



## Victoria Nuland Says US Supports Ukrainian Attacks on Crimea

### Description

**USA: Victoria Nuland, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, said last week that the US is “supporting” Ukrainian attacks on Crimea and called Russian military installations on the peninsula “legitimate targets.”**

Nuland made the comments when asked about a report from *The New York Times* that was published in January and said the Biden administration was “warming” to the idea of helping Ukraine attack Russia despite the risk of escalation.

“Russia has turned Crimea into a massive military installation ... those are legitimate targets, Ukraine is hitting them, and we are supporting that,” Nuland told the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington DC-based think tank.

Nuland also expressed support for the “demilitarization” of Crimea. “No matter what the Ukrainians decide about Crimea in terms of where they choose to fight, etcetera, Ukraine is not going to be safe unless Crimea is at a minimum — at a minimum — demilitarized,” she said.

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova slammed Nuland’s comments, saying she was inciting an escalation of the war. “Now the American warmongers have gone even further: they are inciting the Kiev regime to further escalate, to bring the war to the territory of our country. Just like that, with direct strikes,” Zakharova said.

Nuland’s comments came a day after Secretary of State Antony Blinken acknowledged that a Ukrainian attempt at retaking Crimea would be a “red line” for Russian President Vladimir Putin and would risk a major response from Moscow. US support for such operations would increase the risk of provoking Moscow and heighten the chances of a direct clash between NATO and Russia.

Putin has shown that he will significantly escalate the war over attacks on Crimea. Russia did not start large-scale missile strikes on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure until after the truck bombing of the Kerch Bridge, which connects Crimea to the Russian mainland.

While Ukraine hasn’t been in a position where it can launch an offensive against Crimea, the Biden

administration has made clear throughout the conflict that it wouldn't discourage Kyiv from attacking the peninsula.

Back in the summer of 2022, when the US first provided the HIMARS rocket systems to Ukraine, the administration sought assurances that the weapons wouldn't be used to target Russian territory. When asked by Antiwar.com if that restriction applied to Crimea, a State Department spokesperson replied, "Crimea is Ukraine."

Russia has controlled Crimea since 2014, but neither the US nor Kyiv recognize the peninsula as Russian territory. The people of Crimea voted to join Russia following a US-backed coup in Kyiv, which Nuland played an instrumental role in, and polling since 2014 has shown that they are still happy with the change.

by Dave DeCamp

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