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## ***NATO declares “Ukraine will become a member:” A prelude to direct NATO-Russia war***



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, second left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, talk during their meeting in Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday, April 20, 2023. (Ukrainian Presidential Press Office via AP) [AP Photo]

On Thursday, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg traveled to Kiev to declare that “Ukraine’s rightful place is in NATO.” The next day, speaking at a meeting of the Ukraine Contact Group at Ramstein Air Base, he asserted, “All NATO Allies have agreed that Ukraine will become a member.”

Stoltenberg pledged to achieve Ukraine’s “transition from Soviet-era equipment and doctrines to NATO standards and ensure full interoperability with the alliance... NATO stands with you today, tomorrow and for as long as it takes.”

For NATO to publicly assert its intention to form a military alliance with Ukraine—currently at war with Russia—is to pledge the world’s most powerful military alliance to

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the accomplishment of Ukraine's war aims, which involve attacking and conquering Russian territory. And the statement that NATO will be involved "for as long as it takes," means, translated into the language of the military, no matter how many people will be killed.

Stoltenberg, an unelected military official, effectively pledged NATO to go to war with Russia, a nuclear-armed power, without bothering to inform or ask the public, which is overwhelmingly opposed to the further escalation of the war.

These statements can only mean that NATO is preparing to turn its involvement in the war, which up to this point has largely had a de facto character, into a direct intervention, involving the potential deployment of US and NATO combat troops to Ukraine.

They provide the pseudo-legal basis for the deployment of US military forces directly against Russia.

Stoltenberg's statements come after the release of leaked Pentagon documents showing that Ukraine's military is in a far worse position than indicated by media reports. Under conditions in which US military officials have pledged to "liberate the occupied areas" of Ukraine, it is becoming clear that the accomplishment of the US goals in Ukraine is not possible outside of direct NATO involvement.

Under conditions in which the achievement of the aims set out by Ukraine's vaunted counteroffensive will require the deployment of air and ground forces, Stoltenberg's statements remove even the most minimal verbal limitations on US military intervention in the war.

This takes place under conditions in which the *New York Times* and *Politico* have reported moves to deploy tens or even hundreds of thousands of troops to NATO's borders with Russia, which has doubled in size with the accession of Finland into the alliance.

Stoltenberg's assertion upends one of the central lies used by the US and its allies to justify the war, namely the claim that the war had nothing to do with NATO expansion.

In an essay published in February 2022, former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul asserted that claims that the US and NATO were seeking the entry of Ukraine into NATO were merely inventions by the Russian government.

McFaul declared that "Putin's casus belli is his own invention," asserting that "Putin has fabricated this crisis about NATO expansion to undermine Ukrainian democracy even more directly."

These lies were repeated by the US media over and over again in early 2022. In an article entitled "NATO Won't Let Ukraine Join Soon. Here's Why." The *Times* stated, "Current

and former American and European officials said Mr. Putin was raising the NATO issue to lay the rhetorical groundwork for an invasion, even if it had little basis in reality.”

The efforts to deny the drive to expand NATO, in an attempt to portray the war as an “unprovoked invasion,” went hand-in-hand with US claims that NATO was not a party to the conflict.

In May 2022, White House Spokesperson Jen Psaki told a news conference, “It is not a proxy war... This is a war between Russia and Ukraine. NATO is not involved.”

Stoltenberg’s declaration has blown apart all of these lies, which were used to deceive the American public in order to embroil the United States in a war to reconquer Crimea that had been years in the making.

Stoltenberg’s remarks confirm the assertion by Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov in January of this year that Ukraine is a “member of NATO de facto.”

“It means that Ukraine as a country, and the armed forces of Ukraine, or our sector of security and defense became the member of NATO de facto, not de jure, because we have the weaponry, because we have the interoperability level of the communication with our partners”

The interviewer replied to Reznikov by saying, “Well, that’s a controversial statement. You’re saying that Ukraine is de facto a NATO member.”

To this, Reznikov replied, “Why controversial? It’s true. It’s a fact.”

Reznikov’s assertion is indeed a “fact,” and is only “controversial” because the United States government and media have been lying about this “fact” for over a year.

The war in Ukraine, justified to the public with one hollow lie after another, is rapidly escalating into a global conflict, threatening full-scale war between the US and Russia. No matter the number of dead, no matter what the social cost, the United States is committed to the escalation of this war in a desperate effort to shore up its global hegemony.

The spiraling conflict threatens the first war between two nuclear-armed powers in history, putting the survival of all mankind into question.

This war must be stopped! On Sunday, April 30, the International Committee of the Fourth International, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality and the *World Socialist Web Site* will hold an on-line global rally to celebrate May Day 2023.

This meeting will develop the fight for the unity of the working class in opposition to the war. We urge all workers and young people seeking to take forward the struggle against war to attend and build May Day 2023!

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