



US Sending Soviet Anti-Air Defense Systems To Ukraine That Were “Secretly Acquired”

Description

Update(12:15ET): Greater escalation is in the air as two nuclear-armed superpowers continue stumbling toward a hugely alarming WWII scenario as the Russian invasion of Ukraine reaches almost a full month. *The Wall Street Journal* on Monday has cited US defense officials who say Washington is **covertly sending Soviet-made air defense equipment to Ukraine** to help repel Russian air power. It seems this is the Biden administration’s ‘alternative’ to directly imposing a no-fly zone, yet it’s still a step in that direction. But given the fact that these systems might go all the way back to the 1960’s or 70’s – and perhaps more appropriately belong in a museum in some midwest town – it could be more of a symbolic step to appease the hawks without really doing anything too severely escalatory.

“The U.S. is sending some of the Soviet-made air defense equipment it **secretly acquired decades** ago to bolster the Ukrainian military as it seeks to fend off Russian air and missile attacks, U.S. officials said,” [WSJ writes](#). “The systems, which one U.S. official said **include the SA-8**, are decades old and were obtained by the U.S. so it could examine the technology used by the Russian military and which Moscow has exported around the world.”



SA-8 GECKO file image

The Pentagon has not yet officially confirmed the breaking story, but it comes as the administration is facing immense bipartisan pressure from Congress to “do something” more than merely sending smaller arms. It must be remembered that Moscow has clearly warned it will attack as “legitimate targets” any inbound weapons shipments to Ukraine from Western backers.

The WSJ report says that S-300 systems are *not* part of what’s being considered for the shipment, and [details further](#):

The secretive efforts received public attention in 1994 when a massive Soviet-made transport plane was observed at the Huntsville airport within sight of a major highway...

*Some of the Soviet-style weapons have been kept at the Redstone Arsenal in Alabama, which its website notes serves as “the Army’s center for missile and rocket programs.” At least some of what the U.S. sent was from that base, said officials, who added that **C-17s recently flew to a nearby airfield at Huntsville, Alabama.***

The Russians will surely see this as a massive escalation, likely resulting in threats that such shipments of any anti-air defenses will be directly targeted.

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Update(10:23ET): The past days have witnessed Russian officials lash out at Joe Biden over his most recent scathing comments directed at Vladimir Putin personally. This included a St. Patrick’s Day address last Thursday wherein the US president blasted Putin and a “**murderous dictator**”. He had stated global nations, especially in the West were “standing together against a murderous dictator, a pure thug who is waging an immoral war against the people of Ukraine.” Prior to that, Biden had told a

reporter that Putin is a “war criminal”.

On Monday Russia’s foreign ministry **summoned the US ambassador to issue a note of protest** over Biden’s latest comments, handing over a letter condemning the “unacceptable” remarks about Putin. Further US ambassador John J. Sullivan was informed that US-Russia ties are “**on the verge of being severed**” according to Reuters. Obviously they are already strained following both the invasion and US-led retaliatory sanctions and measures to severely isolate Russia, but a total severing of relations would likely see embassies shuttered and diplomats expelled.

Russian state media is also confirming it was in reaction to the prior “war criminal” and other statements about Putin: “The Russian Foreign Ministry handed a note of protest to the US ambassador on Monday over Joe Biden’s comments about Vladimir Putin – remarks that, according to Moscow, put the relations between the Kremlin and the White House on the verge of being severed,” [according](#) to Russian sources.

[#BREAKING](#) | Russian Foreign Ministry summons US Ambassador in Moscow to say that Biden’s words that Putin is a war criminal, are unacceptable and bringing US-Russia relations on the brink of breaking up <https://t.co/wtm2x0qchA> [pic.twitter.com/7J05MDCLan](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/7J05MDCLan)

— Republic (@republic) [March 21, 2022](#)

Meanwhile, after an alleged two instances where Russian forces said they launched a hypersonic missile into Ukraine...

