflation rocketing and a devastating squeeze on energy supplies threatening blackouts and rationing this winter."

The cost-of-living crisis, as it is known across Europe, the austerity and cutbacks, have sparked a working-class upsurge. In France on Jan. 19 and Jan. 31, some 2 million workers participated in nationwide demonstrations and strikes.

In Britain, there's been the greatest drop in living standards on record. The [Financial Times reports](#), "Last year the lowest-earning bracket of British households had a standard of living that was 20% weaker than their counterparts in Slovenia."

On Jan. 31, the biggest day of industrial action in over a decade, around half a million workers joined a mass strike. Thousands of schools were closed — about 85% of schools in England and Wales were said to be affected — and most trains in England were not running. The Daily Mail described "Walkout Wednesday" as a general strike in all but name.

Workers in Britain have been staging mass strikes since last summer — and since then, the scale of the strikes has only escalated.

