

Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited. Escalations... The U.S., Canada, and NATO Provoking World War III

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"The biggest risk for nuclear war isn't that either side will knowingly choose to enter into one, but that one will be set off by miscalculation, miscommunication or technical malfunction in the chaos and confusion of soaring tensions, as nearly happened numerous times during the last cold war. The higher tensions get, the more likely such an incident becomes, and the more hair-trigger everyone's nuclear systems will be." – Caitlin Johnstone [1]

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On Thursday June 13, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Italy, Volodymyr Zelensky and Joe Biden signed a landmark 10-year security deal supplying Ukraine with a range of military aid and training intended to protect the former Soviet republic from ongoing Russian attacks. The G7 in a separate deal also agreed to a \$50 billion loan based on frozen Russian funds. [2]

Now, Zelensky, who still acts as the democratic president of Ukraine, even though his [five year term expired](#) recently, is now setting up a peace summit in Switzerland intended to move toward a "lasting peace" and draw up a 'roadmap' on how to get both sides involved in the talks. Russia was not invited to participate. [3]

Russia is making [substantial gains in Ukraine](#). Ukraine is running out of troops and are now [allowing prison convicts](#) to enter the battle on the front-lines. Is the U.S. admitting the

situation is not going to their liking and preparing to revisit genuine negotiations with this most potent military force that is Russia's?

Apparently not. In fact, the U.S. is doubling down on their war-stand. Late last month, for the first time since the Russian intervention in 2022, it was revealed that President Biden finally gave Ukraine permission to use U.S. supplied weapons to strike targets inside Russia. A provocative move that caused the Russian President to say, "This constant escalation can lead to serious consequences." [4]

Dmitry Medvedev, the former Russian president and current chair of Russia's security council, called the decision by Biden "a serious escalation of the conflict." He also warned that it would be a crucial mistake to assume Russia would not use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine. He also spoke of the potential to use strategic nuclear weapons against hostile countries.[5]

"This is, alas, neither intimidation nor bluffing," he said.[6]

Russia is countering by targetting the American strategic reconnaissance UAV RQ-4 Global Hawk operating in the Black Sea. These together with NATO AWACS aircraft help reconnaissance for guiding missiles aimed at Crimea and Zaporozhye in defense of Ukraine.[7]

On June 6, Western world leaders arrived in Normandy to salute the soldiers who put their lives on the line to secure victory over the Nazis - the victory which supposedly turned the tide on World War II. Mention was made of the Russians. But not of their own heroic efforts on the Eastern Front, which served to diminish Nazi forces in the West. The Russians were portrayed predominantly as the bad guys of our times. Ukraine leader Zelensky joined the ceremony. Russian leader Vladimir Putin did not.[8]

This episode of the Global Research News Hour spotlights the clear and present threat on the world stage and attempt to prepare listeners for what is coming in spite of the fake news and fake history put forward by the chicken-hawks of the hour.

In our first half hour, we speak with Canadian author and activist Yves Engler about the role of Canada in participating, possibly even fuelling the Russophobic bent of our NATO policy. Engler also talks about Prime Minister Trudeau's participation in the D-Day event last week, and on his recent book tour across the West of Canada.

In our second half hour, we get to hear from former CIA analyst Larry Johnson. He recently returned from the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. He will talk about the state of affairs between Russia and NATO. He will also discuss BRICS+, and the blocking of military analyst and past guest Scott Ritter from leaving the United States by taking his passport.

Yves Engler is one of Canada's foremost Canadian foreign policy critics and dissidents. He is the author of ten books on Canadian foreign policy including [Canada's Long Fight Against Democracy \(with Owen Schalk\) \(2024\)](#) and [Stand on Guard for Whom?: A People's History of the Canadian Military \(2021\)](#). His articles have appeared at [globalresearch.ca](#), [rabble.ca](#), [canadiandimension.com](#), and on his own site [yvesengler.com](#).

Yves Engler's June book tour can be found [here](#).

