

'Washington is pushing Ukraine to attack Donbass'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 5, 2022



Residents of Donbass have resisted Ukrainian military attacks since 2014.

Remarks by Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield during a special online briefing on the U.S./NATO war threats against Russia and Donbass, Jan. 29. [Watch the video here.](#)

For more than two months, there's been a steady drumbeat from the Biden administration and the U.S. corporate media: Russia is threatening to invade Ukraine. The threat is imminent. It's not a question of if, much less of why, only when.

It's presented as a bare statement of fact. No dissenting voices are allowed. The only question up for debate is how strong the response should be. Should it be a direct military response? Is it enough to send weapons, money and advisers to Ukraine? What role should negotiations and sanctions play?

Right now 8,500 U.S.-based troops are on alert for deployment to Europe, in addition to the 64,000 already stationed there.

For those old enough to remember, it's eerily similar to the buildup to the Iraq War in 2002-2003.

And like the "Weapons of Mass Destruction" story used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it's a complete lie.

The real threat of invasion is not by Russia against Ukraine. It is by Ukraine against the small, independent Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia's western border.

Let me repeat that: The threat of invasion is not coming from Russia. The threat is from U.S.-armed and -funded Ukraine. Right now, 125,000 Ukrainian troops, half of the country's military, are concentrated along the borders of the Donbass republics. Washington is pushing, pushing, pushing for Ukraine to attack Donetsk and Lugansk.

Why? Because the U.S. political establishment, the big banks, Big Oil and the military-industrial complex hope this will force a defensive response from Russia that can be used to justify war, harsher sanctions, more military expenditures and

further expansion of the NATO military alliance on Russia's borders.

Only U.S. rulers want war

The United States is the motor force of this crisis. Russia says it will not invade or start a war. The Donbass republics, which have suffered an eight-year economic blockade and a long conflict with Ukraine that has cost 14,000 lives, don't want more war.

Ukraine's President Zelensky and the oligarchs of Ukraine hate Russia and want to conquer Donbass. But they are terrified of what will happen if the U.S. succeeds in pushing them into a war now. Ukraine's 2015 invasion of Donbass was roundly defeated by the local People's Militias and internationalist volunteers. The Ukrainian Army is better trained and armed now, thanks to NATO, but Zelensky knows they are no match for the combined forces of Donbass and Russia.

Germany, the European Union's biggest economic power, doesn't want war. Germany needs Russian gas and heating oil to keep flowing to fuel its economy. The German capitalists know that if there is a war, they will have no choice but to buy from U.S. oil companies at greatly inflated prices. The same is true for the rest of Western Europe.

All of these countries are pawns in a deadly game that only benefits U.S. imperialism. The U.S. rulers created this crisis and continue to pour fuel on the fire day by day.

Why now? The global capitalist system is in crisis. It was spiraling toward recession even before the pandemic struck. While some billionaires and sectors have profited handsomely from the COVID crisis, U.S. imperialism's overall profits and strategic dominance are threatened at every turn.

In particular, the oil industry – thoroughly entwined with the biggest U.S. banks and

the military-industrial complex – has been in crisis for over a decade. Oil and gas prices never rebounded to the heights reached before the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009. That's why Obama, Trump and Biden have targeted oil producers like Venezuela, Iran, Syria and Iraq, and of course Russia, with blockades, sanctions and war to stem the flow of oil and gas.

U.S. capitalists are desperate to stop the nearly completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline project slated to bring Russian gas to Europe.

NATO arms Ukraine's fascists

There is one other group that is eager for war. It's neo-Nazi groups like Right Sector, the Azov Battalion, Patriots of Ukraine and C14, that have run rampant since the U.S.-engineered coup overthrew the democratically elected government in 2014. These groups have been fully integrated into Ukraine's military and security apparatus.

According to officials and activists in Donbass, neo-Nazi battalions have been deployed to towns and villages on the ceasefire line separating Ukraine from Donetsk and Lugansk. These fascists speak of the residents of the region as "cattle" and "insects" and routinely call for genocide to recapture the region. In the event of a Ukrainian invasion, they will form the spearhead.

The U.S. is truly playing with fire. Even if, despite all the buildup of weapons and mobilization of troops, calmer heads prevail in the Pentagon and Biden gives the order to pull back or slow down, there is no guarantee that the neo-Nazis, now armed with NATO weapons and training, will obey. Likely they will feel that Biden has betrayed them, as they are now saying about Zelensky.

Why is the Biden administration collaborating with neo-Nazis?

You won't see it in any of the current media war propaganda. But over the past few

years, several articles have documented how U.S. and European white supremacists have gone to Ukraine to train with these groups. Some have participated in the war on Donbass. The FBI even admitted that a group involved in the Charlottesville fascist riot where Heather Heyer was murdered had trained with Ukrainian nazis.

Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. The inspiration of the modern day fascists there is a creep named Stepan Bandera, who collaborated with the Nazis. Today's Ukrainian government recognizes Bandera as a national hero.

