

NATO in Flight Forward to Nuclear War

by Carl Osgood

March 10—The threat of nuclear war has never been greater. The escalating danger comes from the combined effects of provocations by Global NATO, and the demented response by Western leaders to clear warnings given by Russian President Vladimir Putin, in particular in his annual address Feb. 29 to Russia’s Federal Assembly. We are now at the point where, in recent days, moves in France and Germany—the major European economies in NATO—are driving us to the brink.

French President Emmanuel Macron mooted sending NATO forces to Ukraine outright, speaking at a meeting of 27 nations he hosted Feb. 26 in Paris, to step up sending arms and support to Ukraine. In Germany, top military officials were caught on tape discussing details on how to operate in Ukraine, with use of German Taurus missiles, to conduct direct attacks on Russian arms depots, and to knock out the Kerch Bridge. This was documented in a secret recording of a Feb. 19 discussion, leaked March 1. (See tran-



Emmanuel Macron, President of France: Sending NATO ground troops to Ukraine cannot be excluded.

script below.)

In the U.S., President Joe Biden attacked Russia early on in his annual March 8 State of the Union address to Congress.

Putin of Russia is on the march, invading Ukraine and sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody in this room thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine, I assure you, he will not.

He called for getting more U.S. weapons to Ukraine, saying he would “not bow down” to Putin. He led cheers for the Prime Minister of Sweden, which just joined NATO, who sat in the gallery.

To sound the alarm on the nuclear war danger, and promote a worldwide counter mobilization, the International Peace Coalition, at its 40th weekly meeting March 8, hosted a number of international military, diplomatic and science experts. The consensus among them, whatever their specialties, is that the world is in extreme danger at present. As one observed, we are in a Second Cold



Scott Ritter
Sare for Senate 2024



Diane Sare
Sare for Senate 2024



Jose Vega
Sare for Senate 2024



Prof. Steven Starr
Sare for Senate 2024

War, with nuclear weapons aplenty, but there is no longer any semblance of a “culture of diplomacy.” (See article in this issue.)

U.S. arms and intelligence specialist Scott Ritter, a retired Marine, said March 4, “It seems that Europe is on autopilot towards confrontation with Russia.” He warned, “I haven’t seen a more dangerous situation than the one we currently face.” He spoke in an internet discussion with independent New York candidates Diane Sare for U.S. Senate and Jose Vega from the Bronx, candidate for the U.S. Congress (15th C.D.), and Prof. Steven Starr, a specialist at the University of Missouri on the consequences of nuclear war.

Ritter drew out the significance of what was shown in the leaked tape of the German military officers discussing Taurus missile targeting against Russia from within Ukraine. He said that even in NATO—at its founding at least—civilian leadership is supposed to be in control of the military. But what is going on here? Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and the German Parliament, have said that no Taurus missiles will be sent to Ukraine. But contrary to these statements, Ritter said, we are now at a point where German military officers assess potential targets to be struck by the Taurus. They confer at the behest of the German Defense Minister. There are no hypotheticals being drawn up, Ritter said. This is “an act of war.”

If this act of war is carried out, Russia can view this as an existential threat, and respond appropriately, and a nuclear war will follow. Ritter pointed to Russia’s recent test of its RS-24 Yars missile. A powerful ICBM, it has multiple warheads (3 to 6), each of which can take out a city the size of New York. According to Ritter, it cannot be interdicted by existing U.S. defense systems.

Putin’s Warning, Western Delusions

President Putin was starkly clear about the threat of nuclear war in his Feb. 29 Federal Assembly speech.



Vladimir Putin, President of Russia: “What [NATO] is doing ... risks a conflict with nuclear weapons, which means the destruction of civilization.” kremlin.ru

He warned of the deadly consequences of the stated Western threat of sending NATO troops to beef up the dwindling Ukrainian forces on the ground in that country. Putin said:

We remember the fate of those who once sent their contingents to the territory of our country. But now the consequences for possible interventionists will be much more tragic. They must ultimately understand that we also have weapons—yes, they know about this, I just said—that can hit targets on their territory. And they should understand that what they are

doing now to scare the whole world, it risks a conflict with nuclear weapons which means the destruction of civilization. Do they understand this, or what?

