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## **Top NATO spokesman calls for “wartime economy”**

NATO’s top military spokesman called Saturday for members of the US-led military alliance to transition to a “wartime economy” in order to “increase the production in the defense industry.”

In the interview, aired Friday on Portugal’s public broadcaster RTP News, Rob Bauer, Chairman of NATO’s Military Committee, said the US-led NATO alliance is prepared for a “direct clash with Russia.”



Chair of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer addresses a media conference at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, January 19, 2023. [AP Photo/Virginia Mayo]

These statements follow the announcement last week by the Biden administration that it would deploy M1 Abrams battle tanks to Ukraine, and statements by the White House that it is “discussing” sending nuclear-capable F16 jet fighters.

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Bauer's statements make clear that the US-led NATO alliance is actively preparing for the Ukraine war to escalate into a direct clash between the NATO alliance and Russia, both of which are armed with nuclear weapons.

At the start of the interview, Bauer stressed that NATO views the conflict with Russia as much broader than the war in Ukraine.

Asked by RTP News, "You don't believe that it's only about Ukraine," Bauer replied "no, it's about turning back to the old Soviet Union."

The interviewer continued, "so the entire Eastern Flank is at risk somehow?" Bauer replied, "Yeah."

The interviewer asked, "We are ready to [sic] a direct confrontation with Russia?" To this Bauer replied, "we are."

Bauer noted the massive expansion of NATO's forces in what NATO terms its "eastern flank," saying:

"...what we have done after the war started was [deploying] the battle groups along the eastern flank, we had four in the north, the three Baltic States and Poland, the enhanced forward presence, battle groups, we have decided now... to create four more battle groups in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. And to basically strengthen those battle groups, make them a little bit larger, give them a little bit more support in terms of fire support, and give them better stocks for ammunition and other things."

In order to prepare for war with Russia, Bauer declared, "we need to increase the production in the defense industry," citing the wartime measures taken by the United States during World War II. Bauer continued,

"In the first four years in the United States in the Second World War, in the Ford factories, there was no civilian cars made, but only military production.... And that is, in a way, talking about a wartime economy,"

Bauer's statements about the creation of a "wartime economy" are extremely significant, revealing a central aim of the escalation of the war. During wartime, strikes are generally illegalized, allowing capitalist governments to use war as an instrument of suppressing domestic political opposition.

Bauer's interview aired just one day after congressional testimony by Victoria Nuland, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, in which she declared that the Biden administration was "gratified" by the terrorist attack on the Nord Stream II pipeline in September, a piece of civilian infrastructure jointly owned by Russian and German corporations. Replying to a question from Republican senator Ted Cruz, Nuland declared,

“Senator Cruz, like you, I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea.’

These statements point to a massive, reckless escalation of US involvement in the war with Russia, with the United States putting into effect plans whose logic points to the introduction of ground troops in Ukraine.

The rampant escalation of the war in Ukraine has at the same time only intensified US plans for war with China. In an internal memo sent to all members of the Air Mobility Command, Gen. Mike Minihan told members in his command to begin training for a war with China, writing, “My gut tells me we will fight in 2025.”

He called for building “a fortified, ready, integrated, and agile Joint Force Maneuver Team ready to fight and win inside the first island chain,” referring to Taiwan, Japan, and other islands off the coast of China.

Implying that large numbers of his command will die in such a war, Minihan instructed them to “consider their personal affairs and whether a visit should be scheduled with their servicing base legal office to ensure they are legally ready and prepared.”

As the war with Russia in Europe and the US conflict with China in the Pacific rapidly escalates, warnings are emerging within the US military over the immense dangers presented by the situation.

In a report published last week entitled, “Avoiding a Long War U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict,” the RAND corporation, a Pentagon-sponsored think-tank, warned that:

The extent of NATO allies’ indirect involvement in the war is breath-taking in scope. Support includes tens of billions of dollars’ worth of weapons and other aid given to Ukraine, tactical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support to the Ukrainian military, billions of dollars monthly in direct budgetary support to Kyiv, and painful economic sanctions imposed on Russia.

The report makes it clear that the achievement of Ukraine's stated objectives in the war—the retaking of Crimea—would massively increase the risk of a nuclear conflict between Russia and the US:

If Ukraine does push beyond the pre-February 2022 line of control and manages to retake areas that Russia has occupied since 2014 (particularly Crimea, where the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based), the risks of escalation—either nuclear use or an attack on NATO—will spike.

Neither the remarks of Bauer and Nuland nor the Rand report cited above have been reported on the front pages of any major US newspapers, or cited on the evening news. While US and NATO officials are openly talking about a direct conflict with Russia and China, the public is not being notified about the extraordinarily dangerous and reckless escalation of the war that is taking place.

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