



White House Says Russian Forces 20 Miles Outside Ukraine's Capital

Description

USA/RUSSIA/UKRAINE: Update(10:50pmET): Possible cruise or ballistic missiles have reportedly hit targets in or around the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. It's unclear the degree to which the strikes are sustained at this point.

Whatever was shot down over Kyiv was pretty big pic.twitter.com/aV6a3VwPgX

— OSINTtechnical (@Osinttechnical) [February 25, 2022](#)

CNN reporting now the explosion over Kyiv tonight was a Ukrainian SU-27 shot down by Russian anti-air battery in the city's suburbs. Ukraine has lost the skies over its capital. Grim.

— Paul McLeary (@paulmcleary) [February 25, 2022](#)

The White House has informed lawmakers in Congress that it believes Russian forces [are now a mere 20 miles from Kiev](#).

A [#Russian](#) aircraft shot down by [#Ukrainian](#) air defenses falls on residential areas in [#Kyiv](#). pic.twitter.com/kNR9yFwSGv

— NEXTA (@nexta_tv) [February 25, 2022](#)

Large blasts are being reported by Western correspondents in the early morning hours local time.

A fire in an apartment building after an air attack on [#Kyiv](#). pic.twitter.com/1TnRCHHYff

— NEXTA (@nexta_tv) [February 25, 2022](#)

CNN is [reporting](#):

The Ukrainian capital Kyiv was targeted with missile fire early Friday local time, according to an adviser to the country's government.

“Strikes on Kyiv with cruise or ballistic missiles continued,” Anton Gerashchenko, advisor to the Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine told reporters via text message.

Ukraine's capital city Kiev under missile attack.

Heavy explosions are heard all around the city. [#Ukraine #Russia #Kiev](#)
pic.twitter.com/D9yAoIFebW

— MiddleEastWatch (@MiddleEastWatc1) [February 25, 2022](#)

President Zelensky in an earlier appeal to the world, said a new “iron curtain” is descending over Europe.

VIDEO: ‘New iron curtain’ cutting off Russia, says Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“What do we hear today? It’s not just rocket explosions, fighting and the roar of aircraft. This is the sound of a new iron curtain lowering and closing Russia off from the civilised world”
pic.twitter.com/HZJTG2h7oa

— AFP News Agency (@AFP) [February 25, 2022](#)

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Update(6:42pmET): Shortly before 1am Kiev time Ukraine’s President Zelensky announced:
“The enemy’s sabotage forces have entered the capital. Me and my family are remaining.”

“We need to talk about a ceasefire with Russia,” he added in the video message. Then what followed suggests the brutal reality is finally sinking in that despite years of ‘promises’ from Washington and the West of a “path to NATO membership” – **none of his backers or Ukraine’s allies are coming to help:**

“We are not afraid to talk to Russia. We are not afraid to talk about security guarantees for our state. We are not afraid to talk about neutral status. But what security guarantees will we have? But which countries will give them?” [Zelensky says in response](#) to a prior Russian

offer to begin to negotiation “terms of surrender”.

“We are left alone in defense of our state. Who is ready to fight with us? I don’t see it. Who is ready to guarantee Ukraine’s accession to Nato? Everyone is afraid,” added Zelensky.

“I asked the 27 leaders of Europe whether Ukraine should be in Nato. I asked directly. **They are all afraid.** And we are not afraid,” he said.

The world is now witnessing in real time what prominent geopolitical analyst John Mearsheimer predicted over a half-decade ago against the backdrop of the initial West-backed Ukraine coup...

Analysis & prediction on Ukraine from 6 years ago:

“The West is leading Ukraine down the primrose path & the end result is Ukraine is going to get wrecked.”

-John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the U. of Chicago, pic.twitter.com/kPQNH58o7G

— Prodigal Son (@ThePr0diga1S0n) [January 24, 2022](#)

“The West is leading Ukraine down the primrose path & the end result is Ukraine is going to get wrecked,” Mearsheimer said in a clip that’s lately resurfaced and widely circulating.

Zelensky’s latest comments showing deep frustration and desperation came hours after President Biden in an address on the crisis confirmed that **“US forces are not going to fight in Ukraine”** while also rolling out fresh sanctions which stop far short of what Congressional hawks are demanding. On the energy front, [he had said](#) while crucially **sparing key Russian energy exports from sanctions**:

“In our sanctions package, we specifically designed energy payments to continue. We are closely monitoring energy supplies for any disruption,” Biden said from the East Room of the White House. “We have been coordinating with major oil-producing and consuming countries...”

??Russia says the final straw was President Zelensky’s declaration of intent to restore Ukraine as a nuclear power. This, they say, sealed the invasion

— Murad Gazdiev (@MuradGazdiev) [February 24, 2022](#)

After the first full day of fighting, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine says that in total 30 Russian tanks, 130 armored fighting vehicles, 5 aircraft and 6 helicopters were taken out by Ukraine’s military. However, without doubt the Ukrainian losses are much, much more severe.

Meanwhile fresh reports say Russia is preparing to begin a **“large-scale bombardment of Ukrainian capital Kiev around 03:00am Ukraine time,”** based on a CNN correspondent citing US intelligence

sources.