Putin is bluffing, was the response of a top NATO official to Putin’s Federal Assembly warning. The Deputy Secretary General of NATO Mircea Geoană, from Romania, told that to Spain’s *El País*, which *Politico* then covered under a March 1 headline, “Putin’s Bluffing on Nukes (for Now), Says Top NATO Official.” It quotes Geoană, “We do not see any imminent threat of Russia using these weapons.” Putin’s speech was



Mircea Geoană, NATO Deputy Secretary General: “We do not see any imminent threat of Russia using [nuclear] weapons.” NATO

“a discourse that delves into the logic of psychological intimidation rather than real intentions.... But these statements are in themselves very dangerous, because they erode trust. Russia knows the consequences of taking such a step.” Geoană added the customary verbiage that NATO would “continue to make sure that we support Ukraine and avoid escalation with Russia.”

French President Emmanuel Macron raised the prospect for NATO boots on the ground, on Feb. 26 at his Paris event. He convened a meeting of 27 heads of state and government or their ministerial representatives to participate in a support conference for Ukraine. Macron recklessly stated that, “sending troops on the ground cannot be excluded.” In his opening comments, Macron dramatically held forth that, since the first day of the war, “what is at stake in Ukraine is also capital for our future security in Europe.” These last months, said Macron, there has been a hardening of the Russian attitude both domestically—citing the alleged murder of Alexei Navalny—and in Ukraine. Russia has also increased its cyber attacks everywhere, he insisted.

Macron claimed,

The countries represented here at the Paris conference all said what they are thinking about the present situation, and their collective analysis points to the fact that within a few years, it will be necessary to prepare for the expectation that Russia would attack those 10 countries.... That is very lucid, and basically the security of us all is at stake ... We are surely at a moment where an awakening is necessary for us all, given the transformation of the threat from a military and strategic point of view.

Thus, according to Macron,

First of all, Russia cannot and must not win this war in Ukraine, for Ukraine’s sake. Second, we are in the process of ensuring our collective security, now and in the future. Third, we all agree that we do not wish to go to war with the Russian people.

Macron preceded his Paris warmongering with a number of other such events. On Jan. 30–31 he went to Sweden, with the stated objective of deepening the strategic partnership with the country that had just joined NATO. On Feb. 12, Macron organized a revival in Paris of the “Weimar Triangle,” the 1991 strategic



U.S. Air Force/Trey Ward

Lt. Gen. Anthony Cotton, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command: “We need to seriously consider what uploading and re-MIRVing the ICBM looks like, and what it takes to do that.”

alliance among France, Germany, and Poland, where the basic theme was, of course, Ukraine, and the need for a united and strong EU and NATO.

U.S. Beats the NATO War Drums

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin likewise raised the prospect of direct NATO war with Russia in his House Armed Services Committee testimony Feb. 29, saying that Putin could not be allowed to win in Ukraine. “If Ukraine falls again, Putin won’t stop there,” Austin claimed.

He will just continue to move forward and attack and take on the sovereign territory of his neighbors, and so if you’re a Baltic state you’re really worried about whether or not you’re next. They know Putin. They know what he’s capable of. Quite frankly, if Ukraine falls, I really believe that NATO will be in a fight with Russia....

Also Feb. 29, Gen. Anthony Cotton, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee, endorsing the possible return to placing multiple, not single, nuclear warheads on U.S. strategic missiles. Such a missile is called a multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV). At present, each of the 400 land-based Minuteman III ICBM’s carries a single W87 warhead, after having been reduced from three, to comply with the warhead limitations in the New START Treaty.

“I do believe that we need to take serious consideration in seeing what uploading and re-MIRVing the ICBM looks like, and what does it take to potentially



U.S. Air Force



Above, a Russian RS-24 Yars thermonuclear-armed ICBM mounted on a mobile launcher on parade in Moscow in 2018. At left, a test flight of an U.S. LGHM-30B Minuteman-1 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.

noted that the Air Force had previously disclosed that the new Sentinel ICBM is being designed to be capable of carrying more than one warhead, should the decision be made to do so, although present planning is for just one warhead. However, the New START Treaty expires in 2026—long before the Sentinel will enter service—with little chance that the treaty will be extended.

Cotton demanded that Congress continue to fund the modernization of U.S. strategic forces, to defend against “nuclear peers.” He said, according to *DOD News*,

The most important message I want to deliver today is that the forces under my command are ready to deter our adversaries and respond decisively should deterrence fail. No adversary should ever doubt our capability today.... We are confronting not one but two nuclear peers: the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China.... This reality combined [with] missile developments in North Korea, Iran’s nuclear ambitions, and the growing relationships amongst those nations adds new layers of complexity to our strategic calculus.