After the war, the United States nurtured Ukrainian Nazis as a weapon against the Soviet Union, just as Nazis were recruited for NATO and the U.S. war machine. It's a relationship that goes back decades. We should encourage people who voted for Biden as a rejection of Trump's white supremacist program to demand answers from him.

What we must do

I want to say a little about what we must do to oppose the U.S. war drive.

At this moment, the most important thing we can do is show visible opposition to a U.S. war with Russia. We need people to go out in the streets with signs, banners and leaflets, organize car caravans, social media blasts, the more the better, while wearing masks and taking all necessary health precautions for the pandemic. Not just in Washington, D.C., or New York City, but all over the country, in cities and towns large and small.

That's why Struggle-La Lucha and the Socialist Unity Party are joining with other anti-war groups to call for [National Days of Action from February 4 through 12](#) to say "No War on Russia and Donbass! U.S.-NATO Out of Ukraine!" Baltimore, San Diego, New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Minneapolis are among the

places planning activities.

Wherever possible, we should encourage existing anti-war groups to endorse and we should join any actions they may announce. Those of us with experience in the U.S. movement are aware of the rivalries and sectarianism that exist among these groups, many of which have existed since the Iraq War era. These are long-term issues that we need to work on as a movement. But right now, the most important thing is to make opposition to war with Russia visible.

The George Floyd uprising was just one-and-a-half years ago. The capitalist rulers have certainly not forgotten it. Taking to the streets is the best way to raise the specter of that uprising in their minds and give them pause on their drive toward war.

War danger and the working class

Finally, let's address the problem of how we can reach out to poor and working people. How do we talk to our family members, co-workers and neighbors about this issue?

One big hurdle we have to overcome is that there is very little understanding among people in the U.S. about Eastern Europe and the former Soviet countries. Through no fault of their own, many people in the U.S. cannot identify Ukraine on a map, and most have probably not even heard of Donetsk and Lugansk.

If people have any impression of Russia, it's most often old Cold War anti-communist stereotypes. U.S. war propaganda plays off these stereotypes, despite the fact that socialism was overthrown and the Soviet Union broken up three decades ago.

Explaining what's actually happening with Ukraine, Russia and Donbass, and educating people about the role of the U.S. and NATO in Europe, is very necessary. But it may not immediately grab people's attention out on the street or get them to

take a leaflet or consider joining a protest.

However, we can get people's attention by connecting the war danger to the urgent concerns of their daily lives and struggles. Right now, hundreds of thousands of families are facing eviction around the country as pandemic eviction moratoriums end. But the Biden administration's priority is a war with another nuclear armed power on the other side of the world.

Congress can't manage to pass Build Back Better's modest social and infrastructure measures. But there was overwhelming bipartisan support for the Pentagon's \$768 billion annual budget passed last month.

Biden and Harris have not met any of their campaign promises to curb racist police brutality - in fact, they have been promising more money for cops. But they are collaborating with white supremacist movements abroad.

On social media, many people have made the point that huge shipments of U.S. weapons arrived in Ukraine before people even received their four meager home COVID tests by mail. This example really shines a spotlight on the skewed priorities of the U.S. government at a time when everyone can see the utter collapse of public health in this country.

We're working to develop attractive, easy-to-read flyers that talk about these issues and can be used for leafleting at actions in the coming weeks. We will make them available for download in the next few days. The articles on Struggle-La-Lucha.org also have a ton of helpful facts and information you can use.

Hold a picket line. Have a banner drop. Give out leaflets at your subway stop or school. Notify the local media. Participate in social media blasts. Take photos and videos and share them online and with us. Every action we take right now makes a difference.



‘Ukraine refuses peaceful solution to Donbass conflict’

written by Struggle - La Lucha
February 5, 2022



Struggle-La Lucha received this message from a collective of communists in Donetsk, capital of the Donetsk People's Republic, about the danger of U.S, NATO and Ukrainian military intervention against Russia and Donbass.

Despite the fact that the conflict is presented as a Ukrainian-Russian conflict, one should look at the situation more globally.

The current situation can be assessed as an information war against Russia. Information attacks are a way of pressuring Russia and forcing it to make concessions. There is intimidation with sanctions and military presence: If Ukraine provokes Russia, and Russia responds, the West threatens its participation in the conflict.

If you look at the broader background, there is a redistribution of the energy market. The U.S. has seen that exporting energy resources is profitable. And this information

war is provoking a rise in energy prices.

Spreading disinformation about Russia is a tool to strengthen the right wing, both in Europe and in Ukraine itself. It increases the possibility of an escalation of the war in Donbass. And it gives capital the opportunity to exploit right-wing sentiment around the world.

Ukraine methodically refuses a peaceful solution to the Donbass conflict. In addition, this propaganda distracts attention from socio-economic problems.

Against the backdrop of the pressure, arms sales to Ukraine are increasing.