U.S. CANNOT REFUTE OR INDEPENDENTLY CONFIRM RUSSIAN CLAIM THAT IT
LAUNCHED A HYPERSONIC MISSILE AT UKRAINIAN TARGET – SENIOR U.S.
DEFENSE OFFICIAL

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With newsflow out of Ukraine nothing less than a firehose (of often fake news), with market moving headlines firing every minute, traders can be forgiven if they have just given up following the narrative. To help out, here is a snapshot of all the latest market-moving news out of Ukraine from the last few hours courtesy of [Newsquawk](#):

Discussions/Negotiations

- Ukrainian President Zelensky said he is ready to negotiate with Russian President Putin and warned that if peace talks with Russian President Putin fail, it would mean the start of a third global war, according to an interview with CNN. However, a Turkish official said that Russian President Putin is not ready for talks with Ukrainian President Zelensky.
- Turkish Foreign Minister said Russia and Ukraine “have almost reached agreement” on four critical points of a potential peace agreement, as fierce fighting continued to devastate the key port city of Mariupol, according to FT.
- Russia’s Kremlin says the progress of peace talks with Ukraine is not as big as it should be; there

is no basis for possible Putin-Zelensky meeting, significant progress needs to be made first, there will be no ceasefire during the talks.

- Russian Defence Ministry called on 'nationalists' in Ukraine's Mariupol to lay down arms and offered humanitarian corridors to both the east and west for this Monday, while it stated that Ukraine has until the early hours on Monday to give its answer on surrendering Mariupol.
- Ukrainian Deputy PM Vereschuk said there is no question of surrendering Mariupol.
- Ukraine says eight humanitarian corridors have been agreed on Monday, but the city of Mariupol is not included in that list.

Energy/Economic Updates

- US threatens to expand sanctions on Russia and said they are nowhere near lifting restrictions, according to Sputnik.
- Russian Central Bank Governor Nabiullina said they will start purchasing Russian government bonds and will sell them after the market stabilises.
- EU Foreign Representative Borrell says Russia is guilty of "massive" war crimes, the EU is ready to talk about energy sanctions.

Defence/Military

- Ukrainian President Zelensky appealed to Israel and said that they know Israel's air defence is the greatest in the world and could protect Ukraine, while he said the Kremlin is discussing the final solution to the Ukrainian issue in the same way the Nazi's discussed the European question.
- Ukrainian Deputy PM said they plan to send nearly 50 buses on Monday to evacuate people from the Mariupol region, while she added that 7,295 people were evacuated from cities on Saturday as four humanitarian corridors worked and that 3,985 people were evacuated from Mariupol to Zaporizhzhia on Sunday.
- Kyiv Mayor said there were several blasts in the city's Podil district with residential houses and the shopping district hit.
- China's ambassador to the US said China will work to de-escalate the Ukrainian conflict and said there is misinformation regarding China providing military assistance to Russia.
- UK Ministry of Defence said Russian forces advancing from Crimea are still attempting to circumvent Mykolaiv as they look to drive west towards Odessa and that these forces made little progress during the past week, while it added that Russian naval forces continue to blockade the Ukrainian coast and to launch missile strikes on targets across Ukraine.
- US officials see signals the Kremlin is shifting to a new strategy to secure key territorial objectives, according to WSJ.
- Luhansk separatists say they have recorded an increase in the intensity of Ukrainian shelling on their areas, especially the Pervomaysk region, according to Al Jazeera
- Kyiv Mayor Klitschko announced a curfew from 18:00GMT today until 05:00GMT on Wednesday 23rd.

Other

- Israeli defence sources noted several intel warnings that suggest Iranian intention to carry out attacks via air, sea and on land, according to Israel Radar citing Walla News.

- US and Turkey are said to be in talks over a deal for Turkey to send its Russian-made S-400 missile defense systems to Ukraine in exchange for the scrapping of sanctions imposed by Washington, according to Reuters citing sources. The report suggested Turkey is unlikely to agree to such a deal

by Tyler Durden

Category

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