

# NATO main battle tanks are operating inside Russia in Kursk offensive

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Sky News reported Thursday that British Challenger 2 main battle tanks have been deployed inside Russia as part of the NATO-Ukrainian offensive against Russia's Kursk region.

The United States, Britain and Germany have given Ukraine hundreds of Abrams, Challenger 2 and Leopard 2 main battle tanks. But the report by Sky News is the first confirmation that these vehicles have been used inside the Russian border by Ukrainian troops.

On August 6, thousands of Ukrainian troops began pouring over the Russian border region of Kursk, forcing the evacuation of 120,000 people from the province and surrounding regions.

In recent days, Ukrainian troops carried out attacks on the region of Belgorod, where evacuations have also taken place.

On Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed that Ukrainian forces have taken full control of the Russian town of Sudzha, home to critical pipeline infrastructure for providing Russian natural gas to Europe.

The town, which is six miles inside the border, is one of 80 settlements Ukraine claims to have seized in its 10-day offensive.

Zelensky also claimed that Ukrainian troops had captured more than 100 Russian prisoners of war.

On Wednesday, Oleksandr Syrskyi, head of the Ukrainian armed forces, said that Ukraine now controls 1,150 square kilometers of Russian territory.

CNN reported Thursday that Russia has diverted thousands of troops from the Donbas region in an attempt to stop the Ukrainian offensive.

In the most extensive comment by a NATO official to date, General Christopher Cavoli, NATO's top military commander, said Thursday, "Suffice it to say that it

appears to be going quite well. ... They found an area of weakness in the Russians' position, and they exploited it quickly and have exploited it very skillfully."

US Republican war hawk Senator Lindsey Graham likewise praised the offensive, declaring it "bold, brilliant and beautiful. Keep it up," adding, "Putin started this. Kick his ass."

While US and NATO officials and their media propagandists initially claimed that NATO was not informed of Ukraine's plans to attack Russia, this claim is becoming more difficult to sustain.

In an article published Thursday, the *New York Times* wrote, "American intelligence agencies, as disclosures last year showed, have known about Ukraine's ambition to attack across the border for more than a year."

It continued, "And indeed, recent policy shifts by the Biden administration made the operation possible. Under pressure from his advisers and key allies, Mr. Biden in late May authorized Ukraine to conduct limited strikes inside Russia with American-made weapons, opening what was expected to be a new chapter in the war for Ukraine."

The *Times* added, "Mr. Biden's decision appeared to be the first time that an American president had allowed limited military responses on artillery, missile bases, and command centers inside the borders of a nuclear-armed adversary."

As the *Times* article hints, Ukraine's attack on Kursk follows a significant shift in direct US-NATO involvement in the war with the provision of long-range missiles to Ukraine and the authorization to use NATO-provided military hardware to attack directly inside Russia.

The attack also follows one month after the NATO summit in Washington, which organized the logistical

provision and training of Ukrainian troops under the control of the military alliance.

Now, NATO is further expanding its direct involvement in the war with the arrival this month of F-16 fighters on the front line. On Thursday, Politico reported that the White House is making far-advanced plans to send JASSM long-range air-launched cruise missiles to Ukraine, which would give F-16 fighters flying over Ukraine the ability to strike hundreds of miles behind Russian lines.

In response, major US and European publications are demanding further direct NATO escalation. In an editorial, *The Economist* demanded that remaining restraints be removed from the use of NATO weapons in Ukraine, declaring,

... the risk of escalation should not be exaggerated. It is perverse that Ukraine is not allowed to strike Russian air bases from which jets deliver glide bombs to devastate Ukrainian cities and kill its soldiers. Russian forces that blatantly and criminally violate Ukraine's borders should expect no shelter behind their own.

Meanwhile, the *Washington Post*, in an editorial published Thursday, demanded, "The United States and Europe should give Ukraine all possible means to end the war in a position of strength and as a functioning, prosperous democracy aligned with the West."

In endorsing the use of NATO-provided tanks inside Russian territory, the essentially predatory war aims of Ukraine's imperialist backers are being revealed. The NATO powers provoked the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine with the goal of militarily defeating Russia, overthrowing its government and breaking up the country. Now, the claims by NATO to be waging a "defensive" war are falling by the wayside, and NATO weapons are being used directly to wage an offensive war inside of Russia.



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