Moreover, the war does not stop in Donbass, although the media, which are engaged in the escalation, ignore this fact. And for us there is a prospect that such aggravation can lead to an escalation of the war.

Information warfare and media pressure are affecting the psychological state of people in Donbass, exacerbating anxiety, which is already provoked by economic problems and the situation with COVID. It is in the interest of the residents of Donbass to begin the peace process.



No to U.S./NATO war: Here are the facts!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 5, 2022

The corporate media and politicians claim that Russia is about to invade Ukraine. It's a big lie, just like the lie about Iraq's "Weapons of Mass Destruction." Actually, Washington is pushing U.S.-armed Ukraine to invade two small independent republics, Donetsk and Lugansk, on Russia's border. They want to provoke a response from Russia to justify NATO intervention.

Fight COVID, evictions and poverty, not Russia

Workers are facing crises right here at home. Why is Biden preparing to send 8,500 additional U.S. troops to Europe on top of 64,000 already stationed there? Why did Congress raise Pentagon war funding when they can't even pass Build Back Better legislation or protect people's basic democratic rights, like the right to vote and reproductive rights?

Millions of \$\$ in bombs and bullets, can't deliver masks and tests

Between Jan. 21 and Feb. 1, the U.S. delivered 500 tons of weapons and military supplies to Ukraine. Yet many people have still not received their four free home COVID tests in the mail. Pharmacies have signs saying, "Free gov't masks not yet available." Imagine if Washington put the same effort into fighting the COVID pandemic and providing healthcare. How many of the nearly 1 million U.S. lives lost could have been saved?

Biden: Stop supporting Ukrainian fascists

Ukraine has sent white supremacists and neo-Nazis to the front line to threaten Russia and the residents of Donetsk and Lugansk. Biden went back on his promise to curb racist police violence against Black and Brown communities. Meanwhile the Pentagon is training and arming Ukraine's hate groups, who are no different than those who attacked the Capitol last Jan. 6.

Banks and Big Oil profit from Pentagon wars

U.S. Big Oil companies and banks want to stop the flow of Russian oil and gas to Western Europe. They want to force their European allies to pay extortionate prices for U.S. fuel instead. We don't need another bloody war for oil profits!

PDF

U.S./NATO:
NO WAR on Russia & Donbass

Here are the facts!

The corporate media and politicians claim that Russia is about to invade Ukraine. (It's a lie, just like the lie about Iraq's "Weapons of Mass Destruction".) Actually, Washington is pushing U.S.-armed Ukraine to invade two small independent countries, Donbass and Crimea, in the border. They want to provoke a response from Russia to justify NATO intervention.

Fight COVID, evictions & poverty, not Russia

Democrats are attacking right now. Why is Biden going to give over 8,000 additional U.S. horses to Europe on top of 6,000 already transferred there? Why did Congress name Pentagon over funding when they can't even pass Build Back Better legislation or protect people's basic democratic rights, like the right to vote and free association rights?



Millions of \$s in bombs & bullets but can't deliver masks & tests

(Between Jan. 21 and Feb. 7, the U.S. delivered 130 tons of weapons and military supplies to Ukraine, and over 8,000 additional U.S. horses to Europe. COVID tests in the mail. Pharmacies have signs saying "Free gauze masks not yet available." Imagine if Michigan put the same effort into fighting like COVID pandemic and providing healthcare. How many of the nearly 1 million U.S. lives lost could have been saved?)



Biden: Stop supporting Ukrainian fascists

Ukraine has sent white supremacists and neo-Nazis to the front line to threaten Russia and the resistance of Donetsk and Lugansk. Biden and Congress are too busy to stop racists from attacking Black and Brown communities. Meanwhile the Pentagon is training and arming Ukraine's hate groups, who are no different than those who attacked the Capitol last Jan. 6.



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Struggle-La-Lucha.org



Blackwater is in the Donbass with

the Azov Battalion

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 5, 2022

The phone call between President Biden and Ukrainian President Zelensky *“did not go well”*, CNN headlines: while *“Biden warned that the Russian invasion in February is practically certain when the frozen ground makes it possible for tanks to pass through,”* Zelensky *“asked Biden to tone down, arguing that the Russian threat is still ambiguous”*. While the Ukrainian president himself takes a more cautious stance, the Ukrainian armed forces are massing in Donbass close to the Donetsk and Lugansk area inhabited by Russian populations. According to reports from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, units of the Ukrainian Army and National Guard amounting to about 150,000 men are positioned there, the news is overshadowed by our mainstream which speaks only of the Russian deployment. They are armed and trained, and so effectively commanded by U.S.-NATO military advisers and instructors.