CNN's team witnessed Russian airborne forces engaging in firefight with Ukrainian soldiers north of Kyiv pic.twitter.com/8z7KexZiL5

— ELINT News (@ELINTNews) [February 24, 2022](#)

Ukraine's Defense Ministry is vowing to continue defending the country, also as Zelensky belatedly issued a 'full mobilization order' – [which also](#) **bars all military eligible males from fleeing the country ranging in age from 16 to 60.**

If true this would be a stunning development. Ukraine Minister of Defense claims to have re-secured the airport, seized by Russian Air Assault Forces—Russia's elite military units—on the outskirts of the capital, Kyiv. He added the fight continues. pic.twitter.com/6SpT7lhIn6

— Alexander S. Vindman (@AVindman) [February 24, 2022](#)

Below: a round-up of confirmed footage via NY Times...

Here's what the first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine looked like around the country. The attack left dozens dead and drew new sanctions that President Biden said would buckle Russia's economy.

Follow live updates as the fighting continues. <https://t.co/dQyc5v1EbW>
pic.twitter.com/e7Men35AJa

— The New York Times (@nytimes) [February 24, 2022](#)

Footage of the airport bombing in Ivano-Frankivsk. [#Ukraine](#) [#Russia](#)
pic.twitter.com/MLVuNyPitI

— ? (@w4rw4tcher) [February 24, 2022](#)

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Update(4:28pmET): The US and NATO are apparently doubling down: despite Ukraine seeing overwhelming Russian forces used to subdue the country (along with Belarussian troops), Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Minister has announced Kiev will receive **“new defensive weapons” from Washington.**

Simultaneously, Ukraine's defense minister says Russia is **“preparing a new wave of attacks, including air strikes.”**

Call with [@SecBlinken](#) on ways to stop Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Secretary informed me on the new U.S. sanctions on Russia, as well as plans to deliver new defensive weapons to help Ukraine defend itself. Ukraine holds ground. We need the world to help us.

— Dmytro Kuleba (@DmytroKuleba) [February 24, 2022](#)

However, it appears the debate inside the administration may be continuing on the extent it wants to go on provoking Russia further, after Biden earlier in the day made clear the US won't send troops to Ukraine to engage Russia.

This also as Ukraine's government is touting that its **arming a local resistance made up of civilians and military veterans...**

"We are being attacked from the south, north, east & from the air," – Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky says weapons Will be given out to civilians. "Our future depends on every citizen". [#Putin](#) [#Russia](#) [#UkraineWar](#) map via [@nytimes](#) [pic.twitter.com/rioO9LQhpK](#)

— Andrea Hamblin (@AndieHamblin) [February 24, 2022](#)

SCOOP: Inside the Biden admin there are fears that arming Ukraine's resistance could be seen as escalatory, three people familiar tell [@RobbieGramer](#) and me.

Some officials also worry the U.S. could be seen as a legal co-combatant to a wider war w/ Russia <https://t.co/NI3RYxacfe>

— Jack Detsch (@JackDetsch) [February 24, 2022](#)

Some evidence has emerged in the last half-day of fighting that in some places the Russians may not be encountering much resistance as they approach Ukrainian forces and bases.

Footage appears from Kherson region which shows Russian helicopters arrive on the territory of one of the military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Ukrainian military does not open fire and does not offer resistance, they just let them land on their base. No resistance [pic.twitter.com/gqIJ1z1Jz1](#)

— ASB News / MILITARY?? (@ASBMilitary) [February 24, 2022](#)

However, one major reported reversal happened in the last hours at the major Hostomel airfield near Kiev, which is reportedly back in Ukrainian military control after fierce fighting. Russia took it early in the day after a major aerial assault.

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Update(1:49pmET): Ukraine's government has confirmed that the Chernobyl power plant site has been seized by Russian forces. "The Prime Minister made the announcement in a televised briefing, saying Russian troops had taken control of the zone and the nuclear power plant," *Bloomberg* confirms.

"The facility is located about 80 miles (129km) north of Kyiv, several miles south of the Belarus border. **Holding Chernobyl would provide Russian troops a staging point that couldn't be shelled,**" the report adds, in reference to the potential for dangerous radioactive fallout given the permanent presence of **nuclear waste** there. Speculation remains that should the site come under direct shelling, there could be nuclear contamination released into the air, potentially impacting other areas in Europe.

The first video from the captured Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Ukraine's PM Shmyhal has confirmed that the exclusion zone and all the NPP facilities have come under the control of the Russian forces. pic.twitter.com/D1da62UiRV

— Tadeusz Giczán ?? (@TadeuszGiczán) [February 24, 2022](#)

Multiple Ukrainian officials confirming Russia captured Chernobyl area.

— Richard Engel (@RichardEngel) [February 24, 2022](#)

Russian state media is in the evening Thursday (local time) citing Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov to say that **Moscow is offering Kiev "terms of surrender"**. Meanwhile...