Larry C. Johnson is a veteran of the CIA and the State Department's Office of Counter Terrorism. He is the founder and managing partner of BERG Associates, which was established in 1998. Larry provided training to the US Military's Special Operations community for 24 years. He has been vilified by the right and the left, which means he must be doing something right. You can also follow him on telegram (t.me/sonar https://t.me/sonar_21, Patreon and Substack <https://larrycjohnson.substack.com>)

(Global Research News Hour Episode 436)

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Transcript of Larry Johnson, June 12, 2024.

Global Research: So there have been a number of escalations from the side of NATO, and Russia has responded in similar terms. Just recently, a group of Russian ships, including a nuclear-powered submarine, arrived in Cuba earlier today.

What are your thoughts about these recent trends towards escalation?

Larry Johnson: A lot of times people are reading into events such as the arrival of the Russian ships, perhaps a little more than is there. And what I mean by that, you know, that trip was planned out, you know, some time ago. They just didn't decide last week, hey, we're going to Cuba, we're going to show those Americans.

So part of it is the West reading into it and trying to actually portray a threat that's not there. For example, they said, oh, the Russian submarine is off the coast of Miami. Well, yeah, there's been a Russian submarine off the coast of the United States, the East Coast, West Coast, last 50 years, 60 years.

So, you know, we need to sort of step back from that kind of alarmism. Now, that said, you're absolutely right about the rhetoric of the West in terms of these threats that they're going to ramp up and basically encouraging Ukraine to strike deeper into Russia. Although, you know, Biden said they put some restraints on it, they can only hit around Belgorod.

Well, the reality is Ukraine has been attacking the people, the civilians in Belgorod for more than a year. So that's not like that's new. I think the real issue would be whether they were going to be able to launch any kind of effective attacks deeper inside Russia.

And to that extent, the Russians definitely put the world on notice, both Vladimir Putin, Sergei Lavrov, and the deputy foreign minister, Sergei Rybkov, all have said very, very clearly that the escalation of the West is foolish, it will be met with force, and that Russia will do anything that it needs to do to protect itself. And those in the West that think that Putin is bluffing or he's weak are making a fatal mistake, or at least potentially fatal if they keep it up. Because I don't think, you know, Russia's not trying to escalate this into a massive nuclear war.

But, and, you know, the reality is the West is weak. The West doesn't have the military capability to carry through on these threats. We're deluding ourselves.

I mean, for goodness sake, you've got the British army can barely maintain a strength of 70,000, which is nothing. You know, that's, no, the Russians have killed that many Ukrainians in the last two months. And so, you know, the British don't have anything to offer, neither do the French.

The French have very limited military capability. The U.S. army total for worldwide 452,000 is the last number I saw. Compare that with Russia.

Russia's got 1.3 million troops. So three times the size of what the United States is fielding. But go ahead.

GR: Yeah. I was wondering if, I mean, you've heard from what the politicians are saying, but I mean, you also have contacts within the military. And I'm just wondering, is there a significant difference in the way they relate the actions on the ground versus the way the politicians are? Because I don't know, it seems like the military tend to have a more, you know, practical and an understanding of what's going on.

LJ: No, I'd say they're equally delusional. The ones that have their heads screwed on straight, that recognize how dangerous this escalation is, are generally sidelined. They're not the voices that are listened to.

They're shunted aside. So what, you know, you've got really the blind leading the blind in this case. They keep insisting that they can, you know, bully Russia, and they can't.

You know, Russia has, you know, has done one thing that the United States has never done. And that it's defeated foreign powers that have invaded. I guess you could say, we didn't really defeat, we beat the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1812, 1815.

But that was because the peace agreement had already been signed. So other than that, you know, the United States has lived in a sheltered life, frankly, as have the Canadians, and never faced invading armies and losing millions of citizens to those invading armies. So, you know, you look at what Russia endured with first the invasion by Napoleon, 1812, then followed by the Crimea War with France and England attacking the Russians, which the Russians lost that, followed by World War I, where Russia faced again invasion from Germany.