From 1991 to 2014, according to the U.S. Congress Research Service, the United States provided Ukraine with \$4 billion in military assistance, plus over \$2.5 billion after 2014. The NATO Trust Fund provided over a billion dollars in which Italy also participated. This is only a part of the military investments made by the major NATO powers in Ukraine. Great Britain, for example, has concluded various military agreements with Kyiv investing, among other things, 1.7 billion pounds in upgrading Ukraine’s naval capabilities: this program provides for the arming of Ukrainian ships with British missiles, the production of joint 8 fast missile units, the construction of naval bases on the Black Sea and also on the Azov Sea between Ukraine, Crimea, and Russia. In this context, Ukrainian military spending, which was equivalent to 3% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2014, rose to 6% in 2022 corresponding to over 11 billion dollars.

In addition to the U.S.-NATO military investments in Ukraine, there is the \$10 billion investment foreseen by the plan that is being carried out by Erik Prince, founder of the U.S. private military company Blackwater - now it is renamed Academy - which has supplied mercenaries to the CIA, the Pentagon, and the State Department for covert operations (including torture and murder), gaining billions of dollars. Erik Prince's plan, revealed by an investigation of Time magazine, consists in creating a private army in Ukraine through a partnership between the Lancaster 6 Company, and the main CIA-controlled Ukrainian intelligence office. Through them, Prince has supplied mercenaries in the Middle East and Africa. It is not known, of course, what would be the task of the private army created in Ukraine by the founder of Blackwater certainly with CIA funding. However, it can be expected that it would conduct covert operations in Europe, Russia, and other regions from its Ukraine base.

Against this background, the exposure made by the Russian Defense Minister Shoigu that in the Donetsk region there are "*U.S. private military companies that are preparing a provocation with the use of unknown chemicals*" is particularly alarming. It could be the spark causing the detonation of war in the heart of Europe: a chemical attack on Ukrainian civilians in Donbass would immediately be attributed to the Donetsk and Lugansk Russians, who would be attacked by the preponderant Ukrainian forces already deployed in the region to force Russia to militarily intervene in their defense. At the forefront, ready to massacre the Russians of Donbass there is the Azov battalion, which trained and armed by the U.S. and NATO has been promoted to a special forces regiment. It distinguished by its ferocity in its attacks on the Russian populations of Ukraine. The Azov battalion recruits neo-Nazis from all over Europe under its flag similar to that of the SS Das Reich, it is commanded by its founder Andrey Biletsky who was promoted to colonel. It is not just a military unit but an ideological and political movement, and Biletsky is the charismatic leader in particular for the youth organization that is educated to hate Russians by his book "*The words of the white Führer.*"

Source: [worldbeyondwar.org](https://www.worldbeyondwar.org)



Brochures: No U.S./NATO war on Russia & Donbass (PDF)

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‘U.S. claims of Russian threat to Ukraine are groundless’

By Dmitry Strauss

Dmitry Strauss: Greg, Russia has raised the issue of nonproliferation of U.S. and NATO missile strike systems near its borders. This topic will be discussed by Russia with NATO and the United States in the coming days. In your opinion, how legitimate is this point of view of Russia?

Greg Butterfield: I believe Russia's position is completely valid and correct. The unbridled growth of the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance over the last three decades is a threat to Russia and its allies, and one of the greatest threats to peace in the world. The growth of NATO has meant not just the spread of Western troops and weaponry in eastern and central Europe. It has also meant the ascension of governments like those in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine and the Baltic States, that look to the fascist collaborators of World War II as their example.

President Putin and the Russian government have consistently spoken about the danger inherent in NATO's integration of Ukraine – the last major “domino” on Russia's western border. The situation has been precarious ever since the U.S.-backed coup in 2014 brought a far-right regime to power that nurtures openly fascist elements who eagerly desire war with Russia.

The following interview with Struggle-La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield was originally published by the website Ukraina.ru.



More U.S. and NATO weapons are being sent to the Ukraine puppet government.

In the final days of the Soviet Union, when the Gorbachev government withdrew support from the USSR's socialist European allies, the U.S. pledged not to expand NATO to the east or threaten Russia and other post-Soviet states. Of course, Washington never honored this pledge. Republican and Democratic administrations alike have consistently betrayed that promise and steadily increased the danger of another devastating war in Eurasia.

DS: The U.S. and NATO talk about Russia's “aggressive plans” with regard to Ukraine as their reason for the placement of missile strike systems. Russia says it has no such plans, and explains that the concentration of its troops near the

Ukrainian border coincides with its right to place its troops in its own territory the way it likes. Which argument is more convincing?

GB: The claims by the U.S. and NATO of a threatened Russian “invasion” of Ukraine are completely baseless. They are not taken seriously by any knowledgeable person. Unfortunately, the workers and general population in the West are denied that knowledge. This is the greatest challenge facing the anti-war movement here. U.S. officials expect the lack of objective information and constant beating of war drums in the capitalist media to convince the masses of people that Russia is a threat to people here. They are pursuing

Continued on the other side

Tell Biden: NO WAR! U.S./NATO hands off Russia and Donbass!

