

Members of Congress demand White House authorize Ukrainian strikes inside Russia

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On Tuesday, a bipartisan group of members of the House of Representatives called on the White House to formally authorize Ukraine to use US-provided weapons to strike inside Russian territory, a move that Russian officials had previously warned would trigger war between Russia and NATO.

Five Democratic members of Congress—Linda Sánchez, Rick Larsen, Brendan Boyle, Jason Crow and André Carson—joined five Republicans—Darin LaHood, Neal Dunn, Brian Fitzpatrick, French Hill and Austin Scott—in demanding the action.

The immediate context of the call for expanding US involvement in the war is a series of major setbacks for the Ukrainian armed forces amid a Russian offensive in Kharkiv. According to the BBC, Russian troops simply “walked in” over unguarded Ukrainian defensive lines.

Earlier this month, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron told Reuters that British-supplied long-range missiles could be used by Ukraine to strike Russian territory. When asked if the UK was allowing long-range weapons it provided to Ukraine to be used to strike inside Russia, he replied, “That’s a decision for Ukraine, and Ukraine has that right.”

In April, the Biden administration confirmed that it had secretly sent Ukraine long-range missiles capable of striking at a distance of over 190 miles. Ukraine used these weapons to carry out a strike on an airbase in Crimea earlier this month. The weapons were also used to attack the Port of Berdiansk on the Sea of Azov.

Confirming that the US secretly provided the weapons in March, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, “They are now in Ukraine and have been in Ukraine for some time.”

In May 2022, Biden declared, “We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders.” In September 2022, Biden declared, “We’re not going to send to Ukraine rocket systems that strike into Russia.”

It is becoming clear that, as with previous moves in which the White House crossed the “red lines” it has set for its own involvement in Ukraine, this series of announcements is merely preparation for the official announcement that the US will allow US weapons to be used to strike inside Russia.

The trailer for such an announcement came during Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s trip to Ukraine, in which he declared, “We’ve not enabled or encouraged strikes outside of Ukraine, but ultimately, Ukraine has to make decisions for itself about how it’s going to conduct this war.”

In an article published Wednesday, David Sanger of the *New York Times* wrote that this statement was part of a “debate” within the White House over removing all restrictions on the use of US-supplied weapons in Ukraine.

Strikingly, Sanger, a leading conduit for the US military/intelligence apparatus, framed this “debate” as being over not just arcane rules of engagement but over the merits of whether the Biden administration should “avoid World War III.”

The *Times* wrote:

Since the first American shipments of sophisticated weapons to Ukraine, President Biden has never wavered on one prohibition: President Volodymyr Zelensky had to agree to never fire them into Russian territory, insisting that would violate Mr. Biden’s mandate to “avoid World War III.”

But the consensus around that policy is fraying. Propelled by the State Department, there is now a vigorous debate inside the administration over relaxing the ban to allow the Ukrainians to hit missile and artillery launch sites just over the

border in Russia—targets that Mr. Zelensky says have enabled Moscow's recent territorial gains.

It concluded:

The proposal, pressed by Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken after a sobering visit to Kyiv last week, is still in the formative stages, and it is not clear how many of his colleagues among Mr. Biden's inner circle have signed on. It has not yet been formally presented to the president, who has traditionally been the most cautious, officials said.

The broader context of the “debate” over Ukrainian strikes deep inside Russia is far-reaching plans for the deployment of NATO troops openly in Ukraine. Last week, US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Q. Brown told the *Times* that the NATO military alliance will “eventually” send significant numbers of active-duty NATO troops to Ukraine, which the newspaper said meant the deployment was “inevitable.”

The *Times* article by Sanger gives more details on these plans:

The United States is now considering training Ukrainian troops inside the country, rather than sending them to a training ground in Germany. That would require putting American military personnel in Ukraine, something else that Mr. Biden has prohibited until now. It raises the question of how the United States would respond if the trainers, who would likely be based near the western city of Lviv, came under attack.

In response to Cameron's declarations that Ukraine is free to use NATO weapons to attack Russia, combined with calls by French President Emmanuel Macron that NATO should consider deploying its own troops to Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced earlier this month that Russia would carry out a series of nuclear training exercises near its border with Ukraine.

While both the US and Russia have used nuclear exercises as threats, typically these threats are veiled, and the exercises are framed as long-planned events and not

short-term responses to actions taken by the other side. But in announcing these drills, the Kremlin made it clear that they were a response to “provocative statements and threats of individual Western officials.”

The drills officially began on Tuesday, with the Kremlin's Southern Military District troops “practicing combat training tasks of obtaining special ammunition for the Iskander operational-tactical missile system, equipping launch vehicles with them, and covertly advancing to the designated position area in preparation for missile launches.”

The Kremlin added that the troops “involved in the exercise practice equipping aviation weapons with special warheads, including the Kinzhal aeroballistic hypersonic missiles, and flying into designated patrol areas.”

In framing the “debate” about whether to allow Ukraine to use NATO weapons to strike inside Russia, Sanger explained that at least some within the administration believe the action could trigger a nuclear war. Sanger wrote:

In an interview with The New York Times this week, Mr. Zelensky dismissed fears of escalation, saying President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia had already escalated the war. And he thought it unlikely that Mr. Putin would ever make good on his threat to unleash a nuclear weapon.

Mr. Biden and some of his aides are clearly not convinced. Over the past year, they have said they believe there is some red line out there that would unleash a more severe reaction from Mr. Putin. They just don't know exactly where that is, or what the reaction might be.

In other words, the White House, unbeknownst to the American population, is preparing a course of action with the most staggering and far-reaching consequences imaginable.



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