And then World War II, another invasion from the Nazis, followed by the, you know, United States and Western intelligence launching covert action, covert wars against the Russians, starting, you know, the late 1949, 1950. And it's continued off and on over the last 50 years, 60 years. So, you know, it's something the Russians are, you know, they're accustomed to dealing with this.

And they and they take it seriously.

GR: Yeah. Yeah, I was wondering, could you get looking back at the recently in just in late May, Ukraine had struck the Russian missile in early warning sites, you know, it seemed like a natural target for the Ukrainians, I don't think, but I know it could be a target for the US.

But the US and NATO are technically not at war with Russia. So, how do you read the Russians? Or how do you think the Russians are reading this tactic?

LJ: Well, I think the reports of those attacks were more of a Ukrainian, a joint Ukrainian

Western intelligence, psychological operation, it was an information operation. Because number one, the Ukrainians really didn't have a weapon, like the ATACMS, that could reach that far.

So, reportedly, this was attacked by a drone. And yet, the picture, the only picture that was ever, ever shown, looks like it was

photo-shopped. Then that that advanced that radar in Voronezh, where it's located, there were lots of people around that could have, you know, put photos on social media, nothing showed up.

The second attack in Orsk, again, with a drone where the drone was, you know, shot down outside. So, this was, I mean, this was a dangerous move by Ukraine and the West. It's almost as if they're trying to provoke Russia into overreacting.

And Russia didn't. Because these strategic radars are designed, there are six of them, and they're designed to provide an early warning of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Ukrainians claim damage that I think has not been verified by any kind of overhead photography, or any other photographic evidence.

But nonetheless, it underscores that Russia is in a position to use tactical nuclear weapons. You know, and where could it use it, for example, if as the reports published yesterday, day before yesterday, that the F-16s are going to be deployed into Romania, and then will be used in Romania to launch attacks on Russian positions in Ukraine and in Russia. The Russians could very well take that out with a tactical nuke, it would be a nuke that would actually probably three times the size of what destroyed Hiroshima.

Now, they're only going to do that as a very last resort. But they're not going to sit back and let the United States build up a presence with weapons systems that have the capacity to carry missiles, nuclear tip missiles, that could strike inside Russia. They're not going to give the West the benefit of the doubt anymore.

GR: Well, if we are moving, it sounds like, I mean, we continue escalating, and I mean, we're moving closer and closer effectively to World War III. And I don't know if it's something that could break out accidentally or deliberately, but in your view, compared to where we are now, what additional steps have yet to be taken before it becomes official? What yet has to happen before either Russia or a NATO head threatens their opponent directly?

LJ: I think what we see before that happens is the first sign would be if Russia now starts shooting down U.S. Predators, their own in the Black Sea or U.S. surveillance aircraft, what aircraft is known as rivet joint. If they shoot those down, then that's a clear sign that, hey, this is going to be moving to the next level.

Similarly, if they decide to take out satellites, critical military, U.S. military satellites, that would be another move towards, take us closer to a step towards war. Here's the problem, Michael. The West does not have the military, the troop strength, or the reserves with weapon systems to pursue a war against Russia.

It simply doesn't. And NATO itself is particularly weak in this regard. We've already had Turkey signal that they're not going to participate in any kind of action towards Russia.

Well, that's critical for NATO because Turkey represents the second largest army in NATO

after the United States. So, there's a lot of this, you know, chest-thumping and tough talk and belligerent threats from the West. That reminds me a lot, you know, if you've ever been at a bar and there's some really drunk guy threatening to beat everybody up, but he can't even get out of his chair, can't even walk a straight line.

That's the situation we are with the United States and the European allies.

GR: Larry Johnston, just last week, you were in St. Petersburg in Russia.

You were participating in the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, right?

LJ: Right. Yeah.

GR: Did you speak to or hear from any senior government officials there?

