

Ukraine war spirals out of control after US announces major arms shipment

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The day after the Biden administration announced a massive expansion of US arms shipments to Ukraine, including hundreds of drones, armored vehicles and helicopters, the war took a dangerous new turn, threatening a direct military clash between NATO and Russia.

The Russian warship *Moskva*, the flagship of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, sank. Ukraine claims that it struck the *Moskva* with anti-ship missiles. The Kremlin denies these claims.

The Russian defense ministry said the ship's crew of approximately 500 sailors was rescued, but Konstantin Zatulin, a senior Russian lawmaker, claimed that Russian sailors died in the attack.

Boasting about the sinking of the ship, Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovych said, "It's a hugely important military event and the biggest defeat of the Russian Navy since World War II." The sinking of the *Moskva* would be the largest warship sunk by tonnage since 1945.

Earlier, the US had announced both new military weapons deployments to Ukraine and a massive expansion of "intelligence sharing," with the *Wall Street Journal* writing on Tuesday that "the moves will enable Ukraine to target Moscow's forces in Donbas and Crimea."

It is unclear the extent to which this "intelligence sharing" may have played a role in the sinking of the *Moskva*.

Following the sinking of the warship, Russia claimed that Ukrainian helicopters carried out strikes on its territory on Thursday, attacking the border village Klimovo in the Bryansk Region and leaving seven people injured.

Also on Thursday, European Union officials declared that an embargo of Russian oil imports by EU countries

was in the works and would likely be adopted within a matter of weeks. The ban comes after a previously announced plan to halt the import of Russian coal.

Reports suggest that, following these developments, Russia has significantly escalated direct attacks on Kiev, with explosions and power outages reported across the city. "On the night of Friday, April 15, powerful explosions were heard in different parts of Kyiv. Electricity went out in a significant part of the Ukrainian capital," the Russian government-controlled daily *Izvestiia* wrote.

Further ratcheting up tensions, the Pentagon announced on Thursday that it would provide Ukraine with "300 Switchblade Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems; 500 Javelin missiles and thousands of other anti-armor systems; 200 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers; 100 Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles; 11 Mi-17 helicopters," as well as land mines.

According to the Pentagon, the US has now "committed more than \$3.2 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of the Biden Administration, including approximately \$2.6 billion since the beginning of Russia's unprovoked invasion on February 24."

The announcement of a renewed expansion of arms shipments comes just after the prime minister of Finland declared that the country would seek to join NATO within a matter of weeks. In response, Russian officials have threatened a major nuclear buildup.

"If Sweden and Finland join NATO, the length of the alliance's land borders with Russia will more than double," said Dimitri Medvedev, deputy chair of Russia's Security Council. "Naturally, these borders will have to be strengthened."

Medvedev warned that Russia could deploy

“Iskanders, hypersonics and ships with nuclear weapons” on its borders with NATO member states. Iskander missiles are capable of deploying nuclear weapons.

NATO, for its part, is already massively expanding its nuclear arsenal along its borders with Russia. Jessica Cox, director of the NATO nuclear policy directorate in Brussels, told Defense News that US NATO allies would undertake to use the “nuclear sharing mechanics” of the F-35 fighter, implying the widespread deployment of tactical nuclear weapons along NATO’s borders.

The escalation of the war follows last month’s NATO summit in which US President Joe Biden stated that Putin “cannot remain in power.”

Following the summit, Biden declared, “We must commit now to be in this fight for the long haul. We must remain unified today and tomorrow and the day after and for the years and decades to come.”

This week, Biden escalated this rhetoric against Russia yet again, declaring that the country was committing a “genocide” in Ukraine.

Amid spiraling inflation, and a raging pandemic, the Biden administration is using the war in Ukraine in a desperate effort to divert social tensions outwards and manufacture national unity on the basis of war.

The Biden administration is also seeking to use the war to impose a decisive military defeat on Russia, aiming to initiate regime change in the country in order to seize control of its vital natural resources, which the United States sees as critical for its domination of the global economy and preparations for military conflict with China.

The conflict, however, is rapidly spiraling out of control, raising the prospect of a direct clash between NATO and Russia and the first use of nuclear weapons since the Second World War—with consequences that are almost unfathomable.



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