



US Drawing Up Plans To Sink the Russian Black Sea Fleet: Ukrainian Official

Description

Shortly after [Reuters published an exclusive story](#) that the White House was looking to move advanced anti-ship missiles to Ukraine, an official in Kiev said that the US is making a plan to sink Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs adviser [Anton Gerashchenko](#) tweeted, "The US is preparing a plan to destroy the [Russian] Black Sea Fleet. The effective work of the Ukrainians on [Russian] warships convinced [the US] to prepare a plan to unblock the [Ukrainian] ports. Deliveries of powerful anti-ship weapons are being discussed."

Gerashchenko cited the Reuters report on Washington's effort to ship Harpoon and Naval Strike Missiles to Ukraine. The missiles have a range of up to 300 km and cost \$1.5 million each.

Three US officials and two Congressional sources told the outlet the White House was still working out the details for sending the advanced weapons to Ukraine. Logistical issues and the possibility the US would have to remove a launcher from one of its ships to send to Ukraine are current obstacles to completing the transfer.

Responding to [a question from Newsweek](#), the State Department did not deny it was working on a plan to take out the Russian fleet. "As the conflict is changing, so too is our military assistance to deliver the critical capabilities Ukraine needs for today's fight as Russia's forces engage in a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine," a spokesperson said.

However, the Department of Defense issued a sharp denial of the claims made by the Ukrainians official. "I can tell you definitively that that's not true," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters Thursday afternoon. The Pentagon denial applied only to the Ukrainian official's assertion the US was helping sink the Black Sea fleet, and did not refer to the proposed anti-ship weapons transfer.

Gerashchenko said the attack would help to open up Ukraine's ports. Russia currently controls the Black Sea and maintains a blockade. The UN has called for an easing of restrictions in the sea to allow food exports from Ukraine to help alleviate global food shortages.

Moscow has offered a diplomatic solution to the Black Sea standoff. On Thursday, the Kremlin proposed lifting the blockage in exchange for sanctions relief. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the problem goes beyond the blockade and includes Western sanctions restricting fertilizer exports. “You have to not only appeal to the Russian Federation but also look deeply at the whole complex of reasons that caused the current food crisis. [Sanctions] interfere with normal free trade, encompassing food products including wheat, fertilizers and others,” Russian Deputy Foreign Minister [Andrey Rudenko](#) said.

by Kyle Anzalone

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1. Army-Wars-Conflict Zones-Military Tech.
2. Main

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