LJ: Oh, yes.

Yeah. And I asked, you know, I asked directly about, well, I got indirectly from Alexander Dugin. So, Dugin is quite famous as a leading philosopher.

You know, he's been called Putin's brain. That's an unfair characterization. But Dugin is well plugged into the decision makers in Russia.

And, you know, we were sitting, I was sitting across the table from him and Maria Zakharova, the spokeswoman for the foreign ministry. And I asked specifically about the change in rhetoric, the change in tone that I was hearing from Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov and others. And it was confirmed that, yes, no, there's been a there's been a definite change.

I would liken it to that scene in the movie Network, where the anchor, in his total frustration and rage, encouraged the audience to open their windows and yell out, I'm mad as hell, I'm not going to take it anymore.

GR: The network.

LJ: Yeah, the network.

And that was that was sort of, I think that's where the Russians are right now.

GR: Wow.

LJ: But what's fascinating with, you know, the West completely stayed away from this International Economic Forum.

There were one hundred and thirty six countries represented. There were over twenty five thousand people. It was and it ran like a Swiss watch.

It was so well organized, so well put together, but attention to details. And what is a reminder that China, United States, excuse me, China, Russia, India, Brazil, South Africa, they're busy building an alternative financial system that is going to exclude the West. It's not going to be dependent upon the West and in the regard.

Already, and most people in the West don't pay attention to this. If you look at gross

domestic product measured in terms of personal purchasing parity, what they call PPP. And that and all that means is, hey, you take your money, you take your US dollars, you take your Canadian dollars, you go out on the economy.

How much are you going to pay for a hamburger? How much are you going to pay for a carton of eggs? How much are you going to pay for a car? What's it going to cost to go to a movie? What does it cost to buy a new iPhone or a new cell phone of some sort? OK, and when they measure it in terms of what you can buy with your local currency right now, the top four countries in order are China's number one, United States is number two, India is number three, and Russia is number four. So right off the top, the number one, number three, number four economies in the world measured in GDP have combined to oppose the United States. Germany and Japan have fallen behind and are continuing to fall behind and decline Russia.

So the West had better wake up because what was evident, Russia is not just flexing military muscle in Ukraine and working to destroy the Ukrainian military. Russia is building an economic alliance that is going to cover the global south.

It will be I think it will be the dominant economic power, really, for the remainder of the century. That's where it's headed.

GR: Well, yeah, I know that your your colleague, Scott Ritter, had planned to attend the same forum and...

LJ: right

GR: ...presentation, but he had his passport taken away...

LJ: Correct

GR: ...plane. So I was I mean, I wasn't able to get in touch with him myself, but maybe maybe you could say a few words about him and how the war is also coming at the risk of not only of the people in Ukraine or people on the battlefield, but also of American citizens, you know, certain American citizens losing their rights.

LJ: Yeah, this was a deliberate provocation by the Biden administration.

So they issued the Biden administration, State Department, Anthony Blinken's domain, issued a passport to Scott two years ago. Now, Scott has a criminal conviction in his past because of that criminal conviction. The two things are supposed to happen.

There's supposed to be an identifying marker in his passport to that effect. And he has to notify State Department 30 days, 28 days before he travels out of the country. Well, Scott has done that.

You know, he's travelled to Russia twice in the last two years prior to this. And each time he was notified State Department and the trip was allowed to go off without any problem. State apparently, for whatever reason, realized that the passport didn't have the proper marking that they, State Department, had screwed up.

They were the ones who made the mistake. And instead of acting like normal people, where you say, hey, Mr. Ritter, we made a mistake. We have to, we need to take your passport

back and reissue you a new one.

They made a big show of it because Scott was going to go to this international economic forum. And what was so stupid about it is if Scott had gone to that forum without this attack on him by the Biden administration, he would have gotten some coverage, but nothing like what he received as a consequence of that. It got, it got widespread news coverage, particularly outside the United States.