By Greg Butterfield

Jan. 24 – U.S. imperialism is playing with fire in Eastern Europe. U.S. officials are toying with the lives of millions of people in Europe, Asia and potentially the entire world with their unprecedented campaign of threats, provocations and war propaganda aimed at the Russian Federation.

The Biden regime and corporate media are lying when they warn of an “imminent” Russian invasion of Ukraine. The real danger of invasion comes from the U.S.-supported, NATO-armed Ukrainian government against the peoples of the independent Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia’s Western border.

Wall Street, its bought-and-paid-for politicians and the Pentagon have long sought to dominate all of the former Soviet Union, including Russia. Big Oil is especially rabid to stop Russian oil and gas from reaching the European Union, so that erstwhile U.S. allies are forced to rely on their products instead.

Today the U.S. announced it was pulling diplomats’ families and other “nonessential personnel” out of Ukraine. It’s not because they are in danger from Russia. Rather, it’s another in a long line

of war provocations by Washington and the NATO military alliance it dominates.

U.S. politicians are working to create a wartime atmosphere so that any defensive action by Russia or the Donbass republics, or a wholly manufactured incident, can be used to justify Ukrainian aggression and NATO intervention.

After a week of talks where Secretary of State Antony Blinken continued stonewalling Russia on its just demands for security guarantees against NATO expansion, and when Biden said at a news conference that his “guess” was that a Russian invasion of Ukraine was inevitable, it seemed on Jan. 21 there might be a glimmer of hope that the U.S. warmongers would take a step back.

Blinken finally agreed to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s request to give a written U.S. response to Russia’s draft statement on security guarantees, more than a month after it was presented by Russian diplomats. At least, this would force Washington to declare its intentions in writing before the world rather than being shrouded in backroom negotiations and rumors circulated by unnamed sources in the Western media.

Instead of using this opportunity to step back from the brink of war, it now

Continued inside

December 20, 2021

No support for Ukrainian Rittenhouses! Hands off Donbass, Belarus & Russia

By Greg Butterfield

Why is President Joe Biden's administration laser-focused on threatening war on the other side of the world, when the people of the United States are beset with life-threatening crises here at home?

Racist killer Kyle Rittenhouse was just acquitted, emboldening violent white supremacists across the U.S. Women's reproductive rights are under attack in many states and at the highest summit of the Supreme Court, which may soon overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

The COVID-19 pandemic is surging again, with the Delta and Omicron variants threatening new waves of death and fur-

ther taxing the country's awful, mismanaged private healthcare system. Workers' rights are under attack from Amazon, Kellogg's and bosses across the board. The climate crisis continues to wreak havoc coast-to-coast.

These are a few of the life-and-death problems Biden needs to address. Workers and oppressed people did not give him their votes to start a war with Russia.

Biden's administration claims that 70,000 Russian troops guarding their country's Western border are a great threat to neighboring Ukraine. Seventy thousand Russian troops, that is, stationed on Russia's own territory.

Continued inside



'Over the last 30 years, the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance has steadily expanded eastward, swallowing 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including several on Russia's Western borders. This despite a promise by the U.S. to Russia that NATO would not expand after the Cold War.'



A short history of NATO eastward expansion and the current tensions in Europe

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 5, 2022

Europe stands closer to all out war than at any time since WWII. It is imperative that the Western left fully understands the global geopolitical significance of the escalations currently taking place. Of course, the principal struggle which the U.S. is conducting is with China, and it is this that structures all other major world events. In the event of a major struggle with one adversary, the intelligent tactic would be to create and exploit divisions within that adversary's system of alliances. In this case, by far the most important geostrategic ally of China is Russia.

However, the tactics pursued by the U.S. over the past decade have amounted to the

solidification of the Sino-Russian relationship. This curious way of proceeding can only be understood in terms of the very narrow limits placed on the room for maneuver by the U.S.'s prior project of encircling Russia. The principal instrument of this encirclement in Europe is NATO. And contrary to what is discussed in the Western media, it is the expansion of NATO to the east, to include first the countries of the former Warsaw Pact, and now the attempt to incorporate some former Soviet republics. Fig.1 shows NATO member states and their proximity to Russia. Note that the incorporation of Ukraine and Georgia, both of which are candidates for membership, would bring NATO right up to Russia's borders to join Latvia and Estonia. Moreover, given the attempt at regime change in Belarus in 2021 which if successful would probably have led to a government favorable to NATO candidacy, it is clear that Russia has legitimate security concerns.

It is instructive to summarize the stages in the planning and execution of this eastward expansion. A detailed summary of the early assurances against NATO expansion given by leading diplomats derived from declassified documents is given in the [National Security Archive](#).

In early February 1990, U.S. leaders made an offer. According to transcripts of meetings in Moscow on Feb. 9, then-Secretary of State James Baker suggested to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, that in exchange for cooperation on German reunification the U.S. could make "iron-clad guarantees" that NATO would not expand "one inch eastward." Less than a week later, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to begin reunification talks. After discussing the issue with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on February 24-25, the U.S. gave the former East Germany "special military status," limiting what NATO forces could be stationed there in deference to the Soviet Union.

