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British government prepares to send troops into the war against Russia



British soldiers attend a military exercise 'Iron Sword 2014' near Vilnius, Lithuania. (AP Photo/Mindaugas Kulbis, File)

On Saturday, British Defense Minister Grant Shapps raised the prospect of deploying UK troops directly into Ukraine, nominally to serve as trainers for Ukrainian forces.

“Particularly in the west of the country, I think the opportunity now is to bring more things ‘in country,’” he told *The Telegraph*.

“I think there will be a move to get more training and production in the country,” Shapps added. He also raised the prospect of the direct involvement of the Royal Navy in combat operations against Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, declaring, “Britain is a naval nation so we can help.”

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak effectively confirmed Shapps's assertions, saying, "What the defence secretary was saying was that it might well be possible one day in the future for us to do some of that training in Ukraine."

A warning must be made: If plans to deploy NATO troops to Ukraine are being publicly discussed, it is because the decision has already been made, by a political and military cabal working in secret. They might initially be termed "advisers," "consultants," or "guards," but the strategy is obvious: British "advisers" and "trainers" will be killed in Ukraine, and the Sunak government will use this fact as a pretext for further escalation.

The US-NATO war against Russia is being waged without public support. The NATO governments are engaged in a conspiracy to escalate the conflict behind the backs of the population. Publicly, they declare that they are not at war with Russia and that they intend to strictly limit their involvement in the conflict. Privately, they are contriving to escalate the conflict to a full-scale war between nuclear-armed powers.

Time and time again, the NATO governments have categorically asserted that there are "red lines" they will not cross, and then proceeded to cross them. First it was sending long-range missiles. Then tanks. Then advanced fighter jets. Each time, the public was categorically told these actions would not be done, only to be informed months later that the NATO governments were carrying them out.

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Just two weeks ago, the *World Socialist Web Site* asked, "Now that NATO weapons are being used for strikes inside Russia, how much more room does the United States have to escalate? The next step is the deployment of US and NATO troops."

The statements by Shapps and Sunak followed an article in *Foreign Affairs* last month titled, "Why America Should Send Military Advisers to Ukraine," which declared that "Washington should, therefore, lift the strict restrictions on the number of US government personnel allowed in Ukraine and begin stationing military advisers within the country and across its defense apparatus."

Hundreds of active-duty NATO troops are already in Ukraine, along with thousands of ex-NATO military members serving as mercenaries. In November, the Pentagon confirmed

that “small teams” of active-duty military personnel are in a “variety of locations” in the country. Leaked Pentagon documents from earlier this year show that nearly 100 NATO special forces, including 50 from the UK, plus 100 other US government staff are in Ukraine.

NATO is planning not only to increase the troop presence inside Ukraine, but also for the direct involvement of NATO troops in a shooting war against Russia.

This reality arises not just from the statements of Shapps or Sunak, but from the military logic of the situation. The US and NATO have staked their credibility on the outcome of the war in Ukraine. In January, US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley stated that the goals of the United States are to “liberate Russian-occupied Ukraine” and “liberate the occupied areas.” Last April, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said, “We want to see Russia weakened.” That same month, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Ben Hodges asserted that the goal of NATO in the conflict is “breaking the back” of Russia.

The NATO powers have failed in all of these aims. The Ukrainian offensive, built up for months in the US media as a decisive turning point in the war akin to the invasion of Normandy during World War II, has produced a bloody disaster. In an article entitled “Ukraine Faces a Long War. A Change of Course Is Needed,” the *Economist* wrote, “The counter-offensive... is not working... Ukraine has liberated less than 0.25% of the territory that Russia occupied in June. The 1,000-km front line has barely shifted... Ukraine’s soldiers are exhausted; many of its finest have been killed. Despite conscription, it lacks the manpower to sustain a permanent large-scale counter-offensive. It needs to husband resources, and to change the game.”

With Ukraine running out of cannon fodder in the conflict with Russia, the only way to “change the game” is for NATO forces, up to now providing the weapons, intelligence, logistics, and command structures for the Ukrainian army, to intervene directly in the conflict.

The open talk of sending troops to Ukraine followed speeches at the United Nations last month by US President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, all condemning any peaceful settlement of the war. Biden declared, “Russia’s price for peace is Ukraine’s capitulation, Ukraine’s territory, and Ukraine’s children.”

This was followed by Zelensky’s appearance at the Canadian Parliament, in which all of Canada’s MPs, as well as ambassadors from leading NATO countries, took part in a standing ovation for a 98-year-old Ukrainian Nazi war criminal.

The same week, the US confirmed that Abrams battle tanks had already arrived in Ukraine, and US news reports revealed that the White House had already agreed to send ATACMS long-range missiles to Ukraine. Just two days after Biden spoke, Ukraine, using NATO intelligence and NATO weapons, carried out a strike on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet that led to the deaths of dozens of high-ranking military personnel.

The First and Second World Wars killed tens of millions of people in Europe. Entire generations of young people were wiped out on the battlefields. Now, the European governments, working alongside Washington, are conspiring to inflame a new world war that threatens to kill tens of millions more.

The working class in Britain, Europe, the United States and throughout the world cannot accept this disaster. Workers in the UK should demand an end to the conspiracy to send UK troops into Ukraine, carried out by a hated government that is carrying out a war on the working class at home. In all the NATO countries, the escalation of war abroad is connected to an assault on wages, social program and democratic rights.

The growing social movement in the working class must take up the struggle against war. The demands of workers around the world must be linked with the effort to end the war as part of a global struggle for socialism.

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