

# Who's Playing Nuclear Chicken, and Why?

by Dennis Small and Carl Osgood

Nov. 3—On Nov. 2, the Russian government issued a formal statement through its Foreign Ministry, urging each of the “nuclear five” nations—the United States, UK, France, China and Russia—to restate their commitment to the bottom-line policy that, “We affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” Russia did this in the Foreign Ministry’s policy statement, urging that “the most immediate task is to avoid any military clash of nuclear powers,” which could have “catastrophic consequences” for all of humanity. The statement insisted that de-escalation of the current crisis is the “top-priority task” for everyone.

That phrase—“a nuclear war cannot be won and

must never be fought”—first became famous as the Reagan-Gorbachev Formula of 1985, which helped contain the Cold War. It was most recently restated by the “nuclear five.” Russia, in the Nov. 2 statement, announced that “we fully reaffirm our commitment to the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races of January 3, 2022.”

This statement was one element in a set of major strategic initiatives undertaken by the Russian government over a 24 to 48 hour period to try to break the seemingly ineluctable descent into war.

Additionally, on Nov. 3 the Russian Foreign Min-

## Russian Government Statement on Preventing Nuclear War

*Nov. 2—Because this short and urgent [Statement](#) of the Russian Federation will otherwise be blacked out in the Western media, EIR reprints it in full below. Titled, “Statement of the Russian Federation on Preventing Nuclear War,” it was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Nov. 2.*

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and one of the nuclear-weapon powers, in accordance with the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Russian Federation bears a special responsibility in matters related to strengthening international security and strategic stability.

In implementing its policy on nuclear deterrence Russia is strictly and consistently guided by the tenet that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Russian doctrinal approaches in this sphere are defined with utmost accuracy, pursue solely defensive goals and do not admit of expansive interpretation. These approaches allow for Russia to hypothetically resort to nuclear weapons exclusively in response to an aggression involving the use of weapons of mass destruction or an aggression with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy.

Russia proceeds from the continued relevance of

the existing arrangements and understandings in the field of cutting and limiting nuclear weapons, as well as reducing strategic risks and threat of international incidents and conflicts fraught with escalation to nuclear level. We fully reaffirm our commitment to the Joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races of January 3, 2022. We are strongly convinced that in the current complicated and turbulent situation, caused by irresponsible and impudent actions aimed at undermining our national security, the most immediate task is to avoid any military clash of nuclear powers.

We urge other states of the “nuclear five” to demonstrate in practice their willingness to work on solving this top-priority task and to give up the dangerous attempts to infringe on vital interests of each other while balancing on the brink of a direct armed conflict and encouraging provocations with weapons of mass destruction, which can lead to catastrophic consequences.

Russia continues to advocate for a revamped, more robust architecture of international security based on ensuring predictability and global strategic stability, as well as on the principles of equal rights, indivisible security and mutual account of core interests of the parties.

istry called in the British Ambassador to Moscow, Deborah Bronnert, for a dressing down over the British role in the Oct. 29 aerial and submarine drone attack on vessels of the Russian Black Sea Fleet at their anchorages in the harbor of Sevastopol. As a result of that attack, Russia suspended its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an agreement negotiated last July between Russia and Ukraine, mediated by Turkey and the UN, allowing for the safe export of grain from Ukrainian ports. The Ministry explained that the safe naval corridor meant for exclusive use by grain ships had been used for the Oct. 29 attack:

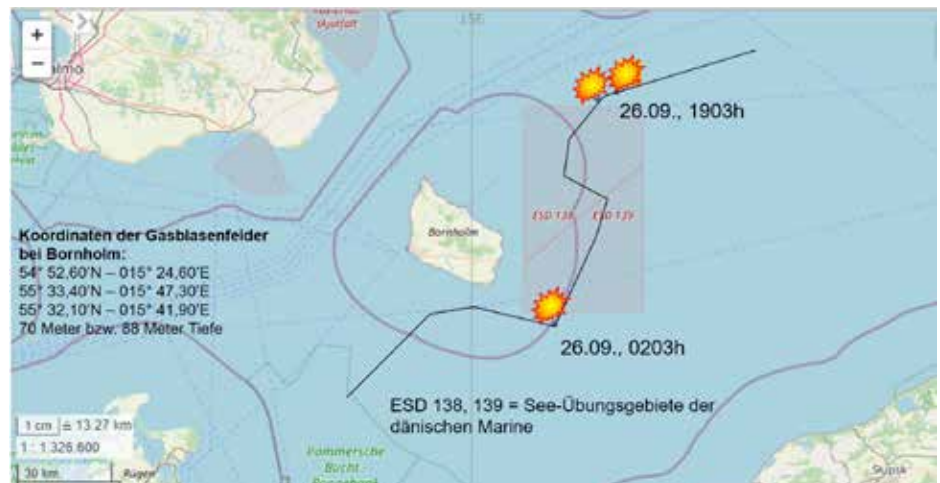
A strong protest in connection with the British military specialists' active participation in training and providing supplies to the units of the Ukrainian special operations forces, including with the goal of conducting acts of sabotage at sea, were expressed to the Ambassador. Concrete facts of that kind of activities by London were provided. The *démarche* emphasized that such confrontational actions by the British pose the threat of an escalation and can lead to unpredictable and dangerous consequences.

It was pointed out that such hostile provocations were unacceptable, and a demand was put forward to stop them immediately. Should these acts of aggression that are fraught with direct implication in the conflict continue, the responsibility for their harmful consequences and the mounting tensions in relations between our countries will lie entirely with the British side.

The statement then provided details on the training of Ukrainian special forces by the British.

### The Pipeline Attacks

The day before, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova had announced that the Russian Defense Ministry's earlier charges that British military forces had played a central role in "mastermind-



<https://www.koordinaten-umrechner.de>, with additions by Lt. Col. Ralph Bosshard (ret).

*The Russian Defense Ministry's charge that British military forces played a central role in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines was presented before the UN Security Council Oct. 31. The map of the Bornholm Island neighborhood indicates the locations and times of the explosions.*

ing" both the Oct. 29 Ukrainian drone attack and the earlier sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines, had been presented with full evidentiary backing before a closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council on Oct. 31.

Russia also resumed the international agreement permitting grain exports from Ukraine, using the safe-passage corridor meant for those exports only. They did so not as a "surprising U-turn in policy," as much of the media claim, but after having (a) presented their case to the UN Security Council on Oct. 31, including the evidence of British military involvement in "masterminding" the drone attack on Sevastopol; and (b) obtaining written assurances from Kiev that the corridor would only be used for grain.

Zakharova's blistering attack also recalled that,

October 28, 2022, marks 78 years since the complete liberation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic's territory from Nazi invaders in 1944, and on November 6 we will mark 79 years since Kiev's liberation from the Nazi occupiers in 1943. At the time it would never have occurred to our forefathers that a time would come when their descendents would have to fight, arms in hand, an ideology of human hatred, the ideological successors of Bandera and Shukhevich, who were Nazi henchmen and have thousands of innocent lives on their conscience. It would never occur to anyone at the time that people with swastika tattoos would be walking around Kiev

and priding themselves on wearing these symbols and exposing them.

## Nuclear Signaling

The Biden Administration has constantly accused Moscow of nuclear saber-rattling and threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine, although U.S. defense and military officials have admitted many times that they see no signs that the Russian military is actually making such preparations. The United States, however, showed its nuclear hand twice in a two-week period.

On Oct. 19, U.S. Central Command issued a press release reporting that its chief, Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla, paid a visit to the nuclear ballistic missile submarine *USS West Virginia* somewhere in the Arabian Sea, accompanied by U.S. Fifth Fleet commander Vice Admiral Brad Cooper. During his visit, Kurilla received a hands-on demonstration of the capabilities of the vessel, which operates globally under U.S. Strategic Command, the release reported.

It’s extremely unusual for the U.S. Navy to reveal anything about the locations of its submarines when they are out on patrol, so this could be taken—especially in the context of the nuclear propaganda against Russia and the allegations of Iran supplying combat drones to Russia—as some kind of message. The release didn’t say how Kurilla and Cooper got to the submarine, even though it had to be on the surface for them to board, making it potentially visible to intelligence gathering efforts.