However, by March 1990 - only one month after Baker's agreement with Shevardnadze - State Department officials were advising Baker that NATO could

finesse Eastern Europe into the U.S.'s orbit. By October, U.S. policymakers were contemplating whether and when (as a National Security Council memo put it) to "signal to the new democracies of Eastern Europe NATO's readiness to contemplate their future membership."

The promise was [reiterated](#) in 1993 when the Partnership for Peace Program was proposed as a U.S. initiative at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in Travemünde, Germany, on October 20-21, 1993. In her [memoirs](#), Madeleine Albright confirmed that the pro-expansion decision was reached in June 1993. Yeltsin was still in his first term as President of the Russian Federation. Indeed, in 1993 Yeltsin told Polish President Lech Walesa "Russia does not oppose Poland's membership in NATO and does not perceive its membership in NATO as a threat to Russia." [However](#), 'Under pressure from opposition within Russia, this informal declaration was retracted the following month, and Yeltsin wrote in October that NATO expansion violated the spirit of the 1990 agreement'.

Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic were invited to join NATO at its Madrid summit in 1997 and became full members in 1999. In 2004, during the George W. Bush presidency, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined, and Bush made an unsuccessful attempt to gain the membership of Georgia and Ukraine. In 2009 Albania and Croatia joined, in 2017 Montenegro became a member, and in 2020 North Macedonia became a member. The invitation to Georgia to join was a factor in the Georgian decision to attack South Ossetia in 2008 igniting the Russo-Georgian war of the same year. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that a pro-Western government came to power in Georgia following the so called 'rose revolution'.

George W. Bush's successful push to expand NATO to include the Baltic republics, and his even more brazen though unsuccessful effort to gain membership for Georgia and Ukraine at the Bucharest NATO summit greatly antagonized Russia.

This promise of NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine, was forestalled only by the opposition of Germany and France on the grounds that it would unnecessarily antagonize Russia, nevertheless encouraged Georgia to provoke a war with Russia by attacking South Ossetia. The background to the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 is the 'rose revolution' of 2003, which [replaced the pro Russian government of Eduard Shevardnadze with the pro-Western government of Mikheil Saakashvili](#). This regime change occurred with the assistance of the suspension of aid by the IMF and U.S., and the active participation of some 4000 mostly foreign funded NGOs, including USAID, and which closely followed the model of the Serbian 'bulldozer revolution' which led to the [overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic](#) on 5 October, 2000.

The model of regime change which led to the overthrow of pro Russian governments in Serbia and Georgia was further pursued by the Obama administration in Ukraine, building on the 'orange revolution' of 2004-5 and culminating in the Maidan uprising which overthrew the pro Russian government of Viktor Yanucovych in 2014 as a result of his refusal to sign a political association and free trade agreement with the EU. The overthrow of the Yanucovych government was accompanied by a purge of civil servants associated with the former government and a de-russification of the country. That is what has led to the current long standing internal civil struggle between the predominantly Ukrainian and predominantly Russian regions of the country (see Fig.2).

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the NATO military alliance has extended its borders 800 miles to the east, incorporating Poland, Hungary, Czechia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and North Macedonia. In 2021, NATO officially recognized Ukraine itself as an "aspiring member," and Sweden and Finland are also considering joining the anti-Russia alliance. Both Finland and Estonia are less than 200 kilometers (125 miles) from St. Petersburg, and Ukraine's eastern border is less than 750 kilometers (465 miles) from Moscow. The current strategic situation facing Russia is shown in

Fig.3.

In addition to the already accomplished eastward expansion of NATO and the proposed additions of Ukraine and Georgia, it is also necessary to account for the failed attempts to overthrow the pro-Russian governments of Belarus in 2021, and Kazakhstan earlier this year. Had these attempts been successful it is extremely probable that there would be moves to incorporate these additional states into NATO. This would accomplish a complete encirclement of Russia on its European and central Asian borders. The cases of Ukraine and Georgia are particularly sensitive since membership of NATO means that states are covered by NATO's mutual defense article. Therefore Ukraine would be encouraged to retake Crimea and the Donbas by force and Georgia would be encouraged to retake Abkhazia by force secure in the knowledge that if Russia intervenes they would have the protection of the other NATO powers. This would deprive Russia of access to the black sea.

As can be seen from the above, the current heightened tension has been building for some time, and results directly from Western deceptions around NATO expansion at the moment of the dissolution of the U.S.S.R, which are intensified by the present day geopolitical confrontation between the Western powers and the Eurasian Bloc led by China and Russia. For instance, Fig.4 shows an excerpt from a speech given by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in 2018.

Source: [Socialist Action Britain](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/nato/page/22/)



Special briefing - Tell Biden No War! U.S./NATO hands off Russia & Donbass!