Russia Sees Provocations

The Russians see recklessness not only in these statements but also in NATO’s behavior. *Military*

structure. In this regard, the Russian Aerospace Forces would play a predominant role in repelling potential aggression.

On the eve of the active phase of the operation, according to the Russian military experts, the enemy will take potentially aggressive action, including provocations, for the purpose of controlling the situation, as well as intensifying all types of intelligence activity. In addition, it may start deploying aircraft carrier strike groups and ships with guided missiles under the guise of exercises. Enemy aircraft, including strategic bombers and drones, will begin to perform regular flights near Russia’s national borders.

The Russian Defense Ministry issued a statement on March 6, reporting the approach of NATO aircraft over the Black Sea, which should be seen in that regard. According to the statement, Russian Aerospace Forces intercepted three French Air Force aircraft approaching Russia’s state border. The three were an E-3F AWACS radar aircraft, escorted by two Rafale fighter jets. The purpose of such an approach, normally involving reconnaissance aircraft, would be to gather intelligence on the response of Russian air defenses. However, the involvement of an AWACS aircraft to within interception range of Russian air defenses would seem to be highly unusual, as its role includes not only air surveillance, but also command and control of offensive and defensive air operations. NATO has kept its AWACS aircraft over Poland and Romania since the beginning of Russia’s Special Military Operation.

Thought, the military theoretical journal of the Russian Defense Ministry, published an article in early March describing a likely scenario for an attack on Russia by a “hypothetical adversary,” which in reality could only be NATO. According to TASS, the article’s authors speculate that an attack might begin with a rapid global strike alongside several massive missile and aviation strikes on the country’s administrative-political and military-industrial infra-

NATO's 'Steadfast Defender'

The *Military Thought* article also comes out in the midst of NATO's exercise Steadfast Defender 2024, the largest military exercise in Europe since the end of the Cold War. It involves 90,000 troops, hundreds of aircraft, and dozens of naval vessels deploying in regions of Europe stretching from the Arctic to Central Europe and the Baltic states south to Romania. According to NATO's description of the exercise, part one focuses on the deployment of forces from the U.S. and Canada, to Europe, whereas part two focuses on "multi-domain exercises across Europe—demonstrating NATO, national, and multinational military capabilities." This phase "will also test the rapid deployment of troops and equipment across borders within the Alliance."

The German-centered part of the exercise, called Quadriga 24, involves forces flowing from Germany north to northern Norway, and east to Lithuania following two routes—across the Baltic Sea and overland through Poland—essentially a pincer movement to cut off the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. Finally, there's also a movement to the south to Romania, where thousands of U.S. troops are already stationed.

Some other parts of Steadfast Defender include the following:

Dragon-24, a Polish-led ground operations exercise, involved troops from eight additional countries. It included a crossing of the Vistula River on March 4–5 in winter conditions. A large number of personnel and combat vehicles were moved across Polish territory. This was to be followed by a tactical road march from Korzeniewo, where both wheeled and tracked military vehicles would cover approximately 300 kilometers over the span of several days, going toward the Bemowo Piskie training area.

Nordic Response 2024 exercise, which kicked off on March 4 in Norway, Sweden, and Finland but was centered on Norway's Finnmark County that borders Russia's Murmansk region to the east. It is the first NATO exercise that Finland is participating in as a full member of the alliance. Over 4,000 Finnish troops were deployed for the exercise, making it the largest Finnish participation ever in a foreign exercise, according to the Finnish Defense Forces.



Quadriga 2024, the largest exercise of German land forces since Feb. 24, 2022, when Russia's Special Military Operation began in Ukraine. Feb. 2, 2024.

NordNordWest

More than 20,000 troops from 13 countries—Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United States—are reported to be deployed for the drill. Roughly half of the participating troops will drill on land. The rest will train at sea, with over 50 participating submarines, frigates, corvettes, aircraft carriers, and various amphibious vessels, and in the air with more than 100 fighter jets, transport aircraft, maritime surveillance aircraft and helicopters, according to the Norwegian military.

Northern Viking and certain other northern exercises will follow up on Nordic Response in the Spring. There will be drills in April in and around Iceland, emphasizing securing sea and air routes to Northern Europe. They are led by the U.S. Naval Forces in Europe. The exercise Dynamic Mongoose will be from April to May, involving anti-submarine warfare in the High North led by NATO Maritime Command. The Northern Forest Exercise will take place in May, led by Finland, for army drills in Rovajärvi, Northern Finland.