

White House announces another \$800 million in military aid to Ukraine

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The White House announced on Thursday that it will be sending an additional \$800 million in military aid to Ukraine for its proxy war with Russia, which is now focused in the east of the country. The package includes heavy artillery, dozens of howitzers and 144,000 rounds of ammunition, as well as drones. President Joe Biden also announced another \$500 million in economic aid.

According to the *New York Times*, the military aid package “effectively will create five new Ukrainian artillery battalions, and includes more than 120 new drones built specifically for use by Ukraine’s forces.”

In announcing the new package, Biden said it would send an “unmistakable message” to Russian President Vladimir Putin. “He will never succeed in dominating and occupying all of Ukraine.”

The US president, visibly gripped by war fever, said, “Sometimes we will speak softly and carry a large Javelin, because we’re sending a lot of those.”

He boasted that the US had moved weapons into Ukraine at “record speed” over the past two months, and had provided “ten anti-armor systems for every one Russian tank that’s in Ukraine.” Biden threatened that the US had the capacity to keep up this level of military deliveries “for a long time.”

Biden also announced that the US has closed off its ports to Russian ships in a further escalation of the warfare by the NATO powers against Russia.

In response, the Kremlin on Thursday imposed sanctions on 29 high-ranking US officials and CEOs, including Vice-President Kamala Harris and Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg, who are now barred from entering the country.

The latest announcement of massive military aid for

Ukraine makes abundantly clear that the imperialist powers, with the US taking the lead, are doing everything they can to prolong the Ukraine war and escalate the conflict with Russia.

It came just one day after Russia demonstratively launched a test of the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile, which can carry nuclear weapons. Putin, who launched the war in a desperate bid to force the imperialist powers to the negotiating table over his demands for security guarantees—a strategy that has clearly failed—said the test was a warning to those who “try to threaten our country.”

The latest package brings the total US commitment of military aid to Ukraine just since the outbreak of the war to \$3.4 billion. The military assistance provided by NATO to Ukraine is unprecedented in scope. In a testimony before Congress last week, Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that in the months leading up to the war and afterward, the US and NATO sent 25,000 antiaircraft weapons and 60,000 anti-tank weapons to Ukraine.

A list provided by the Pentagon indicates that Washington has supplied Ukraine with 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems; 5,500 Javelin anti-armor systems; 18 155mm howitzers and 40,000 155mm artillery rounds; 16 Mi-17 helicopters; 50 million rounds of ammunition, 7,000 small arms and 75,000 sets of body armor and helmets, encrypted radios, armored trucks and more. Britain has supplied about \$588 million of weapons, including anti-tank and anti-ship missiles and long-range artillery.

The US is also training Ukrainian troops in neighboring NATO countries.

On Wednesday, the *New York Times* reported that a “race to arm Ukraine” was under way, and that much of it was being organized in secret. The *Times* wrote:

“Unlike the early part of the war, when many countries seemed to compete to announce what they were providing Ukraine, the current race is being run largely in secret. Much of the coordination, including how to get matériel into Ukraine, is being handled through the United States European Command, or Eucom, based in Stuttgart, Germany, and through a blandly named International Donors Coordination Center set up with the British.”

Most countries, including France, are not advertising precisely what weapons and equipment they are delivering to Ukraine. Poland has refused to confirm the shipment of more than 100 Soviet-era T-72 and T-55 tanks to Ukraine. By contrast, the Czech Republic has boasted that it supplied Kiev with T-72 tanks and BMP-1 armored vehicles, and the Slovak government has supplied a Soviet-era S-300 antiaircraft missile system.

The US is now trying to buy up as much Soviet-era military equipment as possible to sell it to Ukraine. The *Times* quoted former US Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates as saying, “We don’t really have time to get a lot of heavy American armor into Ukraine, and there isn’t time to train the Ukrainian military. But there is a lot of former Soviet military equipment still in the arsenals of the East European states.” The US, Gates said, “ought to be ransacking the arsenals” of these countries for armor and antiaircraft systems, “with a promise from the US to backfill over time with our equipment to our NATO allies.”

Speaking at a roundtable at Russia’s defense ministry about the “Crisis in Russian-American relations,” Sergey Koshelev, the ministry’s deputy head of the department on Northern America, said on Thursday that weapons deliveries by NATO on the territory of Ukraine were a “legitimate military target” for Russia. He acknowledged that the announcements of ever greater military aid by the US to Ukraine were provoking “growing anxiety” in the Kremlin. Washington, Koshelev said, clearly sought to bring about “maximum losses” for the Russian army.

The Russian military has acknowledged “significant” losses in Ukraine, admitting, however, only to 1,351 dead as of March 25. The figure has not been updated since, and Pentagon and Ukrainian officials claim that the figures are much higher. Reports have also suggested that dozens of high-ranking military officials,

including several generals, are among the dead. Funerals for fallen soldiers are taking place across the country every day.

In an indication that the Russian state is trying to cover up the true toll of the war, the Russian Defense Ministry proposed on Wednesday that relatives of soldiers killed in Ukraine should have to apply to enlistment officers rather than civilian authorities for compensation payments, in order to “limit the circle of people” with information on Russian troops that were killed.

Last week, Russia’s navy lost its flagship, the *Moskva*, which sank in the Black Sea. While the circumstances of the sinking of the ship are still disputed—with Ukraine claiming it caused it to sink with two missiles and the Kremlin insisting there was a fire onboard—the loss of the *Moskva* has been a major military humiliation to Russia. The relatives of many of the 500 sailors on board are still waiting to learn the fate of their loved ones.

In Ukraine, 12 million people have been displaced by the war—over one in four of the population. Seven million are internally displaced refugees, while 5 million have fled to other countries, mainly Poland.



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