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US, UK hail murder of Russian lieutenant-general in charge of nuclear defense

On Tuesday, Igor Anatolyevich Kirillov, a lieutenant general in charge of Russia's nuclear and biological defense forces, was killed in a bombing outside his apartment in Moscow.



Workers load a body of Lt. General Igor Kirillov, the head of Russia's Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defence Forces into a bus after he and his assistant Ilya Polikarpov were killed by an explosive device planted close to a residential apartment's block in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024. (AP Photo) [AP Photo]

Russian investigators said Kirillov was killed after “an explosive device planted in a scooter parked near the entrance of a residential building was activated on the morning of December 17 on Ryazansky Avenue in Moscow.”

The Ukrainian security sources promptly informed every major US and British newspaper that they had carried out the bombing as a deliberate assassination.

The murder was carried out just hours after Ukraine's secret service filed a “notice of suspicion” against Kirillov, alleging, without substantiation, that troops under his command

used biological weapons. Kirillov was “responsible for the mass use of banned chemical weapons by the Russians against the defense forces on the eastern and southern fronts of Ukraine,” the notice read.

“Kirillov was a war criminal and a completely legitimate target, as he gave orders to use banned chemical weapons against the Ukrainian military,” a Ukrainian intelligence official told the *Financial Times* Tuesday. “Such an inglorious end awaits all who kill Ukrainians. Retribution for war crimes is inevitable.”

In October, the UK sanctioned Kirillov, calling him a “significant mouthpiece for Kremlin disinformation.”

The bombing is the latest in a series of assassinations of high-ranking Russian military and political figures carried out by Ukrainian forces. Kirillov is the highest-ranking Russian military figure to have been assassinated.

While claiming not to have been informed, US and UK officials praised the killing.

A spokesperson for UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: “It’s clear we won’t be mourning the death of someone who orchestrated an illegal invasion and inflicted immense suffering and loss on the Ukrainian people.”

Kirillov “was a general who was involved in a number of atrocities,” said US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller. “He was involved in the use of chemical weapons against Ukrainian military.”

If the Ukrainian and American governments have not publicly and officially taken credit for the murder, it is because assassination and terrorist bombings are both war crimes.

The Geneva Conventions declare that “it is prohibited to kill, injure or capture an adversary by perfidy.” The use of a terrorist bombing, using a civilian object, is clearly such a crime.

The US and UK media glorified this act of terrorism and murder, with the *Telegraph* calling it “ingenious,” while the *Wall Street Journal* called it “audacious.” The *New York Times* reported on a video of the murder sent to it by the Ukrainian secret service in breathless terms. Predictably, not a single major news publication condemned it.

The US media has repeatedly glorified terrorist actions and assassinations by Ukrainian forces. Just days before Russian far-right media figure Daria Dugina was murdered in August 2022, the *New York Times* ran a laudatory profile of Ukrainian assassination squads operating inside Russia, under the headline, “Behind Enemy Lines, Ukrainians Tell Russians ‘You Are Never Safe.’”

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote Tuesday that “Ukraine has at times recruited people inside Russia who have shown a willingness to aid the Ukrainian cause, and given them detailed

instructions on how to orchestrate attacks. Tuesday’s attack had the hallmarks of a higher-level operation.”

The murder of a Russian lieutenant general is part of a pattern by the United States and its proxy forces, including Israel and Ukraine, of using terrorist bombings in pursuit of its military aims.

On September 17 and 18, 2024, thousands of pagers rigged by Israeli forces exploded in Lebanon, killing 42 people and injuring thousands. Later that month, Israeli forces murdered Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah using 20 bunker-buster bombs.

Last week, Ukrainian forces claimed that they killed Mikhail Shatsky, a leading Russian missile scientist, in Moscow. This followed the murder of Capt. Valery Trankovsky, commander of the 41st brigade of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, who was killed in a car bombing in November.

Even with this bloody legacy behind them, the murder of a general in command of a branch of the Russian armed forces marks a major escalation.

While Kirillov did not appear to be in the chain of command for Russian nuclear weapons as head of Russia’s Troops of Radiological, Chemical and Biological Defense, he would have played a significant role in Russian nuclear war planning.

In murdering such a figure, the United States, through its Ukrainian proxy force, is making clear that there is no length it will not go to in seeking to subjugate Russia. It has, once again, demonstrated its willingness to cross all of the “red lines” declared by the Putin government and by the Biden administration for its own involvement in the war.

Last month, the US and UK authorized the use of NATO-provided long-range weapons for strikes deep inside Russia, followed just days later by the use of these weapons in strikes on Russian military targets.

The Biden administration is doing everything in its power to create “facts on the ground” that guarantee the continued escalation of the war after it leaves office.

For its part, the Trump transition team has made a point of embracing the Biden administration’s escalation of the war. “For our adversaries out there that think this is a time of opportunity, that they can play one administration off the other, they’re wrong,” said Mike Waltz, Trump’s nominee for national security adviser, last month. “We are hand in glove,” Waltz added. “We are one team with the United States in this transition.”

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