

## I. International

# Biden Has Marched Us to World War III

by Carl Osgood

May 31—The Biden Administration, along with its NATO allies—emphatically with London—is playing a nuclear chicken game with Russia, one that could result in thermonuclear World War III and the end of human civilization. The recent, reported drone attacks, numbering perhaps as many as five as of this writing, on Russia’s early warning radar system, are only the latest manifestation of a NATO drive for war with Russia that dates back at least to 2014. That drive is characterized by the U.S./NATO refusal to acknowledge that Russia has any national interests that they must respect.

President Joe Biden effectively set the countdown towards World War III in motion in December 2021, more than ten weeks before President Vladimir Putin ordered the beginning of Russia’s “special military operation” in Ukraine. Biden declared then that he didn’t care about Moscow’s red lines, telling reporters outside the White House on Dec. 3, 2021:

We’re aware of Russia’s actions for a long time and my expectation is we’re going to have a long discussion with Putin. I don’t accept anybody’s red lines.

Earlier that same day, Biden promised to make things difficult for Putin should he decide to invade:

And what I am doing is putting together—what I believe to be—will be the most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. Putin to go ahead and do, what people are worried he may do. But that’s in play right now.

President Putin at that time had laid out what those Russian redlines were, in remarks over the preceding two weeks, pointing in particular to: NATO expansion; the placement of anti-missile defense

installations in Poland and Romania, using launchers that can also be used to launch Tomahawk cruise missiles; and the “markedly confrontational stance” that NATO had adopted towards Russia. Putin said on Nov. 18, 2021:

Of course, we will provide a proper response to NATO’s military activity along Russia’s borders; but, most importantly, Brussels must un-



CC/ Takomabibelot

*Daniel Ellsberg, author of The Pentagon Papers (1971), warned about U.S. nuclear first-strike policy in his 2017 book, The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear Weapons Planner.*

derstand that alleviating military-political tensions is not only in Russia’s interest, but also in the interest of Europe and the world in general.

### America’s Nuclear Doctrine Is ‘First Strike’

The reality is that the United States has always had a “first strike” nuclear doctrine, going back to Harry Truman and continuing to this day. The late Daniel Ellsberg documented that history in his 2017 book, *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear Weapons Planner*. Ellsberg wrote in the Introduction:

The basic elements of American readiness for

nuclear war remain today what they were almost sixty years ago: Thousands of nuclear weapons remain on hair-trigger alert, aimed mainly at Russian military targets including command and control, many in or near cities. The declared official rationale for such a system has always been primarily the supposed need to deter—or if necessary, respond to—an aggressive Russian nuclear first strike against the United States. That widely believed public rationale is a deliberate deception. Deterring a surprise Soviet nuclear attack—or responding to such an attack—has never been the only, or even the primary purpose of our nuclear plans and preparations.

Instead, the structure and posture of U.S. nuclear forces—

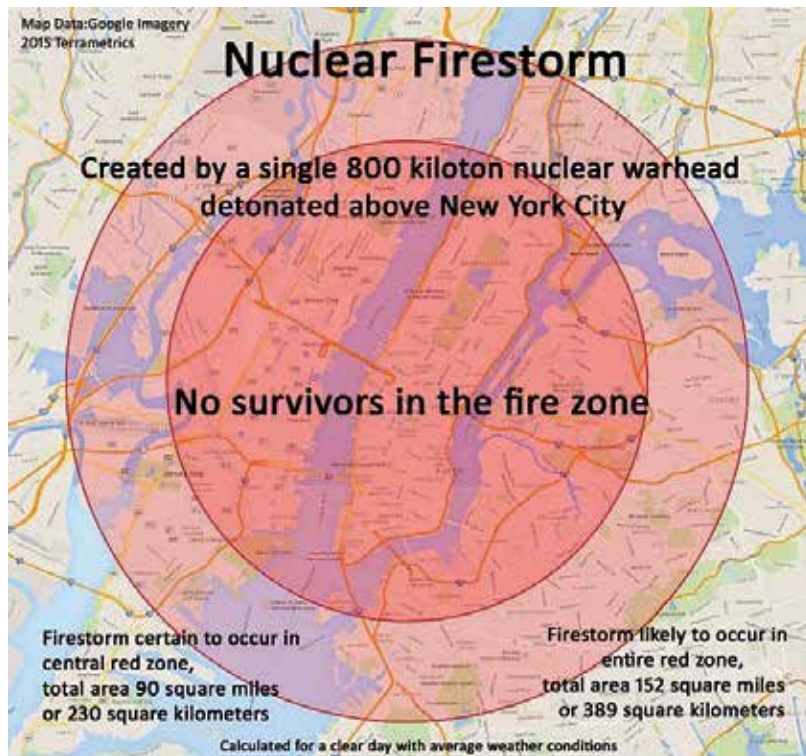
has always been shaped by the requirements of quite different purposes: To attempt to limit the damage to the United States from Soviet or Russian *retaliation* to a U.S. *first strike* against the USSR or Russia. This capability is, in particular, intended to strengthen the credibility of U.S. threats to initiate limited nuclear attacks, or escalate them—U.S. threats of “first use”—to prevail in regional, initially non-nuclear conflicts involving Soviet or Russian forces or their allies.

