

VIPS MEMO: The French Road to Nuclear War

France could be leading the American people down a path toward a nuclear conflict decidedly not in the interests of the American people – or of humanity itself, VIPS warns President Joe Biden.

By [Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

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March 24, 2024

ALERT MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity

SUBJECT: On the Brink of Nuclear War

Mr. President:

France is reportedly preparing to dispatch a force of some 2,000 troops — roughly a reinforced brigade built around an armored battalion and two mechanized battalions, with supporting logistical, engineering, and artillery troops attached — into Ukraine sometime in the not-so-distant future.

This force is purely symbolic, inasmuch as it would have zero survivability in a modern high-intensity conflict of the scope and scale of what is transpiring in Ukraine today. It would not be deployed directly in a conflict zone, but would serve either as (1) a screening force/tripwire to stop Russia's advance; or (2) a replacement force deployed to a non-active zone to free up Ukrainian soldiers for combat duty. The French Brigade reportedly will be supplemented by smaller units from the Baltic states.

This would be introducing combat troops of a NATO country into a theater of war, making them "lawful targets" under the Law of War.

Such units would apparently lack a NATO mandate. In Russia's view, however, this may be a distinction without a difference. France appears to be betting – naively – that its membership in NATO would prevent Russia from attacking French troops. Rather, it is highly likely that Russia would attack any French/Baltic contingent in Ukraine and quickly destroy/degrade its combat viability.

In that case, French President Macron may calculate that, after Russian attacks on the troops of NATO members – NATO mandate or not – he could invoke Article 5 of the NATO Charter and get the NATO alliance to intervene. Such intervention would likely take the form of aircraft operating from NATO nations – and perhaps include interdiction missions against *tactical* targets inside Russia.

On Precipice of Nuclear War?

Doctrinally, and by legal right, Russia's response would be to launch retaliatory strikes also against targets in NATO countries. If NATO then attacks *strategic* targets inside Russia, at that point Russia's nuclear doctrine takes over, and NATO decision-making centers would be hit with nuclear weapons.

We do not believe Russia will initiate a nuclear attack against the U.S., but rather would leave it up to the United States to decide if it wants to risk destruction by preparing to launch a nuclear strike on Russia. That said, Russian strategic forces have improved to the point that, in some areas – hypersonic missiles, for example – its capability surpasses that of the U.S. and NATO.

In other words, the Russian temptation to strike first may be a bit stronger than during past crises, and we are somewhat less confident that Russia would want to “go second”. Another disquieting factor is that the Russians are likely to believe that Macron's folly has the tacit approval of some key U.S. and other Western officials, who seem desperate to find some way to alter the trajectory of the war in Ukraine – the more so, as elections draw near.

What Needs to Be Done

Europe needs to understand that France is leading it down a path of inevitable self-destruction.

The American people need to understand that Europe is leading them to the cusp of nuclear annihilation.

Since Russian leaders may suspect that Macron is working hand in glove with Washington, the U.S. needs to make its position publicly and unambiguously clear.

And if France and the Baltics insist on sending troops into Ukraine, it must also be made clear that such action has no NATO mandate; that Article 5 will not be triggered by any Russian retaliation; and that the U.S. nuclear arsenal, including those nuclear weapons that are part of the NATO deterrent force, will not be employed as a result of any Russian military action against French or Baltic troops.

Void of such clarity, France would be leading the American people down a path toward a nuclear conflict decidedly not in the interests of the American people – or of humanity itself.

FOR THE STEERING GROUP,

VETERAN INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS FOR SANITY

- **William Binney**, former Technical Director, World Geopolitical & Military Analysis, NSA; co-founder, SIGINT Automation Research Center (ret.)
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- **Ann Wright**, retired U.S. Army reserve colonel and former U.S. diplomat who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Iraq War

Background: Earlier VIPS Memos for President Biden on Ukraine

May 1, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)

SUBJECT: [Nuclear Weapons Cannot Be Un-invented, Thus ...](#)

"The growing possibility that nuclear weapons might be used, as hostilities in Ukraine

continue to escalate, merits your full attention."

Sept. 5, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: VIPS

SUBJECT: [Ukraine Decision Time & Secretary of Defense](#)

"If Austin tells you Kyiv is beating back the Russians, kick the tires"

Jan. 26, 2023

ALERT MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: VIPS

SUBJECT: [Leopards to Ukraine: Decisions in an Intelligence Vacuum](#)

"None of the newly promised weaponry will stop Russia from defeating what's left of the Ukrainian army. If you have been told otherwise, replace your intelligence and military advisers with competent professionals – the sooner the better."

"There is a large conceptual – and exceptionally dangerous – disconnect. Simply stated, it is not possible to "win the war against Russia" AND avoid WWII. It is downright scary that Defense Secretary Austin may think it possible. In any case, the Kremlin has to assume he thinks so. It is a very dangerous delusion."

January 25, 2024

ALERT MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: VIPS

SUBJECT: [Throwing Good Money After Bad](#)

"On Jan. 26, 2023, we reminded you that National Intelligence Director Avril Haines had said Russia was using up ammunition extraordinarily quickly and could not indigenously produce what it was expending."

"On July 13, you said Putin "has already lost the war". You may have gotten that from C.I.A. Director William Burns who, a week before, wrote an op-ed in The Washington Post saying: "Putin's war has already been a strategic failure for Russia – its military weaknesses laid bare." Both statements are incorrect. Nor is the war a "stalemate", as Jake Sullivan has claimed more recently."

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Featured image: U.S. President Joe Biden preparing to disembark Marine One, July 2021. (White House, Adam Schultz)

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