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He has written extensively on developments in Ukraine and Donbass since 2014. In September 2014, he visited Crimea to meet with exiled Ukrainian activists; when he attempted to visit the city of Kharkov in eastern Ukraine, he was deported at gunpoint.

In 2016, he went to Donetsk and Lugansk, attending an anti-fascist conference and visiting the people's militia near the front line. Many of his articles and translations can be found at Red Star Over Donbass.



Tell Biden: No war! U.S./NATO hands off Russia and Donbass!

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Jan. 24 - U.S. imperialism is playing with fire in Eastern Europe. U.S. officials are toying with the lives of millions of people in Europe, Asia and potentially the entire world with their unprecedented campaign of threats, provocations and war propaganda aimed at the Russian Federation.

The Biden regime and corporate media are lying when they warn of an “imminent” Russian invasion of Ukraine. The real danger of invasion comes from the U.S.-supported, NATO-armed Ukrainian government against the peoples of the independent Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk on Russia’s Western border.

Wall Street, its bought-and-paid-for politicians and the Pentagon have long sought to dominate all of the former Soviet Union, including Russia. Big Oil is especially rabid to stop Russian oil and gas from reaching the European Union, so that erstwhile U.S. allies are forced to rely on their products instead.

Today the [U.S. announced](#) it was pulling diplomats’ families and other “nonessential personnel” out of Ukraine. It’s not because they are in danger from Russia. Rather, it’s another in a long line of war provocations by Washington and the NATO military alliance it dominates.

U.S. politicians are working to create a wartime atmosphere so that any defensive action by Russia or the Donbass republics, or a wholly manufactured incident, can be used to justify Ukrainian aggression and NATO intervention.

After a week of talks where Secretary of State Antony Blinken continued stonewalling Russia on its just demands for security guarantees against NATO expansion, and when [Biden said at a news conference](#) that his “guess” was that a Russian invasion of Ukraine was inevitable, [it seemed on Jan. 21](#) there might be a glimmer of hope that the U.S. warmongers would take a step back.

Blinken finally agreed to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s request to give a written U.S. response to [Russia’s draft statement on security guarantees](#), more than a month after it was presented by Russian diplomats. At least, this would force Washington to declare its intentions in writing before the world rather than being shrouded in backroom negotiations and rumors circulated by unnamed sources in the Western media.

Instead of using this opportunity to step back from the brink of war, it now seems the U.S. and its allies are instead rushing recklessly ahead.

Along with the move to pull embassy personnel out of Ukraine, the weekend of Jan. 22-23 saw a new propaganda barrage from Washington's junior partner Britain, alleging that Russian President Vladimir Putin was planning a coup to replace the current U.S.-backed Ukrainian government of President Volodymyr Zelensky with one friendly to Russia.

Moscow immediately [refuted the claim](#). But it was taken as gospel by all the big-business media, despite the fact that, as even the [New York Times admitted](#), "The British communique provided no evidence to back up its assertion."

Meanwhile, another provocation was carried out by Kiev on Jan. 22, as a [Ukrainian military sabotage team](#) illegally crossed the ceasefire "line of contact" into the Lugansk People's Republic and kidnapped a soldier of the People's Militia. It was the [third such kidnapping](#) since October.

After a weekend at Camp David with his military and diplomatic advisers - when they were supposed to be preparing their written response to Russia's draft security agreement - President Biden's spokespeople announced that the administration was likely planning the deployment of [thousands of additional U.S. troops](#) and more military hardware to the region. A decision is expected from Biden this week, according to the New York Times.

The real invasion threat

While corporate media whip up fears because Russia has deployed approximately 100,000 troops to defend its Western border, they never mention that 125,000 Ukrainian troops - that is, half the country's entire military - are now concentrated at the contact line with Donetsk and Lugansk, near Russia.

This fact cannot be ignored by the residents of Donbass or Russia, however. Especially since those deployed to the front are the most notorious [ultra-nationalist, neo-Nazi Ukrainian battalions](#), armed with NATO-supplied weapons and trained by the U.S., British and Canadian military.

The Ukrainian fascists have been hell-bent on war with Russia since they toppled Ukraine's democratically-elected government eight years ago. In keeping with their genocidal ideology, inherited from anti-Soviet Nazi collaborators of World War II, these armed groups regard the multinational, mostly Russian-speaking residents of Donbass as "cattle" and "insects."

For weeks, U.S. media have published glowing accounts of how the CIA and other Western police-military agencies have been training these forces for "resistance" in the event of a Russian invasion. In fact, they are being armed and trained to launch a murderous attack on the population of Donbass.

Since Ukraine launched its war on the Donbass region in 2014, when its people voted overwhelmingly for independence, more than 14,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

Donetsk and Lugansk have warned for months about the [dangers of a new Ukrainian invasion](#) as the buildup of troops and heavy weapons unfolded. The last time Kiev invaded, in 2015, the People's Militias routed the Ukrainian forces and handed them a humiliating defeat.

