

US to announce another \$3 billion in military aid for its “forever war” in Ukraine

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One day before the six-month anniversary of the imperialist-provoked Russian invasion of Ukraine, US officials told the Associated Press that the White House is about to announce another \$3 billion in spending to aid and train Ukraine’s military. This comes on top of \$10.6 billion in direct military funding provided by the Pentagon since the beginning of the war, as well as over \$17 billion for US weapons manufacturing for Ukraine.

Based on anonymous US officials, the AP reported Tuesday that the new package is intended to provide weapons and ammunitions that may not arrive in Ukraine for a year or two. In other words, it is designed to fund the new “forever war” by US imperialism in Ukraine, which has already killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers and thousands of civilians, while displacing over a fourth of the country’s population.

Speaking in a similar vein, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated on Tuesday, “Winter is coming, and it will be hard, and what we see now is a grinding war of attrition. This is a battle of wills, and a battle of logistics. Therefore we must sustain our support for Ukraine for the long term.”

Stoltenberg made these remarks at the second online Crimea conference organized by the Ukrainian government of Volodymyr Zelensky. The event was attended by leading imperialist backers of the proxy war against Russia, including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

It was held within the framework of the “Crimean Platform” initiative, launched by Zelensky in March 2021 as part of Kiev’s official military strategy to “recover Crimea.” The campaign to “take back” the Black Sea peninsula is one of the most important provocations that prompted Russia’s invasion in

February.

At the conference on Tuesday, Zelensky insisted again that “retaking” Crimea was the principal military aim of Ukraine. He said, “I know that Crimea is with Ukraine, is waiting for us to return. I want all of you to know that we will return. We need to win the fight against Russian aggression. Therefore, we need to free Crimea from occupation.”

Zelensky then stated, “Ukraine’s restoration of control of Crimea will be a historic anti-war step in Europe,” adding that he was “sure” that Crimea, like the rest of Ukraine, would one day become part of the European Union. In fact, what Zelensky describes as a “historic anti-war step in Europe” is widely seen by military experts as the potential trigger for a nuclear conflict with Russia. In July, Russia’s former president and deputy head of the Russian Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev, warned that an attack on Crimea by Ukraine would result in a “judgement day” response by Moscow.

The aggressive remarks by Zelensky were clearly intended to further fuel the war with Russia and herald major attacks on Crimea by Ukraine. In a deliberate effort to escalate the war with Russia, since August 9 Ukraine has already launched a series of strikes on Crimea, including on Russia’s Saki airbase, where at least 7 Russian fighter jets were destroyed, as well as a major ammunition depot in the north of the Black Sea peninsula. The headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea’s capital, was the subject of a failed drone attack on Saturday.

While carried out by Ukrainian forces, the attacks bear the unmistakable imprint “made in Washington.” Since the imperialist-orchestrated coup in Kiev in February 2014, which ousted a pro-Russian government and prompted the Russian annexation of

Crimea, the US has spent tens of billions of dollars on arming and training Ukraine's military and paramilitary forces for a war against Russia.

So far, the extraordinarily provocative strikes have failed to obtain the desired retaliatory response by the Kremlin. Indeed, the official statements from Moscow, despite earlier threats by leading Russian officials to respond to attacks on Crimea, including with nuclear weapons, have been markedly muted. The Russian press has clearly tried to downplay the significance of the strikes.

Far from easing tensions, however, the refusal by the Kremlin to be goaded into a further escalation of the war has only led Washington to engage in evermore overt provocations. On Saturday evening, Daria Dugina, daughter of the far-right ideologue Alexander Dugin and herself a right-wing Russian nationalist journalist, was assassinated in a car bomb in central Moscow. Her father was supposed to be in the car with her but had decided to take a different vehicle at the last minute.

While Kiev and Washington have denied their involvement in the assassination, it bears all the hallmarks of the murder squads of the CIA and its far-right allies in Ukraine. Dugin is both a prominent supporter of the war and an influential figure in far-right Russian politics. His daughter was known for sharing his views and assisting him in much of his work.

The aim of the assassination clearly was to pressure the Kremlin into a military response that would provide the imperialist powers with the necessary justification to further broaden and escalate their war against Russia.

The *Washington Post*, a mouthpiece for America's super-rich and the CIA, gleefully noted on Monday that "the killing immediately heightened a sense of vulnerability among Russia's most elite and visible promoters of the war in Ukraine, who now realize that they might be targets and that the government is potentially unable to protect them." The paper added that the assassination "also raised the prospect of a serious escalation in the war as Putin comes under increased pressure, including from Dugina's grieving father, to hit Ukraine hard."

Without openly blaming Kiev, Russia's President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences to Dugina's

family and posthumously awarded her a medal for her "courage" and "patriotism." Some of Russia's best known oligarchs, state television anchors and politicians attended Dugina's memorial in Moscow on Tuesday, and they openly accused Kiev of the attack. Dugin said that his daughter had died a martyr for Russia and that "this ultimate sacrifice, the highest price we pay, can be justified only by victory."

In a message to the memorial, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called the attack a "vile and inhumane crime." At a press conference later that day, Lavrov said "there can be no mercy for those who organised, ordered and carried out [the bombing]."

The Russian secret service (FSB) claims to have identified Natalya Vovk, a 43-year-old Ukrainian journalist who served in the fascist Azov Battalion, as the killer of Dugina. According to the FSB, the woman came to Russia in July, along with her child, moved into the same building as Dugina, and had planned to kill both her and her father in the attack. The FSB claims that Vovk is now in hiding in Estonia.

Tallinn dismissed these claims, with Urmas Reinsalu, Estonia's foreign minister, stating, "We regard this as one instance of provocation in a very long line of provocations by the Russian Federation, and we have nothing more to say about it at the moment." Estonia, like Lithuania, is now in the process of destroying decades-old Soviet monuments to the victory of the Soviet people against Nazi Germany in World War II.

While the Western press and Ukrainian government now breathlessly warn of an escalation of Russian attacks, including on Kiev on August 24 and 25, whatever escalation of the war may now occur will be the result of their deliberate efforts to provoke a military response by the Kremlin.



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