

US to send another \$1 billion in weapons to Ukraine

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US President Joe Biden will provide an additional \$1 billion in weapons shipments to Ukraine Wednesday, more than double the value of the military equipment that the US has sent to Ukraine since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war 20 days ago.

The weapons package, first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*, will be announced by Biden in a speech on Wednesday, following the address of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to the US Congress.

The new weapons package will include anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons. It will be funded from the \$13.6 billion allotted for Ukraine in the omnibus budget bill Biden signed Tuesday.

Over the weekend, White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the United States would also consider sending Ukraine anti-aircraft weapons.

Between 2014 and the start of this year, the US had provided \$2.5 billion in weapons to Ukraine.

The White House is also considering sending additional troops to Eastern Europe on top of the 15,000 that have been deployed there since the crisis began, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

In his address to the US Congress, Zelensky is expected to repeat calls for the United States to establish a “no-fly” zone in Ukraine, which would entail the US and NATO shooting down Russian aircraft. Ahead of Zelensky’s speech, the parliament of Estonia, a NATO member, demanded that NATO set up a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

Zelensky’s appearance is tightly choreographed with calls by members of Congress—including both Republicans and Democrats—for the US to implement actions Russia sees as tantamount to war.

Zelensky spoke to Canada’s parliament Tuesday, demanding, “Please close the sky, close the airspace... Please understand how important it is for us to close

our airspace from Russian missiles and Russian aircraft.”

In a preemptive response to Zelensky’s comments, White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said yesterday that Biden “continues to believe that a no-fly zone would be escalatory, could prompt a war with Russia.”

Also on Tuesday, the White House announced that Biden will travel to Brussels, Belgium to take part in the March 24 NATO summit in response to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Ahead of Zelensky’s speech, members of Congress are scrambling to propose new ways to escalate the conflict.

The US Senate Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution condemning Putin as a war criminal. Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer declared after the vote, “All of us in this chamber joined together, with Democrats and Republicans, to say that Vladimir Putin cannot escape accountability for the atrocities committed against the Ukrainian people.”

Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal and Republican Senator Marsha Blackburn are planning to introduce a resolution that would sanction all Russian banks. Blumenthal said of the proposed measure: “Putin would be unable to collect the revenue which is the lifeblood of his oil and gas sales,” and the move would keep other countries from doing business with Russia.

Blumenthal bragged that if his proposals were approved, they would disrupt Russian energy exports to China. He declared, “China could buy the oil, but they couldn’t pay for it.”

In addition to these measures, Zelensky has called on the United States and NATO to close international waterways to Russian ships, implementing an effective

blockade of the country—traditionally seen as a wartime measure.

The moves come against the backdrop of major NATO military drills near Russia's borders. This week, NATO began Cold Response 2022, a series of military exercises in Norway involving 40,000 NATO troops.

Meanwhile, demands for a no-fly zone are escalating in the media and political establishment. On Tuesday, Tom Enders, the former CEO of Airbus and the president of the German Council on Foreign Relations, demanded the US shoot down aircraft over Ukraine.

Enders dismissed the threat of nuclear escalation, saying, "Would Putin then escalate further and attack NATO countries in the east or the Baltic, even use nuclear weapons? This is still very unlikely, especially since the West would not be attacking Russian territory—only Russian aircraft, cruise missiles and missiles in Ukrainian airspace."

He concluded, "Establishing such a no-fly zone over western Ukraine is not just feasible, it is necessary. It is time for the West to expose Putin's nuclear threats for what they really are—a bluff to deter Western governments from military intervention."

The press is full of such demands for war with Russia, promoted with media-friendly phrases such as "no-fly zone," "humanitarian corridor" and "humanitarian airlift." Writing in the *Washington Post*, Joe Scarborough, son-in-law of the late US military strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski, declared that it is "time for NATO to stop being reactive to Putin's ever-changing definition of what constitutes an act of war... Biden should change the dynamic by employing his own disruptive tactics."

Scarborough concluded by demanding that the US create "humanitarian safe zones"—over which the United States and its allies could shoot down Russian aircraft.



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