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US, UK to deliver advanced longer-range missile systems to Ukraine

US President Joe Biden announced on Wednesday that Washington will deliver advanced longer-range missile systems HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) to the Ukrainian army, as part of yet another \$700 million in military aid that the White House announced on May 31. This latest tranche brings the total direct military aid committed by the Biden administration since the beginning of the war three months ago to \$4.6 billion.

Hours after this announcement from Washington, *Politico* reported that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Biden had spoken Wednesday morning about the transfer of US-made M270 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS). UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken are set to discuss further details on the deliveries on Thursday morning.

Out of all of the imperialist provocations of recent months against Russia in their proxy war in Ukraine, the US and NATO delivery of longer-range missile systems is one of the most dangerous.

Both the HIMARS and MLRS are advanced long-range missile systems which, depending on the munition, can launch rockets as far as 300 kilometers, or 186 miles, away. According to CNN, both “are fired from a mobile vehicle at land-based targets, which would allow the Ukrainians to more easily strike targets inside Russia.”

As for munitions, the US will deliver the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System rockets that can strike targets that are 80 kilometers, or 50 miles, away. In an op-ed for the *New York Times*, Biden said that these missiles “will enable them [the Ukrainian army] to more precisely strike key targets on the battlefield in Ukraine.”

The delivery of these advanced missile systems is clearly meant to shift the balance of forces in the imperialist proxy war in Ukraine against Russia back to Ukraine’s NATO-backed military.

Unlike in the first stage of the war, when Ukraine’s military and paramilitary could drag down Russian forces in bloody urban fighting, the war is now almost entirely fought in East Ukraine, and artillery is playing a much bigger role, giving Russia an advantage.

After a humiliating first stage of the war and major military losses, Russia has made significant advances in recent weeks. The strategic port city of Mariupol is now under Russian control, enabling the Kremlin to form a land bridge between the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea and the territories around Donetsk and Lugansk, which have been held by pro-Russian separatists since 2014. Russian forces also appear to be in the process of taking over the strategic city of Severodonetsk (or Sievierodonetsk).

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged last week that his army was losing “between 60 and 100” men each day in the war in the Donbass while 500 are being wounded on a daily basis. Many estimate that Ukrainian losses may be even higher.

Above all, however, the HIMARS and MLRS deliveries raise the direct prospect of Ukraine firing missiles far into Russian territory. Leading Russian officials have made stark warnings of the potential escalation of the war and its expansion beyond the borders of both Ukraine and Russia.

Commenting on the first reports about the impending deliveries of these systems last week, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated, “We have warned the West in the most serious manner that they are, in essence, already waging a proxy war against the Russian Federation with the hands, bodies and brains of Ukrainian neo-Nazis, but this [such deliveries] will constitute the most serious step toward an unacceptable escalation.”

Dmitry Medvedev, the head of the Russian Security Council and one of the most bellicose politicians in Moscow, warned on May 30 that, in case of attacks on Russian cities, Russia's armed forces would carry out strikes on the decision-making centers responsible for coordinating these strikes, noting that "Some of them are not at all in Kiev."

The White House announced the extraordinarily provocative move with the empty assurance that the US would "only" deliver munitions that can strike 80 kilometers, or 50 miles, and that the Ukrainian government had given "assurances" that it would not strike targets in Russia.

This is a charade. Munition deliveries can be changed at any moment. In fact, in the past two months, in which Washington has passed more than \$54 billion of aid for Ukraine, it has revised, time and again, what had earlier been proclaimed "off limits."

Even before Washington rammed through a \$40 billion aid budget for Ukraine in May, the US had committed over 90 155mm Howitzers and over 200,000 155mm artillery rounds; 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems; over 5,500 Javelin anti-armor systems and over 14,000 other anti-armor systems. The US has since begun delivering Harpoon anti-ship missiles via Denmark to Ukraine, as well as the M109 Paladin armored self-propelled howitzer, the same anti-ship missiles and mobile artillery systems that the US Navy and Army are using.

Now, US weapons manufacturers are looking forward to over \$17 billion in weapons contracts, just from the \$40 billion war bill.

And the word of the government of Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky, which is parading neo-Nazis from the Azov Battalion as "heroes" and the "best defenders of Ukraine," is worthless.

In an interview Tuesday night, Zelensky claimed, "We are not planning to attack Russia. We are not fighting on their territory. We have the war on our territory."

In fact, there already have been multiple air strikes on targets from the Ukrainian side on arms depots and factories, as well as villages in the Russian Kursk region. Dozens of Russian civilians have been wounded, and at least two have been killed; many residents of

the border region have been relocated. The Russian Defense Ministry has recently increased its troop and artillery deployments to the Kursk region.

Ukrainian officials have refused to either confirm or deny that Kiev was behind these attacks, but even outlets like the *Wall Street Journal* now openly write that Ukraine has been carrying out strikes on Russian territory.

A Russian official, speaking to the government-controlled *Izvestiia* newspaper, noted that the US does not recognize Crimea as part of Russia or the so called People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk as independent, as the Kremlin does. Strikes on these territories with the HIRMAS or MLRS could therefore be justified as legitimate by both Kiev and the White House but still provoke major retaliation by Russia. Since March 2021, the “retaking” of both the Donbass and Crimea has been part of Ukraine's official military doctrine.

In a lying op-ed for the *New York Times*, Biden claimed that the US does not “seek a war between NATO and Russia” and does not “want to prolong the war just to inflict pain on Russia.” The US president must take his readers for fools.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia was not only provoked deliberately for many years. Every step the US has taken since the beginning of its proxy war against Russia in Ukraine has been aimed at escalating and expanding the conflict.

While the White House and its subservient media work overtime to lull the public about the dangerous implications of these reckless policies, denying or downplaying the threat of nuclear escalation, the *Wall Street Journal* has now revealed that there “has been a series of urgent meetings in the administration to map out how Mr. Biden should respond if Russia conducts a nuclear detonation in Ukraine or around the Black Sea. Officials will not discuss the classified results of those tabletop exercises.”

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