

# Attacks inside Russia continue as NATO head declares “Ukraine will become a member”

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Large-scale Ukrainian attacks inside of Russia continued Thursday, as the town of Shebekino, in Belgorod province just across the border, has been under constant shelling for the third day in a row.

On Thursday, social media photos and videos showed burning buildings, and there were reports of a powerful drone strike in the town, with multiple injuries.

Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote that “Shebekino is under incessant fire,” and that residents in the town and nearby areas were being evacuated.

In a video posted to Telegram and reported by Reuters, a female resident declares, “Today is June 1. Behind me is our city of Shebekino, which is on fire... There are still fights going on. ... The [Armed forces of Ukraine] is attacking the city, there are very few of us left there.”

She added, “The previous days, there was practically no response; there were no soldiers in the town. We were left to our own devices. It got to the point that tonight people all fled. Now many remain in the basements; they cannot be evacuated.”

There were reports that, in addition to the shelling, Ukrainian ground forces also crossed the border in the Belgorod area, but no further details were given.

The latest cross-border attacks follow Tuesday’s attack on Moscow, as a swarm of eight drones was launched at the Russian capital, with one hitting an apartment building.

Asked to comment Wednesday on the attacks inside Russia, US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said, “We don’t have any specific information that tells us who was responsible, and it’s not like we’re going to go out and investigate this.”

Kirby was asked, “On Ukraine, can you clarify for us again the U.S. policy here? Because it says that, as a general matter, Ukraine shouldn’t strike inside Russia.

What exactly does that mean, ‘general matter’?”

He responded, “We don’t tell them where to strike. We don’t tell them, you know, where not to strike. We don’t tell them how to conduct their operations.”

These statements effectively hands Ukraine a public blank check for Ukraine to attack Russia, despite earlier explicit statements by US officials that they oppose such actions.

Last year, President Joe Biden claimed, “We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders,” adding that “we’re not going to send to Ukraine rocket systems that strike into Russia.”

These actions to escalate the military conflict come as there is open discussion of bringing Ukraine into NATO, which would mean the entire 31-nation alliance, above all the United States, would become direct combatants in the war with Russia.

On Thursday, NATO foreign ministers met in Oslo, Norway to discuss formalizing their alliance with Ukraine. At the press conference following the conclusion of the meeting, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg declared, “Our focus today was on how we can bring Ukraine closer to NATO, where it belongs.”

He continued, “All Allies agree that NATO’s door remains open ... Allies agree that Ukraine will become a member of NATO.”

Stoltenberg previewed next month’s upcoming NATO summit, saying, “we will take decisions to further strengthen our deterrence and defense. Agree a new Defense Investment Pledge, with 2% of GDP on defense as the minimum.”

Commenting on the summit, the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that “pressure to give Ukraine explicit security guarantees and a path to alliance membership grows.”

Speaking Wednesday in Slovakia, French President

Emmanuel Macron called for Ukraine to be provided with “tangible and credible” security guarantees. Macron said, “if we want to hold our own against Russia... we must give Ukraine the means to prevent any new aggression and to include Ukraine in any new security architecture.”

The French president said he favored a “path” to NATO membership for Ukraine.

As the war in Ukraine continues to escalate, the US has launched a series of military maneuvers in the arctic. Describing the “Northern Forest” exercise in Finland, Reuters wrote

Overseeing the exercise just a two-hour drive from the Russian border at one of Europe's largest artillery training grounds in Rovajarvi, northern Finland, Major General Gregory Anderson from the 10th Mountain Division of the U.S. Army said his country stood ready to defend Finland.

“We are here, we are committed. The U.S. Army is here training with our newest NATO ally to build that capability, to help defend Finland if anything happened,” Anderson said.

The exercises will involve over 150 fighter jets and support planes, including F-35 Lightning II fifth-generation stealth fighters.

The *New York Times* reported that Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark had decided to merge their air forces into one, creating a force with more warplanes than Britain or France.

All of these elements point to a massive escalation of the conflict. This reality is summed up in an article published by the *Washington Post*, headlined, “Biden shows growing appetite to cross Putin’s red lines.”

The *Post* declared, “President Biden’s decision last month to help Ukraine obtain F-16 fighter jets marked another crossing of a Russian red line that Vladimir Putin has said would transform the war and draw Washington and Moscow into direct conflict.”

It continued, “Despite the Russian leader’s apocalyptic warnings, the United States has gradually agreed to expand Ukraine’s arsenal with Javelin and Stinger missiles, HIMARS rocket launchers, advanced

missile defense systems, drones, helicopters, M1 Abrams tanks and, soon, fourth-generation fighter jets.”

The combination of sustained attacks inside of Russia, accelerated moves to accept Ukraine into the NATO alliance structure, and the massive buildup of military forces on Russia’s border point to an extremely dangerous escalation of the war, with potentially catastrophic consequences for all of humanity.



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