"In terms of the numbers, if we take personnel, then from the Ukrainian side [near the contact line] it is two-to-three times higher than ours," [explained Denis Pushilin](#), the Donetsk People's Republic head of state, on Jan. 18. "The amount of equipment also exceeds ours. But we are at home, we are defending our land, so we have many more chances to resist."

While the Donbass republics are confident in their ability to defeat the invaders again, as they did in 2015, the influx of NATO high-tech weaponry would mean massive devastation to the civilian infrastructure and high casualties in a region already suffering under a nearly eight-year economic blockade by Ukraine and the West.

And this time, the danger of direct NATO military intervention – forcing Russia to defend itself and potentially igniting a new regional or even world war – is very real.

Alexander Skubchenko of the Housing Union of Ukraine summed up the situation: “What is happening now is not an attempt by NATO to protect Ukraine from a Russian invasion – it is an attempt by Russia to protect the Donbass republics from Zelensky’s military adventure, which NATO is pushing him to do.”

Flooding Ukraine with weapons

A Jan. 22 Washington Post headline screamed, [“Military trainers, missiles and over 200,000 pounds of lethal aid: What NATO members have sent to Ukraine so far.”](#)

“Last December, the White House authorized a \$200 million security assistance package that provides Ukraine with small arms and ammunition, secure radios, medical equipment and spare parts. Other lethal equipment, including Javelin anti-tank missiles and other anti-armor artillery, as well as heavy machine guns, also were included,” according to the Post. “The U.S. Embassy in Kiev said late Friday that a first shipment of nearly 200,000 pounds of lethal aid had recently arrived in Ukraine. ...

“British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told Parliament on Monday that a ‘small number’ of British personnel would join an existing British operation to build up Ukrainian military capacity. ‘Light, anti-armor, defensive weapon systems’ also will be supplied ...

“Canada also has a military training program with Ukraine, and Ottawa recently sent a small contingent of special forces to assist Kiev, according to Canadian media. The Department of National Defense declined to comment on potential troop deployments, citing operation sensitivity.

“The Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia also have received permission from the Biden administration to send U.S.-made weapons, such as Stinger air defense systems and Javelins, to Ukraine, the countries’ defense ministers said Friday.

“Turkey, which has a sizable weapons manufacturing industry, has previously sold Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine. The weapon has been used to strike Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine [That is, the Donbass republics - including the [murder of 5-year-old Vladik Shikhov](#) by drone strike last April - GB].

“The Netherlands and Spain also have deployed warplanes and warships, respectively, to the region to support NATO,” the Post concluded.

“The United States and its allies have already delivered billions of dollars in military assistance to Ukraine, with Washington alone contributing about \$400 million in 2021 alone,” [Sputnik News noted on Jan. 18](#). “Total U.S. outlays have topped \$2.5 billion since 2014, and have included ‘non-lethal’ items, such as Humvees and artillery-locating mobile radar, as well as lethal systems like U.S.-made sniper rifles and Javelin anti-tank missiles.

“NATO allies have provided hundreds of millions of dollars more, including Turkish Bayraktar drones, British-made Saxon armored common centers, Czech 152 mm howitzers and Italian and German engineering and medevac vehicles.”

Stop a new war!

Significantly, Germany blocked Estonia from transferring German-manufactured

artillery to Ukraine, as an incensed [Wall Street Journal reported Jan. 21](#). NATO member Germany, the economic powerhouse of the European Union, is reliant on Russian gas and heating oil, and is eager for the completion of the NordStream2 pipeline to increase the flow of affordable fuel from the east - something the U.S. is desperate to stop.

Russia has made it clear that Ukraine's takeover by NATO is a red line for its security and independence. Washington refuses to even negotiate on the issue of NATO's further eastward expansion, despite the [promise made by U.S. officials](#) at the end of the Cold War not to do so - some 14 new NATO members ago!

Poor and working people are wracked with crisis after crisis here at home. Rampant spread of COVID and the deliberate dismantling of public health measures to control the pandemic. Wages slashed by inflation. Capitalism's climate destruction intensifies by the month. The end of eviction moratoriums threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of families in the dead of winter. Far-right attacks, from the streets to state legislatures to the Supreme Court, against voting rights, reproductive rights and trans rights.

U.S. war threats against Donbass and Russia are a greedy grab for profits and continued Pentagon military dominance. But they are also an ugly, xenophobic attempt to distract workers in the U.S. from fighting the bosses' attacks on them, and instead turn us against people in other countries. The billionaires who dominate both the Democratic and Republican parties rely on this divide-and-rule strategy to maintain their power.

Don't fall for it. Let's fight for the things we need here at home - and fight to stop another bloody war.

Tell Biden and Congress: Sign Russia's proposed defense agreement! Withdraw all U.S. troops and weaponry from Eurasia! Dismantle NATO!



<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/nato/page/22/>