



Russia Declares War Goals Have Expanded After West Pumped More Arms Into Ukraine

Description

RUSSIA/UKRAINE: With the Donbas region now largely under control of Russian forces five months into the invasion... is Moscow setting its sights on the rest of Ukraine? It appears this could be the case, based on provocative Wednesday remarks by Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, captured in a fresh FT report.

“Russia’s foreign minister said Moscow had expanded its war aims for its invasion of Ukraine, the strongest sign yet that it seeks to annex parts of the country currently under its control,” FT introduces, citing that:

*Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday that Russia’s **goals were more ambitious than Moscow had declared at the start of the war** in February, when it claimed its goal was to “liberate” the eastern Donbas border region. Moscow’s war aims **now extend to the provinces of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in southern Ukraine**, which are mostly occupied by Russian forces, Lavrov said.*



Source: EPA/Shutterstock

Lavrov also said a “**number of other territories**” are additionally included in the new war aims, though without naming them.

President Vladimir Putin and his top generals within the opening two months of the war made it clear that a central goal was to “liberate” the Donbas region, but speculation has since abounded over whether the Kremlin would keep going beyond this territory.

Some political analysts in the West – the University of Chicago’s John Mearsheimer foremost among them – have stated their belief that Moscow initially sought to limit operations to the East, in defense of the pro-Russian breakaway republics; however, Mearsheimer has argued that many variables have likely caused Putin to expand beyond these initial goals. Chief among the battlefield variables remains Washington and the West’s continually escalating involvement, especially in weapons shipments – including longer range missile systems.

Lavrov alluded to this in his Wednesday comments, “**If the west continues to pump Ukraine full of weaponry out of impotent rage or a desire to exacerbate the situation [. . .] then that means our geographical tasks will move even further from the current line,**” he said.

The conditional, ‘warning message’ nature of his wording suggests that the Kremlin may not have extended the goal posts just yet. Lavrov referenced that the conflict is “an ongoing process” during the statements.

On Tuesday a White House statement condemned what it called Russia’s “**annexation playbook**” amid reports the Kremlin is installing pro-Russian officials and administrations in towns and cities now under its control. Russian media has also previewed potential “referendums” in these territories akin to Crimea in 2014.

And on Wednesday the Pentagon confirmed it is sending Ukraine **four more High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS)** as part the next round of security assistance, according to the words of

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

Calls made by [#Russian](#) nationalist and pro-war voices for the [#Kremlin](#) to officially define operations in [#Ukraine](#) as a war, conduct general mobilization, and pursue expanded territorial goals reached a crescendo today.

Read the full report: <https://t.co/Gm29hq9Ot9> [pic.twitter.com/vkEKvKQ0bm](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/vkEKvKQ0bm)

— ISW (@TheStudyofWar) [July 20, 2022](#)

Thus the ongoing proxy war looks to grow hotter in at least the near term before any possibility of compromise is taken seriously by either side. The Ukrainian government responded to Lavrov's latest words by reasserting that it will not sit down with the Russians at the negotiating table. **"Russians want blood, not talks,"** FM Dmytro Kuleba [said](#), and urged yet more sanctions, more pressure to ramp up on Moscow from the West.

by Tyler Durden

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