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US sends long-range missiles to Ukraine

The White House announced Friday that it would send long-range missiles capable of striking nearly 100 miles into Russian territory to Ukraine, in one of the most significant escalations of US involvement in the war with Russia to date.

Following Washington's tradition of the "Friday afternoon news dump," the announcement was timed so as to garner as little public attention as possible.

The pliant American media supported the Biden administration's goal of keeping the American public from understanding the consequences of this action. This massive escalation of the war against Russia received effectively no media coverage. It was not featured on the front pages of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, or *Washington Post*, and was not reported on the evening network news shows.

The weapons system, known as the ground-launched Small Diameter Bomb, is a rocket-launched maneuverable glide bomb with double the range of the HIMARS missiles Washington has already provided.



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Airmen with the 3rd Munitions Squadron assemble a rack of inert small diameter bombs during readiness training at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Feb. 9, 2018. The small diameter bomb is a precise and accurate weapon that allows the the F-22 Raptor to deliver decisive air power. (U.S. Air Force photo by Alejandro Peña)

The announcement marks a repudiation of Biden's pledge in May that "We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders," and his declaration that "We're not going to send to Ukraine rocket systems that strike into Russia."

The announcement is the latest in a whirlwind escalation of US involvement in the war over the past week. On January 26, the White House declared that it would send 31 Abrams main battle tanks to Ukraine, as part of a coalition of NATO countries sending over 120 main battle tanks in the first "wave."

No sooner was this announcement made than the White House revealed that it was in discussions to send F-16 fighters to Ukraine, against the backdrop of demands by Democratic and Republican politicians and dominant sections of the US media to send the aircraft.

The expected announcement of the new long-range weapons comes as press reports indicate that the Biden administration is discussing openly endorsing a Ukrainian assault on the predominantly Russian-speaking peninsula of Crimea, which Russia has claimed as its territory since 2014.

While the Biden administration endorsed the Zelensky government's Crimean Platform back in 2021, which entails the "retaking of Crimea," since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, Washington had toned down its explicit endorsement for the official war aim of the Zelensky government in order to hide the massively escalatory character of its involvement in the war.

Now, however, the *New York Times* reports, "(T)he Biden administration is finally starting to concede that Kyiv may need the power to strike the Russian sanctuary, even if such a move increases the risk of escalation."

The *Times* writes that "the Biden administration is considering what would be one of its boldest moves yet, helping Ukraine to attack the peninsula."

In an article for the think tank magazine *Foreign Affairs*, entitled "What Ukraine Needs to Liberate Crimea," United States Army Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman declared, "Washington should give Ukraine the weapons and assistance it needs to win quickly and decisively." Vindman is the former director for European affairs for the US National Security Council.

In the article, Vindman explained how a NATO-backed Ukrainian offensive against Crimea would proceed:

The first step would be to pin down Russia's forces in the Kherson and Luhansk regions and in the northern part of Donetsk. Next, Ukraine would free the remainder of Zaporizhzhia Province and push through southern Donetsk to reach the Sea of Azov, severing Russia's land bridge to Ukraine. Ukrainian forces would also need to destroy the Kerch Strait Bridge, which connects Russia to the Crimean Peninsula and allows Moscow to resupply its troops by road and rail.

What none of the planners of this offensive admit, however, is that its implementation will require a massive expansion of NATO involvement in the war, including not only the deployment of advanced weapons systems, but the direct deployment of NATO troops.

Last week, explaining the deployment of the M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, the WSWS outlined how such a scenario could unfold:

The significance of Biden's announcement lies less in the battlefield impact of the tanks than in the consequences of deploying them. The turbine-driven Abrams tanks will require a massive logistical network inside Ukraine, involving large numbers of specialist American contractors. Attacks on these supply networks and American personnel servicing the tanks will then be used to press for implementation of a "no-fly zone" and the deployment of US and NATO troops to Ukraine.

Just one week after these words were written, the initial stages of this scenario are already being put into place.

On Friday, *Politico* reported that "A group of former military officers and private donors is raising money to send Western mechanics close to the Ukrainian frontlines, where they will repair battle-damaged donated weapons and vehicles that have been flooding into the country."

The report continued, "The plan is to find 100 to 200 experienced contractors who would travel to Ukraine and embed themselves with small units near the front lines. Under the project, called Trident Support, those contractors would in turn teach the Ukrainian troops how to fix their equipment on the fly."

The claim that this initiative is being led by "retired" officers is merely a fraudulent pretense distancing the Biden administration from this deployment. While the deployment of the contractors may be "voluntary," threats to the safety of the hundreds of American personnel on the front lines maintaining American vehicles could serve just as well as a pretext for US escalation of the war.

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