

US and Europe Escalate Provocations Against Russia

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The European Union summit held in Brussels over the weekend represents a major escalation of the aggression by the Western powers against Russia, raising the specter of full-blown war in Europe and even a nuclear war between NATO and Russia.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, the business oligarch and leader of the right-wing regime installed by the Western powers in Kiev, set the tone for the summit. He urged the EU to take a tougher stance against Russia, which he accused of “military aggression and terror.”

“We are very close to the point of no return, the point of no return is full-scale war, which is already happening in the territories controlled by the separatists,” Poroshenko said at a news conference.

Standing alongside European Commission President Juan Manuel Barroso, Poroshenko alleged that Kiev still hoped for a political settlement of the conflict, but then painted a picture of war.

“We are too close to a border where there will be no return to the peace plan,” he said, claiming that since Wednesday, “thousands of foreign troops and hundreds of foreign tanks are now on the territory of Ukraine, with a very high risk not only for the peace and stability of Ukraine but for the peace and stability of the whole of Europe.”

EU officials and European heads of state joined in the allegations and threats of war against Russia. British Prime Minister David Cameron described the situation in Ukraine as “deeply serious,” adding: “We have to show real resolve, real resilience in demonstrating to Russia that if she carries on in this way the relationship between Europe and Russia, Britain and Russia, America and Russia will be radically different in future.”

Dalia Grybauskaitė, the president of Lithuania, a NATO member, took an even more aggressive tone: “It is the fact that Russia is in a war state against Ukraine. That means it is in a state of war against a country which would like to be closely integrated with the EU. Practically Russia is in a state of war against Europe,” she said from the summit.

She demanded, “We need to support Ukraine, and send military materials to help Ukraine defend itself. Today Ukraine is fighting a war on behalf of all Europe.”

Assertions that Western politicians are merely reacting to a Russian aggression against Ukraine and now have to defend Europe against Russia are lies. This crisis has been instigated by the imperialist powers, above all Germany and the US, which organized a fascist-led coup against the pro-Russian Ukrainian government of President Viktor

Yanukovych. Now the EU and NATO are collaborating closely with the puppet regime they installed to militarily crush pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine as part of their broader plan to encircle and ultimately subjugate Russia.

In comments cited by Russian news agencies, Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed the crisis in Ukraine on the NATO powers, accusing them of supporting a “coup” in Ukraine in February.

“They should have known that Russia cannot stand aside when people are being shot almost at point-blank range,” Putin said. Now, despite the fact that their political adventure is blowing up in their faces, the imperialist powers continue to seize upon the manufactured crisis in Ukraine to ratchet up tensions with Russia.

Echoing Poroshenko’s comment by saying that Russia was pushing the conflict in Ukraine toward “the point of no return,” Barroso threatened that European leaders would take new, tougher measures to make Moscow “come to reason.” The president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, said that the European heads of state had agreed to take “further significant steps” if Russia did not back down within a week.

“Everybody is fully aware that we have to act quickly given the evolution on the ground and the tragic loss of life of the last days,” Van Rompuy said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that further sanctions were needed, as “the situation has deteriorated considerably in the last few days,” and would be imposed “if this situation continues.” Despite her numerous phone calls with Putin, Merkel said she could not make “a final judgment” on his intentions and whether Putin seeks to take “further parts of the country under his control.” She said that Germany “will certainly not deliver weapons, as this would give the impression that this is a conflict that can be solved militarily,” but indicated that other European countries might take a different stance on this issue.

There are signs that the factions in the imperialist governments that foresaw a Russian reaction to the Western provocations are increasingly taking the lead in pushing for a full-blown militarization of Europe and a possible war with Russia.

The current issue of the major German news magazine *Der Spiegel* published yesterday runs an article under the headline, “Level 4.” It states that the “hardline faction within NATO is on the rise” and insists that “they want much more than economic sanctions.”

Der Spiegel writes,

“Poland and the Baltic States promote a demonstrative break with Moscow, and they are receiving increasing support. Canada, which hosts over one million people of Ukrainian descent, has now taken their side. ‘Diplomacy is reaching its limits in the face of continued Russian aggression,’ said even the foreign minister of Luxembourg, Jean Asselborn. ‘The question is posed, if there can be any diplomatic solution with Putin at all.’ Several Eastern European governments are coming to similar conclusions.”

On Friday, the *Financial Times* reported that seven NATO states plan the creation of a new so called “rapid reaction force” of at least 10,000 soldiers as part of plans to strengthen NATO. The force would be led by Britain. Countries involved include Denmark, Latvia,

Estonia, Lithuania, Norway and the Netherlands. Canada has also expressed an interest. According to the FT, the force includes air and naval units as well as ground troops for rapid deployment and regular exercises in Eastern Europe. Cameron is expected to announce the creation of the force coinciding with the upcoming NATO summit in Wales later this week.

On Sunday, Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* (FAS) newspaper led with the headline, "NATO goes east: military bases, armament depots and intervention forces," reporting that NATO plans to deploy five bases in Eastern Europe. At each base in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania and Poland, up to 600 servicemen will be stationed.

The paper also reports that more soldiers will be stationed at the regional NATO headquarters in Stettin, Poland, which is currently led by Germany, Poland and Denmark. In "case of emergency," it will host 60,000 troops. The FAS writes that these plans are part of a "readiness action" plan to be discussed in detail at the summit. It brands Russia as a "threat to Euro-Atlantic security."

Since the crisis began, the most aggressive elements within NATO, which are close to Washington and especially to the neo-conservative faction within the American ruling elite, have sought to transform the NATO into an anti-Russian alliance and place Europe on a permanent war footing against Russia. This is now happening with breathtaking speed.

In another landmark decision, European leaders decided that Polish president Donald Tusk will succeed Van Rompuy on December 1. The British *Guardian* described him as "a leading EU hawk on the Kremlin and the crisis in Ukraine," stressing that "Poland has been leading the campaign for a more energetic anti-Putin and pro-Ukraine policy."

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