Then two weeks later, on Nov. 2, another nuclear ballistic missile submarine, the *USS Rhode Island*, surfaced and sailed into His Majesty’s naval base in Gibraltar. A release quoted Capt. John Craddock, commander of Task Force 69, an element of the U.S. Sixth Fleet:

*Rhode Island’s* port visit to Gibraltar reinforces our ironclad commitment to our allies and partners in the region. The U.S. and UK share a strong history of cooperation, through exercises, operations, and cooperation activities such as

this, that enhance our combined capabilities and partnership. The complexity, lethality, and tactical expertise of *Rhode Island* epitomizes the effectiveness and strength of the submarine force.

Prior to her port visit to Gibraltar, the *Rhode Island* had visited His Majesty’s Naval Base Clyde, Scotland for a scheduled port visit in July. It’s not publicly known when the *Rhode Island’s* visit to Gibraltar was scheduled, but it’s hard not to see it as a follow-up to the earlier message sent by the *West Virginia*.

Indeed, a few days after the *West Virginia* appeared in the Arabian Sea, an article appeared in the Russian publication *Vzglyad*—believed to have good connections with the Kremlin and the Russian military—expressing concern that the *West Virginia’s* message was that strategic missile bases in southern Russia were vulnerable to a U.S. first strike. Correspondent Alexander Timokhin wrote:



USN/Jennifer L. Walker

*The surfacing of a U.S. nuclear missile submarine in the Arabian Sea in October was recognized in Russia as a sign that strategic missile bases in southern Russia are vulnerable to a U.S. first strike.*

There is no possibility to intercept or block all dangerous waters with the operations of Russia’s anti-submarine forces. And this means that, as in the case of the Arabian Sea, the Americans and the British who can hold the area, will be free to maneuver there in order to strike from locations where the missiles can reach us too quickly. For example, in the Northern, Norwegian, Barents, Mediterranean and Arabian Seas. [This is] all very complicated, and the risks

of loss of surprise are very high. But their chances of success are not zero. With the visit of *West Virginia* to our “soft underbelly,” the Americans clearly show how far they are willing to go if they deem it necessary. The Americans are sending an extremely clear signal—for them, nuclear war is no longer unthinkable, and not impossible.

## Biden Administration’s Hostile Fantasy World

In between the surfacings of the two nuclear ballistic missile submarines came the Pentagon’s release of its defense policy documents on Oct. 27, the *National*

*Defense Strategy* (NDS), the *Nuclear Posture Review*, and the *Missile Defense Review*. These documents followed on from the *U.S. National Security Strategy*, released by the White House Oct. 12, which divided the world between “democracies” and “autocracies.” Taken as a whole, the defense policy documents essentially rule out peace with Russia and China (and, as an after thought, North Korea and Iran), by calling for a policy of active containment of both countries as part of a strategy to cement the domination of the world by the Anglo-American Global NATO empire.

The authors of these documents, and the policy-makers behind them, live in a hostile fantasy world where only U.S. military power, accompanied by coercive diplomacy (including sanctions) and the surrounding of designated adversaries by vassal states, can assure Global NATO’s dominance. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin told reporters at the Pentagon:

The key theme of the NDS is the need to sustain and strengthen U.S. deterrence with the People’s Republic of China as our pacing challenge. At the same time, the NDS bluntly describes Russia as an acute threat, and we chose the word “acute” carefully. Unlike China, Russia can’t systemically challenge the United States over the long term. But Russian aggression does pose an immediate and sharp threat to our interests and values, and Putin’s reckless war of choice against Ukraine, the worst threat to European security since the end of World War II, has made that very clear for the whole world.

The *Nuclear Posture Review* reaffirms that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack on the United States, our allies, and our partners. Meanwhile, the *Missile Defense Review* underscores that missile defense contributes to integrated deterrence by undermining a potential foe’s confidence in its ability to amount a successful attack.

To do all of this requires a gigantic military budget, explained Austin:

Now, the strength and combat credibility of the Joint Force remains central to integrated deterrence, and that’s why our Fiscal Year ’23 budget request included more than \$56 billion for air

power platforms and systems and more than \$40 billion to maintain our dominance at sea and almost \$13 billion to support and modernize our forces on land and some \$34 billion to sustain and modernize our nuclear forces.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian, during the ministry’s regular briefing Nov. 1, denounced the *National Defense Strategy* as—

driven ostensibly by a Cold War zero-sum mentality and the logic of domination and hegemonism and says everything about the ill intention of the U.S. to contain and suppress China....

