

# Democrats, media cheer as Trump escalates Ukraine-Russia war

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14 July 2025

Donald Trump has effectively reversed his administration's policy on the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, announcing over the weekend that the Pentagon will resume massive arms shipments totaling up to \$10 billion. The deliveries will include Patriot air defense systems and long-range missiles capable of striking Moscow and other major Russian cities.

Trump appeared at the White House on Monday alongside NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, exchanging flattery and pledges of renewed solidarity. Rutte later met with top congressional leaders, while German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius held talks with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and General Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to finalize the details of the arms shipments.

As is generally the case with Trump, boosting the profits of American corporations at the expense of their overseas rivals was a key selling point for the deal. European countries will purchase billions of dollars in US-made weapons, including two Patriot missile systems, and send them to Ukraine, propping up both the crumbling Zelensky regime in Kiev and the bottom lines of military contractors like Raytheon and Lockheed Martin.

At Monday's press briefing, Trump announced that he was giving Russian President Vladimir Putin 50 days to reach a ceasefire deal with Ukraine. If not, Trump warned, he would impose tariffs of at least 100 percent on any country that purchases Russian oil and gas.

The tariffs would target China, India and Brazil, which—along with Russia—are founding members of BRICS, the economic bloc set up to promote trade and financial transactions outside the US dollar. Trump's ultimatum thus directly links his trade war policies

against the foreign rivals of American capitalism, particularly China, with the US-NATO war against Russia, instigated by Trump's predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, whom he regularly denounces.

The response of leading Democrats and their allies in the corporate media was, predictably, to praise the shift. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said, "It would be good news if the president follows through and ensures that he makes good on those statements." In an interview with the *New York Times*, she said, "It's a welcome change in rhetoric," but added, "Whether that lasts very long ... is not clear."

The opposition of the Democrats to Trump, going back to the first administration, has always been centered primarily on issues of foreign policy, particularly what they considered to be an insufficiently aggressive attitude toward Russia.

When the Democrats moved to impeach Trump in 2019, it was not for his crimes against the working class, such as the savage persecution of immigrants or the separation of children from their parents, or his open preparations for dictatorship. Instead, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives impeached Trump for delaying US military aid to Ukraine in order to put pressure on President Zelensky to help Trump in his reelection campaign.

Once Biden entered the White House, he quickly set aside the threat of fascist dictatorship revealed in Trump's instigation of the failed coup attempt of January 6, 2021. Instead, he called for a "strong" Republican Party to support his anti-Russia policy, which succeeded in provoking Putin's invasion of February 2022.

The Democrats have facilitated and collaborated in the second Trump administration's assault on

immigrants, democratic rights and social counter-revolution. They have assured financing of the government, opposed impeachment, and stood by as Trump erects a political dictatorship. Like the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus, unalterably committed to the defense of the profit system at home and the global interests of American imperialism.

At least for the present, Trump—whose main focus has been on China—is shifting behind the demands for aggression against Russia.

The bipartisan policy of war against Russia was spelled out most directly in the joint appearance on the CBS Sunday morning interview program, “Face the Nation,” by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham and Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal. Graham is a frothing warmonger, whatever the target of US imperialism. Blumenthal was his partner at the NATO meeting last week, where they met with Ukrainian President Zelensky.

Graham boasted that he and Blumenthal had obtained 85 co-sponsors (among 100 members of the Senate) on legislation to authorize Trump “to impose 500% tariffs on any country that helps Russia, and props up Putin’s war machine.” He gloated, “This is truly a sledgehammer available to President Trump to end this war” (i.e., bring about the defeat and crushing of Russia).

Democrat Blumenthal embraced that term, saying, “This has to be a critical moment for these sanctions, and bringing down this sledgehammer at this moment was emphasized by all of the European allies who were at the meeting that Senator Graham and I attended in Europe. They are absolutely in solidarity.”

Blumenthal continued, “But what is most important, I think, at this moment, is our unity. Senator Graham and I, Republican and Democrat, coming together, the European leaders with diverse views, also in unity.” This “unity” reportedly included a common determination to make use of \$300 billion in Russian assets, frozen in accounts in Europe, to help pay for the war, including the new round of massive arms purchases from the United States.

Blumenthal went on to endorse a bipartisan US policy of breaking up Russia’s alliances with North Korea, China and Iran, and referred admiringly to Trump’s recent air strikes against Iran as “the success against

Iran’s nuclear program.”

Trump’s shift on Russia has produced a noticeable change in tone in the Democratic-Party aligned media. The Bezos-owned *Washington Post*, which has consistently been the most aggressive against Russia, published an editorial Monday endorsing Trump’s actions on Ukraine, but warning against any turn away from confrontation with Russia. “For the sake of Ukraine specifically and American credibility generally,” the *Post* wrote, “Trump cannot back down.”

The editorial called for “more offensive weapons to hit targets behind the front line,” criticizing the previous Biden administration for timidity, because it was “always fearing that more direct Ukrainian attacks on Russia might ignite a broader regional conflict against a nuclear power. (They didn’t).” After this blithe dismissal of the danger of a nuclear holocaust, the *Post* urged Trump to continue the policy Biden eventually arrived at, of supplying long-range ATACMS ballistic missiles which can hit major Russian cities, including Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The Democratic Party’s full embrace of Trump’s escalation of the war in Ukraine exposes the fundamental political reality: it is not an opposition party. It shares with Trump the essential aims of American imperialism, support for Wall Street, and the defense of the capitalist system.

There is massive and growing opposition to Trump’s drive toward dictatorship, the militarized assault on immigrants, and the escalating attack on social programs. But this opposition cannot be realized through the Democratic Party, which functions as a tool of the same ruling class. What is required is the development of an independent political movement of the working class, fighting for the abolition of capitalism and the reorganization of society on a socialist basis. This is the program of the Socialist Equality Party.



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