

Alarming U.S. and NATO escalation in Ukraine means the world faces a situation of unprecedented danger, as the war drags on there with no end in sight. There is minimal awareness and almost no public discussion of the incredible risks being taken by Western governments, even as the threat of nuclear war is growing. It is urgent that those of us who understand the stakes raise our voices to demand an end to this game of chicken and the start of a serious effort to negotiate peace. Such a peace can offer Ukraine the only way out of its present predicament, which increasingly threatens its future as a nation.

On May 31st, the Biden Administration took the unprecedented step of authorizing what are claimed to be “limited” strikes inside Russia using U.S. weapons, satellite technology, and quite possibly U.S. advisors on the ground. Under international law, this incredibly reckless move may result in our being deemed directly at war with the largest nuclear armed power on Earth.

No U.S. president has EVER authorized strikes with U.S. weapons inside a country possessing nuclear armaments. Not at the height of the Cold War. Not during the Cuban Missile Crisis, a faceoff that brought us close to total catastrophe. Never.

Even if the Biden administration hangs on by the barest legal thread to the argument that we are NOT at war with Russia (and Russia chooses to concur), the slightest targeting slip up, a misinterpretation of instructions, a rogue operator on the ground, could lead to an all-out nuclear exchange, incinerating population centers, spreading radioactive fallout, and starving millions or billions of survivors. It is completely plausible that such an event would cause the extinction of our species.

As Biden authorized this escalation, other voices in the U.S. and Europe were calling for even more provocative moves such as French “boots on the ground.” Western leaders are panicked at the undeniable fact that Ukraine is losing the war. But if the only response to this reality is to keep escalating, how can a wider war possibly be avoided? We hear over and over that “Russia must be stopped,” with no consideration given to the fact that Russia has come nowhere near attacking the U.S. on its own soil and is demonstrably motivated by regional security concerns. Disturbingly, there is no Congressional debate about the grave dangers of striking inside Russia with U.S. weapons, even though Congress is the one body with the Constitutional right to declare war.

The point must be emphasized: no amount of military “assistance” is going to be genuinely helpful to the people of Ukraine. Every day that the war continues brings more death, suffering, and economic woe to this deeply divided country, riven by civil war for eight years before Russia's invasion. Recent government efforts to draft more and younger men are proving highly unpopular. After more than two years of this bloodbath, we can clearly see that our own government has promoted and prolonged the carnage for its own geostrategic purposes. The aim was always “weakening Russia,” not upholding Ukrainian interests.

All this is happening at the same time people across the planet are rising up in outrage at the cruelty of Israel's war on Gaza in which the U.S. is not only complicit but acts as partner. We must sustain that righteous movement while acting with full knowledge that the same dominance-obsessed “Western” empire that produces and attempts to justify genocide in Gaza is manufacturing acquiescence in what could turn out to be humanity's final conflict—a nuclear one. We must raise our voices to prioritize *everyone's* survival.

Regarding Ukraine, our task is to make peace. Only a ceasefire and robust diplomatic initiatives that include a comprehensive security framework for all of Europe (Russia included) will set the Doomsday clock back. Peace will enable Ukrainians to rebuild, allow the U.S. and European countries to devote precious resources to fulfilling human needs, and give everyone the breathing room we need to keep fighting for justice all over the world.