The world is undergoing changes of a magnitude unseen in a century. The historical trends of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit are unstoppable. And yet, the hegemonic, high-handed, and bullying acts of using strength to intimidate the weak, taking from others by force and subterfuge, and playing zero-sum games, are exerting grave harm. China has always been committed to its foreign policy goals of upholding world peace and promoting common development, and it is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future.... We firmly oppose all forms of hegemonism and power politics including attempts to blackmail, contain, blockade, and exert maximum pressure. We oppose the Cold War mentality and double standards. We will resolutely defend our national sovereignty, security and development interests.

The Russian government also expressed alarm at the new U.S. defense strategy. Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko told *RIA Novosti* Oct. 29 that the new documents provide for “an increase in the number of scenarios, including outside of the nuclear context, which allow the use of nuclear weapons.” Grushko said that “the language of nuclear strategies is quite vague,” and noted that Russia is “closely monitoring the evolution” of Western military doctrines, including those presented by nuclear powers—the United States, the UK, and France.

### **Who’s Playing Nuclear Chicken?**

Scott Ritter, former Marine intelligence officer and former UN weapons inspector, charged that U.S. nuclear policy, as described in the new *Nuclear Posture*

*Review* (NPR), is nothing more than an effort to black-mail the world. In an Oct. 30 interview with *Sputnik*, he noted that President Joe Biden ran on a platform that he would seek what's called the "single-purpose policy" for nuclear deterrence, but the new NPR breaks that promise. Ritter said,

The strategy that he has propagated recently is a strategy that continues the past practice of having deliberate ambiguity about the conditions and circumstances under which America could use nuclear weapons, up to and including a pre-emptive nuclear attack by the United States in response to a non-nuclear incident.

Basically, the United States is holding the world hostage to its nuclear arsenal, saying that we reserve the right to use nuclear weapons, any time we determine, under any circumstances, so that we have a broader definition of deterrence.... With a sole purpose declaration, we're deterring a nuclear attack against us. But the current nuclear strategy is to deter something that is ambiguous in nature, meaning we haven't precisely spelled it out. We're leaving the world guessing. And what we're saying is, "Don't mess with us, or else we'll nuke you."

So who is playing nuclear "chicken"? The answer is pretty clear. But as to why: That may, at first glance, seem less evident to some of our fellow citizens.

In her Oct. 25 speech to the "International Scientific and Practical Conference 'Scientific-Technological and Innovative Cooperation of BRICS countries,'" hosted by the Russian National Committee on BRICS Research, Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche went to the heart of the matter:

It is the systemic failure of the neoliberal system, which is the real dynamic behind the Anglo-Saxon geopolitical confrontation against Russia and China.... Events in London signal the definite arrival of the global systemic crisis, of which my late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, warned 51 years ago, when President Nixon replaced the fixed exchange rates of the Bretton Woods System with floating ones. He warned at the time that a continuation of that monetarist system oriented towards the maximization of profits for the



The White House/Erin Scott

*"The strategy that he has propagated ... continues deliberate ambiguity about the conditions and circumstances under which America could use nuclear weapons, up to and including a pre-emptive nuclear attack by the United States."*

speculators, would necessarily lead to a new depression, a new fascism, and the danger of a new World War—or, a completely new world economic system.

It is for that elementary reason that the declaration, "Stop the Danger of Nuclear War Now," which is circulating widely to convoke a third international seminar of political and social leaders of the world, states unequivocally:

We call on people of good will around the world—notwithstanding our diverse and natural differences—to participate in this process of deliberation and search for peaceful solutions, including a thorough examination of the alternative economic policies to replace speculation, which has generated so much poverty and suffering, with a system of production and progress to meet the needs of a growing world population.

It is for that same reason that LaRouche independent candidate Diane Sare's campaign for Senate from New York is of such strategic importance. As the voice of Lyndon LaRouche on today's U.S. political scene, Sare's clear denunciation of the pressing danger of nuclear war and her presentation of LaRouche's policy solutions, remains decisive regardless of the Nov. 8 vote count.