And that doesn't, you know, all it does is further reinforce the image of people outside the United States that we're a bully, that we don't respect the law, that we're all about force and coercion.

GR: And he got a chance to talk to the audience and to participate by video anyway, right?

LJ: Right. He did it.

It was, I don't know if it was over Zoom or Skype or whatever, but he was up at 3.30 in the morning because the session, as I recall, was started at 10.30 and in St. Petersburg, so a seven hour difference between where Scott lives and where the session took place. But I actually, I attended that session and saw him and he did a fine job.

GR: Yeah.

If there's one more question I'd like to ask you, I mean, while you were in St. Petersburg, there was most of the media attention in the United States and Canada was on the 80th anniversary of D-Day, just that last Thursday. And I mean, they were saluting the veterans for their service, but also they had this president, so-called President Zelensky, because, I mean, he didn't get the actual run in the last election, they canceled and so on.

LJ: Right.

GR: But he's currently serving as the president, being hosted. And Putin was, well, sorry, Zelensky was embraced by one of the veterans who hugged him. And, you know, so it was kind of odd, you know, seeing someone who put his life into fighting the Nazis, you know, treating this fellow who's working with the Nazis as a hero.

But what do you make of that? I mean, is that part of an attempt to actually rewrite history?

LJ: Well, the United States and France can try to pretend all they want. What happened in World War II was different than what they're claiming, that it was the West that triumphed over the Nazis, that Ukraine was somehow fighting, you know, in your own country, in Canada, you had people introduce that former Nazi member of the SS Waffen Battalion as fighting against the Soviets in World War II. Well, that was exactly right.

He was part of the Nazis. The Soviets were the ones who beat Nazi Germany, not the West. The West helped, but it was the Soviets, and particularly the Russians, who fought 80% of the German army during the course of that war, 80%.

And it was the Russians who suffered overwhelming casualties compared to the West. You know, in the United States, by contrast, the Russians lost 16 citizens for every 100 people in that war, whereas the United States lost a fraction, basically a 10th of a percent in the battle in Europe of all of its casualties compared to its population. So, you know, when you

compare 27 million to 450, or actually, in the European theater, it was like 225,000, because there was others that died in the Pacific.

So, not even a comparison, and it really was a low-class move by the United States. At least Macron had the grace to invite Putin, recognizing that, you know, that battle against Nazi Germany was, it was a joint effort by the United States, by Britain, by the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, but the ones who bore the brunt of the burden of the war in defeating the Nazi army was the Soviet Union, and to not even acknowledge that and pretend otherwise. And then, as you correctly note, here's Zelensky modern day embracing the Azov battalion, the right sector.

These guys are sporting Nazi tattoos, swastikas, SS, you know, the Toten, the death hat, and they embrace Mein Kampf. You know, they're Hitler aficionados, and that's who the West is aligning itself with. You know, that says volumes about the moral degeneracy that has taken hold in places like the United States.

GR: Well, Larry, I could see why you're disliked by some people, both on the left and the right, for your views, but I certainly do thank you for sharing so much of your analysis and experience with our listeners.

LJ: Hey, Michael, I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you for the courtesy.

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Notes:

1. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/brinkmanship-russia-keeps-escalating/5858995>
2. Danny Kemp (June 13, 2024), 'Biden, Zelensky sign 'historic' 10-year security deal', Agence France Press; <https://www.yahoo.com/news/biden-zelensky-sign-historic-10-205428872.html>
3. Jamey Keaten (June 10, 2024), 'About 90 countries to take part in Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit. Russia won't attend', Associated Press; <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2024-06-10/about-90-countries-to-take-part-in-swiss-hosted-ukraine-peace-summit-russia-wont-attend>
4. James Jordan and Harriet Morris (June 6, 2024), 'Putin warns that Russia could provide long-range weapons to others to strike Western targets', Associated Press News; <https://apnews.com/article/russia-putin-ukraine-e192904652221b29efdc88d0af23114e>
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6. *ibid*
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