



US, NATO Rush MANPADS Systems Into Ukraine, Downplay Proliferation Risks

Description

Anti-tank missiles were the centerpiece of western arms shipments to Ukraine earlier in the war. New indications are that the focus is shifting to shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles (MANPADS), with the [US and NATO getting as many as they can into the Ukraine.](#)

The expectation is that the MANPADS will offer Ukraine substantial anti-aircraft capacity. Shipping a lot of MANPADS into a country is always a danger, because if they end up in the wrong hands they could threaten civilian airliners, and after the wars they tend to go missing into the global black market.

That's been a problem more than a few times, with the US shipping MANPADS into Afghanistan during the Soviet War, only to lose control of many of them. The most recent concerns were in the NATO regime change in Libya, where Libya's huge cache of MANPADS were looted and sold across the region

Both NATO and the airline industry are largely mum on the threats posed by such missiles. Russian officials are noting that the [west is "grossly ignoring" a number of international agreements](#) designed to prevent MANPADS proliferation.

Senior US officials say its a "risk worth taking," which is easy to say since the risk of proliferation is chiefly in Europe, and the US has ample experience in ditching responsibility for unintended, albeit easily-predictable, blowback.

It seems that the missiles are being used as a replacement for the warplanes Ukraine sought, and which the US feared would be seen as too big of an escalation. The assumption seems to be MANPADS are less of a risk in that regard.

Either way, it's no secret what NATO is doing, and it sets a precedent where Russia or others might distribute MANPADS in other proxy wars they might want to get involved in.

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Date Created

03/15/2022