

US sends hundreds of armored vehicles to Ukraine as offensive continues

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As the Ukrainian military continued its rapid advances along multiple fronts, the White House announced another massive arms shipment for the war against Russia, sending over 200 armored vehicles in its latest arms shipment.

Along with the armored vehicles, the US announced the shipment of four HIMARS long-range missile systems, 16 M777 howitzers, together with 500 “Excalibur” long-range guided artillery shells.

Ukrainian forces continued their advance on two fronts Tuesday, leading Russian forces to retreat in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk as well as the Kherson region to the south.

Speaking Tuesday night, Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodomir Zelensky said dozens of settlements had been retaken. “This week alone ... dozens of population centers have been liberated. These are in Kherson, Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions all together,” adding, “This is far from a complete list. Our soldiers do not stop.”

Serhiy Kuzan, an adviser to Ukraine’s Defense Ministry, told the *Financial Times* that Russian forces “are not operating in a co-ordinated fashion because we chose the right tactics to destroy their communications and supply lines.”

In the preceding weeks, Ukrainian forces had destroyed command centers, resupply lines, and weapons depots, in some cases dozens of miles behind the Russian front.

In a Pentagon briefing Monday, a senior military official made clear that the free operation of Ukrainian long-range missiles were made possible by Ukrainian/NATO air superiority over the contested regions of Ukraine, made possible by the deployment of advanced anti-aircraft systems from the US and NATO.

The official said, “It is a contested environment in the air and predominantly Russian forces, as, again, you highlight them, launching munitions from safe zones, so to speak, right over Russian-held territory or not too far from the border to try to evade Ukrainian air defenses.”

The latest advances follow the capture of Lyman, a strategic transit hub in the north of Donetsk, where Russian forces staged a disorganized retreat, and were reportedly killed in large numbers by Ukrainian forces as they were retreating.

“All Russian forces withdrew in poor order, suffering high casualties from artillery fire as they attempted to leave,” said a Western official quoted by the *WashingtonPost*. In Kharkiv, the official said “troops received an order to cede the territory... But in Lyman, we think that the Russian troops retreated despite orders to defend and remain.”

The Associated Press reported that Russian troops left the bodies of their comrades lying in the streets as they retreated, and AP photographers documented the bodies of Russian soldiers being torn apart by animals.

The advances by Ukrainian forces continued as Russia struggled to train and mobilize the hundreds of thousands of reservists it had called up two weeks ago, amid widespread reports that troops were not provided uniforms, supplies or body armor.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia had called up 200,000 men out of a planned total of 300,000. By contrast, the US media reports that over 400,000 people had fled the country since then.

Mobilized soldiers reportedly have to purchase their own uniforms and a first-aid kit. The *Washington Post* wrote: “Prices of bulletproof vests have dramatically increased in Russia over the past two weeks, with some stores hiking up the prices by more

than ten times... In total, a soldier looking to purchase a full uniform appropriate for fighting in Ukraine [would] have to spend roughly \$3,000 out of pocket.”

As this military debacle was unfolding, Russia’s upper house of parliament approved the annexations of four Ukraine regions, despite the fact that the Russian military was rapidly losing ground and Kremlin Spokesperson Dimitri Peskov could not specify what the borders of the annexed territories actually were earlier this week.

The European Union escalated its economic war against Russia, with Politico reporting that EU ambassadors have reached an agreement to place a price cap on sales of Russian oil. On Monday, the United Nations General Assembly will meet and is expected to vote on a draft resolution condemning Russia’s annexation of Ukraine territories.

Over the past week, multiple Russian officials have stated that Russia would use nuclear weapons to defend the territories newly annexed by Russia.

In what was perhaps the most chilling development of the past 24 hours, a US Defense Department official refused to deny reports that a train from a unit of the Russian military charged with handling nuclear weapons was making its way toward the front.

During Monday’s Pentagon briefing, a reporter from NPR asked,

“The Times of London” is reporting that a train operated by what they call the Secretive Nuclear Division in Russia, is heading towards Ukraine. Are you guys seeing any movement of any nuclear arsenal?

The official replied, “Tom, I’m aware of those press reports. I don’t have anything on that.”

A follow-up question in the briefing from the *Economist* asked:

You said you’d seen nothing that compels you to change your posture, which is not quite the same as saying that you’ve seen no movement of nuclear related forces by Russia. There’s also, apart from the report of the 12th

main directorate, there’s also a report of a Russian submarine, the Belgorod diving in the White Sea, perhaps to test the Poseidon torpedo. Do you have any information on that?

The US official again refused to issue a denial, saying, “No, I don’t have any information to provide on that. And again, I know it’s not a satisfying answer other than to say, again, we have not changed our posture.”

In an interview with Maria Bartiromo on Sunday, Republican representative Mike Turner called on the US to alter its nuclear posture, declaring, “This administration needs to step up its game on missile defense. We have assets in Europe and we need to engage them so that we can provide protection to our allies.”

He declared, “The administration needs to begin to deploy and activate our missile defense systems, so at least we can look to Europe, and say we’re going to be using these resources to provide some protection, should Putin decide to use weapons of mass destruction.”

In the face of the clearly mounting nuclear danger, the *Washington Post* rejected any efforts by the US to negotiate an end to the conflict, declaring that Putin “flirts with a dance of death. The only sane thing to do is stand down and end this needless war.”



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