

In major escalation of the NATO proxy war against Russia, US rams through \$40 billion aid package for Ukraine

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On Tuesday night, the US House of Representatives voted by 368 to 57 to approve a record \$39.8 billion in military aid to Ukraine, just hours after the text of the bill was made known. It is widely expected that the Senate will also approve the bill and that it will be presented to President Joe Biden for ratification later this week.

The bill marks an extraordinary escalation of the NATO proxy war in Ukraine against Russia.

It goes even beyond the \$33 billion that had been requested by the Biden administration and amounts to 5 percent of the total US national security budget of \$782 billion. The almost \$40 billion comes on top of \$13.67 billion approved by Congress at the beginning of the war, bringing the total aid to Ukraine to over \$53 billion in only two months. This is more aid than any country has received from the US in at least two decades.

Almost all of this money is going directly to fund the war against Russia. According to *Politico*, out of the \$39.8 billion, \$11 billion will go to transfers of weapons and equipment from the US military stockpiles directly to Ukraine; \$8.7 billion will be used to replenish weapons inventories sent to the front lines (up from \$3.3 billion that the White House had requested); \$6 billion will go to the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which allows the Biden administration to buy weapons from US military contractors and then send them directly to the Ukrainian army; and \$3.9 billion will be used to fund increased troop deployments and other NATO military operations in Europe. Only \$900 million is provided for the 5.9 million refugees of the conflict.

These staggering sums are being pushed through in a bipartisan effort, while a miserable \$10 billion for COVID-19 relief was unceremoniously dropped by the Democrats, even as the Biden administration is now expecting that 100 million people might get infected in

the fall and winter.

After 1 million people have died from COVID-19 in the US, the ruling class is not even pretending to try to save lives anymore. Instead, in a desperate and reckless attempt to divert immense class tensions outward, it is pushing for the escalation of the NATO proxy war in Ukraine into an ever more direct and open conflict with nuclear-armed Russia.

The supposed “left” wing of the Democratic Party is completely lining up behind the war drive, conspiring in attempts to stifle any public discussion about its implications. Expressing his support for the push by Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer to ram the package through Congress as fast as possible, the supposedly “left” Senator Bernie Sanders stated, “We should always have a debate, but the problem is that Ukraine is in the middle of a very intense war right now. I think every day counts, and I think we have to respond as strongly and vigorously as we can.”

The implications of the new “aid” package are immense. The noted historian of Nazi Germany, Adam Tooze—who is an open supporter of NATO in the conflict—warned in a comment for *The Guardian* that the package, if approved, “will mean that we are financing nothing less than a total war.” He wrote this with regard to the *smaller* sum of \$33 billion initially proposed by the White House.

The aid package for Ukraine was passed within the framework of the Biden administration’s renewal of the Lend-Lease bill which the US adopted in March 1941 to provide direct military support to its allies against Nazi Germany and Japan in World War II. Raising in so many words the specter of a Third World War, Tooze noted in *The Guardian* that the March 1941 bill marked the moment when the US “abandoned neutrality” in the war,

which it only formally entered in December 1941.

In a move that can only be described as sinister, Biden chose Monday, May 9, the anniversary date of the end of World War II, which cost 60 million lives, to sign the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022 into law. The US can now easily lend and lease weapons directly to Ukraine or to Eastern European countries for the war.

Everything is being done to chloroform public opinion as to the enormous dangers bound up with this deliberate escalation of the NATO conflict with Russia.

Amid reports that Russia has effectively taken over large parts of east Ukraine, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday that “we are not confident the fight in Donbas will effectively end the war.”

Haines claimed, “Our view [is] that there is not sort of an imminent potential for Putin to use nuclear weapons” because Putin would turn to nuclear weapons if he perceived an existential threat either to his regime or to Russia and if he believed that NATO was “either intervening or about to intervene in that context.”

But this is precisely what NATO, and especially the US, have been signaling at every step of the way, constantly seeking to provoke Russia into an escalation of the war. The Biden administration alone has already funneled billions of dollars worth of weapons, tanks, anti-tank missiles, ammunition and more into Ukraine, directly influencing the course of the war that has claimed the lives of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and Russian soldiers. Other NATO members, including Germany, the UK, France and Poland, have also provided billions worth of weapons, tanks and other military aid.

In the most recent provocation, information was leaked confirming that the US had provided intelligence to help Kiev assassinate Russian generals and sink the flag ship of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, the Moskva. The US now claims that as many as 10 Russian generals may have been killed in the war, a staggering figure for a conflict that is barely three months old.

Emboldened by the imperialist powers and working in cahoots with NATO-armed neo-Nazi militias, the Ukrainian government of Volodymyr Zelensky is also doing everything it can to escalate the war. Speaking to the *Financial Times* on Tuesday, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba announced that, given that the West keeps funneling weapons to Ukraine, Kiev is now preparing to retake the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in March 2014, and the Donbass.

Kuleba said, “Of course the victory for us in this war will be the liberation of the rest of our territories.”

In fact, already back in March 2021, the Ukrainian government approved a new military strategy that explicitly aimed at “recovering” Crimea and the Donbas, which at the time was tantamount to an announcement that Ukraine was preparing for war. The strategy was backed by the Biden administration and was one of the many provocations that propelled the Kremlin into launching its invasion, in a desperate bid to preempt a potentially devastating military move by imperialist-backed Ukraine and to force the imperialist powers to the negotiating table.

Three months into the war, it is clear that this decision was not only criminal but also a disastrous miscalculation by the Putin regime. Far from showing any signs of willingness to compromise, the imperialist powers are instead doing everything they can to broaden the war and bleed the Russian army dry, while working with sections of the oligarchy to bring about regime change in Moscow.

The Putin regime, which has emerged out of the Stalinist bureaucracy’s destruction of the Soviet Union and the oligarchy’s plunder of state property, can only respond to the increasing pressure of imperialism by whipping up Russian nationalism and threatening to deploy its nuclear weapons.

The struggle against war now entirely depends on the development of a socialist antiwar movement in the international working class that must connect the fight against war with the fight against the pandemic and social inequality, and their root cause: the capitalist system.



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