

Let's be Clear: If World War III Happens It Will be the Result of Choices Made by the US Empire

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The commander of the US nuclear arsenal has stated unequivocally that the war in Ukraine is just a warmup exercise for a much larger conflict that's already in the mail.

Antiwar's [Dave DeCamp reports](#):

The commander that oversees US nuclear forces delivered an ominous warning at a naval conference last week by calling the war in Ukraine a "warmup" for the "big one" that is to come.

"This Ukraine crisis that we're in right now, this is just the warmup," said Navy Adm. Charles Richard, the commander of US Strategic command. "The big one is coming. And it isn't going to be very long before we're going to get tested in ways that we haven't been tested [in] a long time."

Richard's warning came after the US released its new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), [which reaffirms that the US doctrine allows for the first use of nuclear weapons](#). The review says that the purpose of the US nuclear arsenal is to "deter strategic attacks, assure allies and partners, and achieve US objectives if deterrence fails."

Not only does Richard appear to believe that a hot war between major world powers is a foregone conclusion, he [has also previously stated](#) that a nuclear war with Russia or China is now "a very real possibility."

The US empire really is threatening all life on Earth with potential nuclear apocalypse:

The US military commander who oversees nuclear forces said, "This Ukraine crisis that we're in right now, this is just the warmup"

"The big one is coming," he added <https://t.co/6c1iLEDOEk>

— Ben Norton (@BenjaminNorton) [November 7, 2022](#)

Again, this is not some armchair warrior opining from his desk at a corporate newspaper or DC think tank, this is the head of STRATCOM. Richard would be personally overseeing the very warfare he is talking about.

What I find most striking about remarks like these is how passive they always make it sound. Richard talks about “The Big One” like other people [talk about California earthquakes](#), as though a hot war with China would be some kind of natural disaster that just happened out of nowhere.

This type of rhetoric is becoming more and more common. Describing an Atomic Age world war as something that would **happen to** the US empire, rather than the direct result of concrete A-or-B decisions **made by** the empire, is [becoming its own genre](#) of foreign policy punditry.

This passive, oopsy-poopsy narrative overlay that’s placed atop the US empire’s militarism is nothing new. Back in 2017 [Fair.org’s Adam Johnson documented](#) the way western media are always describing the United States as “stumbling” into wars and getting “sucked in” to military interventions, like a cheating spouse making up bad excuses after getting caught:

This framing serves to flatter two sensibilities: one right and one vaguely left. It satisfies the right-wing nationalist idea that America only goes to war because it’s compelled to by forces outside of its own control; the reluctant warrior, the gentle giant who will only attack when provoked to do so. But it also plays to a nominally liberal, hipster notion that the US military is actually incompetent and boobish, and is generally bad at war-making.

This is expressed most clearly in the idea that the US is “drawn into” war despite its otherwise unwarlike intentions. “Will US Be Drawn Further Into Syrian Civil War?” asked **Fox News** ([4/7/17](#)). “How America Could Stumble Into War With Iran,” disclosed **The Atlantic** ([2/9/17](#)), “What It Would Take to Pull the US Into a War in Asia,” speculated **Quartz** ([4/29/17](#)). “Trump could easily get us sucked into Afghanistan again,” **Slate** predicted ([5/11/17](#)). The US is “stumbling into a wider war” in Syria, the **New York Times** editorial board ([5/2/15](#)) warned. “A Flexing Contest in Syria May Trap the US in an Endless Conflict,” **Vice News** ([6/19/17](#)) added.

Syria the Latest Case of US ‘Stumbling’ Into War - <https://t.co/uZV7Lu3VFf>
pic.twitter.com/FVPtSGeery

— FAIR (@FAIRmediawatch) [June 22, 2017](#)

So let’s get real clear about this here and now: if there is a hot war between the US and a major power, it will not be because that war was “stumbled into”. It will not be like an earthquake or other natural disaster. It will not be something that happens to or is inflicted upon the US empire while it just passively stands there in Bambi-eyed innocence.

It will be the result of specific choices made by the managers of empire. **It will be the**

result of the US choosing escalation over de-escalation, brinkmanship over detente — not just once but over and over again, while declining off-ramp after off-ramp. It will be the result of real material decisions made by real material people who live in real material houses while collecting real material paychecks to make the choices they are making.

Another thing that strikes me about comments like those made by Charles Richard is how freakish and insane it is that everyone doesn't respond to them with, "Okay, well, then let's change all of the things we are doing, because that's the worst thing that can possibly happen."

And make no mistake: that absolutely is an option. The option to turn away from the collision course with potentially the most horrific war of all time is available right now, and it will remain available for some time into the future. This isn't 1939 when war is already upon us; if anything it's more like the early 20th century precursors to World War I and all the stupid aggressions and entanglements which ultimately gave rise to both world wars.

One of the many ways our cultural fascination with World War II has made us stupid and crazy is that it has caused us to forget that it was the worst single event in human history. Even if a hot war with Russia and/or China didn't go nuclear, it would still unleash unspeakable horrors upon this Earth which would reverberate throughout our collective consciousness for generations.

That horror should be turned away from. And the time to start turning is now.

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[“Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War”](#)

by Michel Chossudovsky

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Michel Chossudovsky is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website www.globalresearch.ca. He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Reviews

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–**John McMurtry**, Professor of Philosophy, Guelph University

“In a world where engineered, pre-emptive, or more fashionably “humanitarian” wars of aggression have become the norm, this challenging book may be our final wake-up call.”

–**Denis Hallida**, Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations

Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world’s only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

–**Ellen Brown**, author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute

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