



Russia Formally Warns US to Stop Arming Ukraine

Description

RUSSIA: Russia sent a formal diplomatic note to the US this week calling on Washington and NATO to stop arming Ukraine. The note, [which was obtained by The Washington Post](#), said the Western campaign to pour weapons into Ukraine was “adding fuel” to the conflict and could lead to “unpredictable consequences.”

The diplomatic note was sent Tuesday, when news broke of a new massive US military aid package for Ukraine. President Biden announced the new aid on Wednesday, [which is worth \\$800 million](#) and includes howitzers for the first time. The package also includes helicopters, armed Switchblade drones, coastal defense drones, armored vehicles, radar systems, and thousands of Stinger and Javelin missiles.

The Russian note was sent to the State Department by the Russian Embassy in Washington. It said the US and its NATO allies were ignoring “rigorous principles” on the transfer of weapons into the conflict zone and said the Western powers are oblivious to “the threat of high-precision weapons falling into the hands of radical nationalists, extremists and bandit forces in Ukraine.”

The Russians accused NATO of pressuring Ukraine to “abandon” peace talks with Moscow “in order to continue the bloodshed.” The US and most of its NATO allies have shown little interest in supporting the negotiations between the warring sides. The Western powers are signaling that they don’t want Kyiv to make any concessions to Moscow.

The *Post* [reported last week](#) that for some NATO members “it’s better for the Ukrainians to keep fighting, and dying, than to achieve a peace that comes too early or at too high a cost to Kyiv and the rest of Europe.”

The formal Russian protest of the US arming Ukraine could be a precursor to Russia launching airstrikes on weapons shipments in Ukraine. On Wednesday, [Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned](#) that Moscow would view US or NATO vehicles transporting arms inside Ukraine as “legitimate military targets.”

It's not clear if any US or NATO vehicles have actually brought weapons into Ukraine since Russia invaded. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby has said that Ukrainian troops bring the weapons into Ukraine after the US brings them to Eastern Europe. So far, there haven't been reports of Russia targeting weapons shipments as they enter Ukraine, but Moscow has hit weapons depots. Earlier this week, Russia said it [destroyed an S-300 missile defense system](#) in Ukraine that was provided by a European country.

Russia's protest highlights the danger of the US-led campaign to pour weapons into Ukraine and the risk of provoking Moscow. On top of arming the Ukrainians, the US is also [providing them with intelligence](#) for attacks on Russian forces. The huge amount of support raises questions about at what point Russia would consider the US a co-belligerent in the war.

by Dave DeCamp

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