

US announces plans to send F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine

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On Friday, the White House announced the most reckless and dangerous escalation of its involvement in the war with Russia to date, that it has decided to train Ukrainian pilots to fly US-made F-16 fighter jets and send the nuclear-capable planes to the battlefield.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters at the G7 summit in Japan that Biden “informed his G7 counterparts that the United States will support a joint effort to train Ukrainian pilots on fourth generation fighter aircraft including F-16s.” He added the US “will work with our allies to determine when planes will be delivered, who will be delivering them and how many.”

Facing a series of major military setbacks for its proxy forces in Ukraine, the United States is massively expanding its direct involvement in the war, with potentially catastrophic consequences for all of humanity.

Although first fielded decades ago, the F-16 has been continuously updated and remains one of the most capable, complex and deadly weapons systems in the world. With a range of more than 500 miles, it is capable of fielding the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, with a range of up to 1,200 miles. These weapons threaten both Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Last March, the Pentagon rejected a plan to send semi-obsolete Soviet-era MiG-29s to Ukraine, because it “may be mistaken as escalatory and could result in significant Russian reaction that might increase the prospects of a military escalation with NATO.”

The fact that these words are far more applicable to the decision to send F-16s points to the degree to which the war in Ukraine is spinning out of control.

To an even greater degree than the M1 Abrams battle tank, sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine would involve the deployment of logistical infrastructure and

supply lines into Ukraine from the NATO countries, likely including the deployment of American civilian contractors to help maintain these sophisticated systems.

The F-16 is the workhorse of the United States’ “nuclear sharing” program. In the event of a full-scale nuclear war, atomic bombs based in Turkey, Germany and Poland, delivered from F-16 fighters, would be among the first to explode.

The announcement that NATO would send F-16 fighters to Ukraine takes place in flagrant defiance of multiple explicit promises made by the Biden administration to the public, aimed at reassuring the population that it was seeking to avoid an escalation of a full-scale war with nuclear-armed Russia.

In March 2022, Biden asserted, “the idea that we’re going to send in offensive equipment and have planes and tanks and trains going in with American pilots and American crews, just understand—and don’t kid yourself, no matter what you all say—that’s called World War Three.”

In May, Biden said, “We will not be directly engaged in this conflict, either by sending American troops to fight in Ukraine or by attacking Russian forces. We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders.”

One by one, Biden has crossed each of the “red lines” he set out to limit his administration’s involvement in the war.

In January, the Biden administration announced that it would send dozens of M1 Abrams main battle tanks to Ukraine, alongside hundreds of other main battle tanks from NATO countries.

In April, leaked documents revealed that 97 NATO special operations troops are deployed inside Ukraine, alongside 71 active-duty US military personnel. These

troops, according to an article published this week in the *Wall Street Journal*, are “operating very close to the front lines” and are a “guiding influence on Ukrainian special-forces activity.”

Ukraine has received US authorization in private to carry out strikes inside Russia itself, and in February, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland publicly endorsed Ukrainian strikes inside Crimea. “Those are legitimate targets,” Nuland said. “Ukraine is hitting them. We are supporting that.”

Now, with the sending of F-16 fighter jets, the United States has crossed the last of these self-proclaimed red lines.

But the war does not enjoy the support of the population. Only one in five Americans approves of expanding US involvement in the war, according to a University of Maryland poll.

It is for this reason that the Biden administration has systematically lied about its plans to escalate the war and sought to cloak its long-planned escalatory measures as improvised responses to public “pressure” from its NATO allies and members of Congress.

This was the narrative presented over and over in the US media. “For more than a year, getting F-16s into the skies above Ukraine for use against Russia has been Kyiv’s holy grail... Suddenly, President Biden has said yes,” wrote the *Washington Post*.

“The turnaround, according to US, European and Ukrainian officials, is the result of steady pressure from allies, Congress and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who just completed visits to European capitals.”

This narrative has just one wrinkle, namely the fact that the US has been working on plans to send F-16 fighters since at least July of 2022. That month, John Kirby, the National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, confirmed that the Pentagon is discussing “providing fighter aircraft to the Ukrainians,” and Air Force Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., asserted that “discussions are ongoing” to send US-NATO fighters to Ukraine.

The announcement by the White House that it would send F-16 fighters to Ukraine, under the pressure of a series of military defeats, sets the stage for a further escalation of the war, threatening a full-scale conflict between the countries with the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals.



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