The required U.S. strategic capabilities have always been for a first-strike force: Not, under any president, for a U.S. surprise attack, unprovoked or “a bolt out of the blue”; but not, either, with an aim of striking “second” under any circumstances, if that can be avoided by pre-emption. Though officially denied, preemptive “launch on warning” (LOW)—either on tactical warning of an incoming attack, or strategic warning that nuclear escalation is probably impending—has always been at the heart of our strategic alert.

Ellsberg notes that “extended deterrence”—that is, the policy of extending the protection of nuclear deterrence to U.S. allies such as Japan, or to NATO allies in Europe—has been the basis of every U.S.

administration’s rejection of a declaratory “no-first-use” nuclear policy. Extended deterrence—

rests on our preparedness and our frequently reiterated readiness to carry out threats of first use (initiation of limited nuclear attacks with short-range tactical weapons); and/or, implicitly, to carry out a disarming first strike on the homeland of the USSR or Russia, mostly with long-range strategic weapons, in response to large non-nuclear attacks by its conventional forces....



Map of the effects on New York City of the detonation of a single nuclear warhead. Courtesy of Steven Starr

Even when an American president wanted, at least nominally, to adopt a “no-first-use” policy, he was forced to go along with the existing doctrine. Ellsberg wrote that Barak Obama, in his administration’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review,

was continuing a policy of threatening possible American initiation of nuclear war, that has, outside public awareness, characterized every American administration since Truman’s.

This was true in the Trump Administration and remains the case with the current Biden Administration.

## The October 2022 Submarine Threat

EIR, in a [report](#) in its Dec. 23, 2022 issue, documented the development of the U.S. nuclear first strike doctrine and the posturing of U.S. forces for nuclear warfighting since the 2001–2002 period. In summary, this development includes: the theory of preventive war; American withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty during the George W. Bush Administration; the rejection of a “no-first use” policy by both the Obama and Biden administrations; and, among other things, technical measures to improve the target-kill probability of U.S. nuclear warheads.

All of this points to a doctrinal belief that a nuclear war can be fought and won—in contradiction to the statement signed by the nuclear-armed members of the UN Security Council in January 2022—and that the United States is preparing its nuclear forces to do exactly that. Indeed, the surfacing of the ballistic missile submarine USS *West Virginia* in the Arabian Sea in October of that year was seen in Moscow as a message that the U.S. believes that it has the capability for a disarming first strike on Russia.

Though Moscow has not officially commented on the recent drone attacks on Russian early warning radars looking south toward the Arabian Sea/Indian Ocean, the view in Moscow likely remains the same since that time.

### Putin Responds to Attacks on Russian Territory

In remarks to reporters in Tashkent on May 28, in the aftermath of those drone attacks but without making reference to them, Putin issued a chilling warning as to where continued NATO escalation against Russia will lead. Ostensibly, Putin was responding to statements made by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and certain other European leaders, that there should be no restrictions placed on the Kiev regime’s use of Western-supplied long range strike weapons to attack targets inside Russia. The Russian President said:

So, these officials from NATO countries, especially the ones based in Europe, particularly in



Open-source image

*The early-warning radar station at Armavir, Russia, following an overnight attack May 22–23—the first of a series over that week—by Ukrainian rockets reliant on NATO control.*

small European countries, should be fully aware of what is at stake. They should keep in mind that theirs are small and densely populated countries, which is a factor to reckon with before they start talking about striking deep into the Russian territory.

