

# US gives Ukraine blank check for strikes inside Russia

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With the ink barely dry on the \$40 billion weapons and aid package signed May 21 by the Biden administration, the United States is further expanding the range of weapons it is flooding into Ukraine, creating conditions for a vast enlargement of the terrain over which the war is being fought.

On Saturday, Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said that Ukraine had begun to take delivery of the Harpoon anti-ship missile transferred by the US via Denmark, as well as the M109 Paladin armored self-propelled howitzer directly from the US.

The M109, weighing in at nearly 30 tons, is capable of firing artillery rounds, each weighing 100 pounds, at distances of over 25 miles. The Harpoon, according to manufacturer Boeing, is “the world’s most successful anti-ship missile ... capable of executing both land-strike and anti-ship missions.”

Boeing writes, “The 500-pound blast warhead delivers lethal firepower against a wide variety of land-based targets, including coastal defense sites, surface-to-air missile sites, exposed aircraft, port/industrial facilities and ships in port.”

The provision of these weapons systems means that Ukrainian forces will be using the same anti-ship missiles and mobile artillery systems as the US Navy and Army.

Reznikov also announced that Ukraine had recently received more than 100 drones. With the M109’s 25-mile firing range, the Harpoon’s 77-mile range, and the US-procured Bayraktar drones with a range of thousands of miles, the United States has already provided Ukraine with means to strike dozens or hundreds of miles into Russian territory.

Last week, a US official told Reuters that the US is putting no geographic limits on the use by Ukrainian forces of the weapons it is providing. “We have

concerns about escalation and yet still do not want to put geographic limits or tie their hands too much with the stuff we’re giving them,” the official said.

In other words, the US is effectively providing Ukraine with a blank check on strikes inside Russian territory.

The Ukrainian army has already carried out multiple strikes within Russia, killing at least one civilian and wounding dozens. The Russian Defense Ministry recently increased its troops and artillery deployments to the Kursk region neighboring Eastern Ukraine.

In addition to advanced weapons systems, the US has plans to provide Ukraine with even longer-range weapons in the form of multiple rocket launchers potentially capable of striking deep inside Russia.

While Biden told journalists Monday that the US was “not going to send to Ukraine rocket systems that can strike into Russia,” White House officials immediately clarified that Biden’s statement was largely meaningless.

According to the White House, it only applied to certain long-range munitions fired by the systems the US would provide, such as the MGM-140 ATACMS missile which has an effective range of up to 190 miles. These systems violate the Convention on Cluster Munitions, but the United States, which has killed thousands of people with cluster munitions in wars all over the world, does not abide by the treaty.

In the words of Michael McFaul, former US ambassador to Russia, Ukraine will still “get new shipments of precision-guided missiles with longer ranges than Ukrainians have now.”

Even Biden’s statement on the most minimal restrictions on weapons transfers to Ukraine was immediately denounced in the media.

The *Wall Street Journal* was apoplectic, accusing

Biden of wanting Ukraine to “merely survive to sign a truce with more of its former territory under Russian control.”

Seemingly in a panic, the *Journal* warned that Russian forces are making “new military gains in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.” It accused the US president of “reassuring Vladimir Putin about what the US won’t do,” and that “Biden’s ambivalence in aiding Ukraine encourages the Russian to believe he can still achieve a strategic victory.”

In a similar vein, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham accused Biden of carrying out “a betrayal of Ukraine? and democracy itself.”

Although the *Wall Street Journal* is the most hysterical, the war fever spans the entire political establishment. The apparent advances being made by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine are only leading US officials to up the ante, threatening an ever-greater escalation of the war.

Liberal journalist Gideon Rachman, writing in the *Financial Times* on Monday, penned a warmongering column entitled, “The West must hold its nerve on Ukraine.” Condemning isolated voices within the US political establishment who have raised the prospect of a diplomatic settlement of the conflict, Rachman insisted, “The momentum in the war must shift back towards Ukraine before there is any prospect of an acceptable peace settlement.”

The expansion of the imperialist proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is assuming a logic of its own, even as the United States actively escalates its conflict with China over Taiwan.

On March 11, Biden still declared, “We will not fight a war against Russia in Ukraine. Direct conflict between NATO and Russia is World War III, something we must strive to prevent.”

Yet since then, day in and day out, the US has taken step after step toward a direct clash with Russia. The US expanded its weapons shipments to Ukraine, first ten- and then a hundredfold. By March 26, Biden stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin “cannot remain in power.” Last month, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin acknowledged that “we” are in a “fight” with Russia, and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer openly stated this month, “We are at war.”

In an analysis of a series of simulations conducted by a group of think tanks, the Center for Strategic and

International Studies think tank warned of “a dangerous tendency toward unintended [geographic] escalation over the course of a protracted conflict, even when participants stated they wanted to keep the conflict contained to one country.”

To see this dangerous trend in action, one need look not at what is happening in simulations, but on the ground in Ukraine.

By providing Ukrainian forces with the ability to strike further and deeper inside Russian territory, the US hopes to provoke a further escalation of the war.

The recklessness of American imperialism in escalating a war with a nuclear-armed power is a testament to the massive domestic crisis it is facing. Amid raging inflation, falling wages, shortages of key products, and a looming recession, there is a growing movement of the working class in the US as part of a global upsurge of the class struggle.

The entire US political establishment is united in escalating the war with Russia, which has already killed tens of thousands of people and threatens to kill millions. It is the task of the working class to put an end to this war.



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