

British foreign secretary gives go-ahead for Ukrainian strikes on Russia with UK-supplied missiles

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UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron told Reuters Thursday that British-supplied long-range missiles could be used by Ukraine to strike Russian territory. The announcement confirms a major escalation in the NATO-Russia proxy war.

Speaking in Kiev after discussions with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Cameron told reporters in reference to military equipment supplied by the UK, “In terms of what the Ukrainians do, in our view, it is their decision about how to use these weapons, they’re defending their country, they were illegally invaded by Putin and they must take those steps.

“We don’t discuss any caveats that we put on those things.

“But let’s be absolutely clear, Russia has launched an attack into Ukraine and Ukraine absolutely has the right to strike back at Russia.”

Asked if this included using British weaponry to strike Russia, Cameron replied, “That’s a decision for Ukraine and Ukraine has that right.

“Just as Russia is striking inside Ukraine, you can quite understand why Ukraine feels the need to make sure it’s defending itself, it’s getting the Russians out of its country, and it has the ability to strike back.”

As the *Washington Post* later commented, “The remarks signaled a sharp reversal in Britain’s position, which previously did not allow Russia to be targeted with British-supplied weapons.”

Ukraine’s Western allies, the paper noted, “have so far forbidden Ukrainian forces from using Western-supplied arms to target locations within Russia, for fear of escalation and possibly being drawn further into the conflict.”

Missiles supplied by the UK to Ukraine include Storm Shadow cruise missiles, with a range of over 250 kilometres, placing a huge number of targets in Russian territory within Ukraine’s reach. The weapons are known to have been used already to carry out a large strike on the port of Sevastopol in Crimea last September—the peninsula was annexed by Russia in 2014.

Announcing the decision to send Storm Shadows last May, then Defence Secretary Ben Wallace insisted that they would only be used “within Ukrainian sovereign territory,” leaving open targets in Crimea—whose Russian control is contested by Ukraine and its allies—but not in the Russian Federation.

This restriction has now been removed. The consequences are so inflammatory that officials in the British state and staff at Reuters apparently had second thoughts about whether to broadcast the statement. The news agency withdrew its article not long after publication, announcing, “A Reuters story saying Britain’s Foreign Secretary David Cameron promises aid to Ukraine is withdrawn, pending review of certain details in the story. A revised version of the story will be published in due course.”

The details were already widely reported by other organisations and the article was republished with no changes.

Cameron’s announcement is only the latest example in a list of previously forsworn levels of NATO involvement in the Ukraine war which have since been embraced, including sending long-range missiles and artillery in the first place, along with heavy tanks and F-16 fighter jets.

The declaration with the gravest implications was

made by French President Emmanuel Macron's suggestion in February of engaging alliance troops directly in the war against Russia. He raised the subject again in a long interview with *The Economist* published Thursday, saying, "I'm not ruling anything out... if Russia decided to go further, we will in any case all have to ask ourselves this question."

The significance of Macron and Cameron's remarks for Russia was expressed by Kremlin press secretary Dmitry Peskov, who told reporters that their statements "potentially pose a danger to European security, to the entire European security architecture," adding, "We see a dangerous tendency towards escalation in official statements. This is raising our concern."

More and more resources are being committed to NATO's de facto war with Russia. Cameron's statement came as part of a visit touting the UK's commitment to a minimum of £3 billion in military aid for Ukraine every year. The foreign secretary told reporters, "Ukraine is fiercely defending itself against Russia's illegal invasion, making a war Putin thought would last days take years. But this war is the challenge of our generation and Ukraine cannot fight it alone."

"We must all step up to ensure Ukraine has what it needs to win. Through our multi-year military funding, weapons provision and vital support to protect and repair Ukraine's energy infrastructure, the UK is standing with Ukraine and we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes."

This is a pledge to indefinitely fund, with wealth clawed from the working class, the grinding slaughter in which Ukrainian workers are being used as cannon fodder to pressure an overstretched Russian regime into collapse and carry out a regime-change operation.

The £3 billion-a-year commitment was first announced last week by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak alongside a £500 million support package. The money, Downing Street explained, would be used to "rapidly deliver urgently-needed ammunition, air defence, drones and engineering support." It was coupled with the UK's largest-ever delivery of military equipment, including:

- 60 boats, including offshore raiding craft, rigid raiding craft and dive boats as well as maritime guns.
- More than 1,600 strike and air defence missiles, as well as additional Storm Shadow long-range precision-guided missiles.

- More than 400 vehicles, including 160 protected mobility "Husky" vehicles, 162 armoured vehicles and 78 all-terrain vehicles.

- Nearly 4 million rounds of small-arms ammunition.

In further escalating the war in Ukraine, London is again striving to maintain its place as second only to the United States in terms of support for war in Ukraine.

Sunak stressed pointedly last week, "The United Kingdom will always play its part at the forefront of European security," with his defence secretary Grant Shapps noting, "The UK was the first to provide NLAW [anti-tank] missiles, the first to give modern tanks and the first to send long-range missiles. Now, we are going even further."

But all the imperialist powers are committed to the proxy war with Russia and the ramping up of military spending and production it requires. Cameron's announcement is the latest step in a common NATO offensive constantly escalating towards a direct clash between nuclear-armed powers.



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