Putin noted that the focus has been on the Russian offensive in the Kharkiv region of northeastern Ukraine; he reminded the press that six months ago or so, he had warned that if drone and rocket attacks against civilians in Russia’s Belgorod region did not stop, Russia would have to move to create a security zone inside Ukraine, to put a stop to those attacks. Now, he commented,

No one is talking about [the issue of] shelling Belgorod or other adjacent territories. The only thing they are talking about is Russia opening a new front and attacking Kharkiv. Not a word. Why is that? They did it with their own hands. Well, let them reap the fruits of their ingenuity. The same thing can happen in case the long-range precision weapons which you asked about are used.

More broadly, this unending escalation can lead to serious consequences. If Europe were to face those serious consequences, what will the United States do, considering our strategic arms parity? It is hard to tell.

## Russian Warnings

Putin's comments in Tashkent were not the first time Moscow had warned the West, that Russia would be forced to respond to escalations against its security. On Dec. 9, 2022 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian President commented that Russia was adopting policies that the United States had long claimed it had a right to adopt, regarding its nuclear posture:

The United States has this theory of a preventive strike. This is the first point. Now the second point. They [the United States] are developing a system for a disarming strike. What does that mean? It means striking at control centers with modern high-tech weapons to destroy the opponent's ability to counterattack, and so on....

There were plans to deliver a preventive disarming strike with hypersonic weapons. The United States does not have these weapons, but we do. Regarding a disarming strike, perhaps we should think about using the achievements of our U.S. partners and their ideas about how to ensure their own security. We are just thinking about this. No one was shy about discussing it out loud in the past.... The United States has a theory and even practice. They have the concept of a preventive strike in their strategy and other policy documents. We do not. Our strategy talks about a retaliatory strike....

But if a potential adversary believes it is possible to use the preventive strike theory, while we do not, this still makes us think about the threat that such ideas in the sphere of other countries' defense pose to us.

Near the end of his annual address to the Federal Assembly on Feb. 21, 2023, Putin announced that Russia would be suspending its participation in New START, the treaty which limits the numbers of U.S. and Russian strategic warheads and which expires in 2026 with little prospect for its replacement. He put the Russian decision in the context of U.S./NATO demands that Russia adhere to everything it has agreed to, including New START, while they will do whatever they want, including seeking the strategic defeat of Russia. Putin also cited the matter of the British and French strategic arsenals, which are not included in any arms control treaty, but must nonetheless be accounted for in Russian strategic policy:

We are aware of the fact that certain types of U.S.

nuclear weapons are reaching the end of their service life. In this regard, we know for certain that some politicians in Washington are already pondering live nuclear tests, especially since the United States is developing innovative nuclear weapons. There is information to that effect.

Given these circumstances, the Defense Ministry and Rosatom must make everything ready for Russia to conduct nuclear tests. We will not be the first to proceed with these tests, but if the United States goes ahead with them, we will as well. No one should harbor dangerous illusions that global strategic parity can be disrupted.

Today, the United States and its NATO client states are still dreaming of inflicting "a strategic defeat" on Russia, and are ready to carry on with their policy of deterring our country "to the last Ukrainian." At the same time, the West is balancing on the dangerous edge of a direct military confrontation between nuclear powers, which could have catastrophic consequences.

TASS, in various stories, quoted further from the Foreign Ministry transcript of Lavrov's remarks:

We are especially concerned that the three Western nuclear powers are among the main sponsors of the criminal Kyiv regime and the main organizers of various provocations. This could create serious strategic risks and increase the level of nuclear threat.... We are convinced that to prevent further degradation of the world situation, maintain durable stability, and create a realistic disarmament, all countries should pool their efforts to upgrade the international security system relying on the principles of multilateralism, equality and indivisibility. This is the only way of reducing interstate conflicts and ensuring real progress in arms control.

This is definitely no comprehensive account of Russian warnings, but it is indicative of the potential nuclear fire that Western policy elites are playing with.

To be sure, President Biden did not invent the narrative that President Putin is "bluffing" or making "empty" nuclear threats. That comes out of imperial think-tanks like London's Chatham House and the Atlantic Council, and is repeated on an almost daily basis, particularly by political officials in Poland, the Baltic states and northern Europe. It is what makes playing a game of chicken with a nuclear power so dangerous.