

Ukrainian attack on Kremlin is a criminal provocation

Andre Damon

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On Wednesday, two drones exploded over the Kremlin in Moscow, the official residence of the president of the Russian Federation. Russia's Foreign Ministry called the explosions an attempt by the Ukrainian government to assassinate Russian President Vladimir Putin. "We regard these actions as a planned terrorist act and an attempt on the life of the President," Moscow said.

The Ukrainian attack on the Kremlin and attempted assassination of Putin is a criminally reckless provocation, serving no other purpose than to provoke retaliation by Russia that would then be used to justify a massive escalation of NATO's involvement in the war.

Critically, the attack on the Kremlin took place just after Zelensky had left Ukraine for NATO territory, arriving in Finland just hours ahead of the bombings, in what was no doubt an effort to shield him from retaliation in kind by Moscow.

The attack took place on the eve of the much-publicized Ukrainian offensive, which the Kiev regime believes is critical to the very viability of the war effort.

Leaked Pentagon documents indicate that Ukraine is in a far worse military position than the public has been led to believe, meaning that the success of the offensive is highly unlikely and could even end in catastrophe without the direct intervention of NATO forces.

The response of the United States, exemplified by the statements of Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, directly implicates the United States in the attack, and as such testifies to a staggering level of recklessness at the highest levels of the American state.

Shortly after the attacks, Blinken was asked by *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius to comment on "the news overnight from the Kremlin accusing

Ukraine of having tried to assassinate President Vladimir Putin with a drone strike. ... What is the United States' position on such attacks on leadership during this war by Ukraine?"

Far from separating the United States from responsibility, Blinken explicitly sanctioned the legitimacy of such attacks, declaring, "We leave it to Ukraine to decide how it's going to defend itself."

Ignatius asked him again: "If Ukraine decided on its own to strike back in Russian territory, the United States would not criticize them?" To this, Blinken again reiterated, "These are decisions for Ukraine to make about how it's going to defend itself, how it's going to get its territory back, how it's going to restore its territorial integrity and its sovereignty."

Later in the day, during a White House briefing, Jean-Pierre was asked a variant of the same question: "Does the administration see Putin as the commander-in-chief of Russian troops that have waged this war against Ukraine, as a lawful military target?"

She refused to condemn the potential assassination of Putin, declaring, "I'm just not going to speculate."

These statements make clear that the aim of the United States in the conflict is regime-change, with Putin placed in the same category as previous leaders Washington has overthrown and murdered: Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein, both of whom were killed by US proxy forces, and Slobodan Milošević, who died while in custody.

It has long been recognized that the assassination of a political leader is a *casus belli*. George W. Bush, in justifying the 2003 invasion of Iraq, cited the false claim that Saddam Hussein had previously planned the assassination of his father. World War I was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria.

Even though the bombing in Moscow did not succeed in killing Putin, it was an attack on the Kremlin, the seat of the Russian government. The United States gave as its primary reason for invading Afghanistan, and as a significant reason for invading Iraq, the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. In planning the attack on the Kremlin, Kiev knew full well that it would intensify pressure within Russia to escalate the war.

In the aftermath of Blinken's statement, there were attempts by Washington and Kiev to walk back their open involvement in the operation. "We didn't attack Putin," said Zelensky. But this claim was belied by the announcement by the Ukrainian Postal Service just hours after the attack that it would issue a stamp depicting the Kremlin in flames.

US officials likewise told the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and other newspapers that the United States did not know about the attacks beforehand. Going a step further, James Nixey of the pro-imperialist Chatham House think tank declared the attack was a "false flag" by the Kremlin.

These efforts to deny responsibility lack all credibility and have been contradicted by open gloating by US officials.

Colonel Alexander Vindman, a leading figure in the run-up to the war, hailed the attack, declaring that it "demonstrates how vulnerable Russia really is." He continued, "The most important thing about drone strikes on the Kremlin is the sheer [sic] embarrassment for Putin. He looks terribly week [sic]."

The denials by Ukrainian and US officials follow the pattern set by the October 8, 2022 attack on the Kerch Bridge, in which Washington and Kiev denied involvement. US media accounts later revealed that the attack was carried out by Ukrainian special forces.

The response of the White House to the bombing makes clear that it is giving the Ukrainian government what amounts to a blank check to escalate the war. This means that the world is effectively being held hostage to whatever criminal actions the Zelensky government may take.

As the war has progressed, everything that the Biden administration has declared it would not do in the war it has proceeded to do. The United States is intent on breaking every barrier to the escalation of the conflict as a means to achieve its military objectives.

The statements by US officials legitimizing a potential assassination of Putin expose the degree of recklessness, desperation and unhinged stupidity that now dominates in Washington and other NATO capitals. The war is expanding not just in intensity but in geographic scope, threatening to metastasize from Eastern Europe to the Pacific.

This war must be stopped. It is urgently necessary to build a mass international movement against the war, oriented to the growing struggles of the working class, and armed with a socialist program.



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