WESTERN ALLIES SEE KYIV FALLING TO RUSSIAN FORCES WITHIN HOURS

Peskov [said](#): *The president formulated his vision of what we would expect from Ukraine in order for the so-called 'red-line' problems to be resolved. This is neutral status, and this is a refusal to deploy weapons.*

And further:

*The operation has its goals – they must be achieved. The president said that all decisions have been made, and the goals will be achieved," Peskov continued, **suggesting that, if Kiev were to agree to meet the demands, the current military attack on Ukraine could be called off.***

Moscow is willing to negotiate terms of surrender with kyiv, Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov.

In exchange Ukraine would: a guarantee of neutral status and the promise of no weapons on its territory. Per RT.

— Richard Engel (@RichardEngel) [February 24, 2022](#)

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Update(10:11amET): The potential is rising for greater fallout from the war across Europe, as intense fighting is being reported centered in the Chernobyl area. Ukrainian authorities are sounding the alarm over potentially disastrous scenarios which could ensue in **areas of the Chernobyl containment zone**, which includes an expansive region surrounding the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant where **radioactive contamination is highest**, since the April 1986 disaster. Russian troops are reportedly entering the area from Belarus, according to *Interfax*:

Advisor to Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Anton Gerashchenko said that Russian troops from the territory of Belarus **entered the zone of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant (NPP)**.

Gerashchenko stressed that **“if a nuclear waste storage facility is destroyed as a result of enemy artillery strikes, then radioactive dust can cover the territories of Ukraine, Belarus and the EU countries!”**

Ukraine's President Zelensky has also reportedly sounded the alarm over combat in the containment area:

UKRAINE PRESIDENT SAYS RUSSIAN OCCUPATION FORCES ARE TRYING TO CAPTURE THE CHERNOBYL PLANT

Russian occupation forces are trying to seize the [#Chornobyl_NPP](#). Our defenders are giving their lives so that the tragedy of 1986 will not be repeated. Reported this to [@SwedishPM](#). This is a declaration of war against the whole of Europe.

— ?????????? ?????????? (@ZelenskyyUa) [February 24, 2022](#)

clarifying: advisor says heaving fighting MAY disturb nuclear waste.

— Richard Engel (@RichardEngel) [February 24, 2022](#)

It goes without saying that given the ferocity of Russia's ongoing air and ground campaign, any major incident there could spark broader panic for Europe, and a possible long term negative health impact in parts of Europe.

Meanwhile Russia's air war continues to intensify...

Video of a dangerously close air-to-ground strike. Unclear of purpose or target.
pic.twitter.com/CKIVjRWEyN

— Global: MilitaryInfo (@Global_Mil_Info) [February 24, 2022](#)

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Now many hours into Russia's attack that started around 5am Kiev time, it's become clear that a full-scale 'shock and awe' type invasion is clearly on – which is not just limited to Donbas in the east. Stunning videos from on the ground show what can be described as an ongoing air war on Kiev and several other cities across the country. Tanks have also been seen speeding across Ukraine's border from Belarus, with widespread reports that Belarusian soldiers are mounting the attack alongside Russian troops.

Russia's military had announced within just a couple hours into the offensive that all of Ukraine's air defense systems have been taken out. A massive Russian aerial presence, including fighter jets and helicopters, has been confirmed over much of the country.

Confirmed by Ukrainian authorities. A large air assault operation with Mi-8 helicopters on Antonov International Airport in Hostomel. Interior Ministry says Russia has seized control. Very dangerous; it's just 15 minutes west of the capital ring road.
pic.twitter.com/JhlyVktVRC

— Christopher Miller (@ChristopherJM) [February 24, 2022](#)

Soon after the initial attack which also included cruise missile launches, which likely came from Russia's Black Sea fleet, Kiev [authorities cited](#) "hundreds" of Ukrainians killed, including civilians.

It's believed that much of Ukraine's command and control military infrastructure was targeted and hit in the first wave, also as Ukraine border guards were attack, with some reports of soldiers fleeing the Russian advance. Moscow has declared safe passage for any Ukrainian soldier laying down their arms.

Ukraine's state emergency service has also said a Ukrainian military plane was downed, which killed five people. This as surreal battlefield footage continues to evidence the ferocity of an air war in progress.

A group of Russian helicopters was attacked using man-portable air defense systems (or RPGs).
Countermeasures are active.

20 km to Kiev. Vyshgorod, Kiev region. pic.twitter.com/iRL2SsaO7q

— War News? (@AlphaW4r) [February 24, 2022](#)

Video pic.twitter.com/3s6HldT3xC

— OSINTtechnical (@Osinttechnical) [February 24, 2022](#)

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Thursday issued comment on the scope and goal of the military objections, citing Putin's aim of the "demilitarization and denazification" of Ukraine.

"Ideally, Ukraine should be liberated, cleansed of Nazis, of pro-Nazi people and ideology," Peskov said, saying that operations would end only once these objectives have been reached. It remains unclear whether this will mean regime change in Kiev, though at this point that scenario is looking more than likely. There were early reports that President Zelensky has been offered safe passage if he leaves Ukraine.

Russian Ka-52 shot down in Hostomel from up close. You can clearly see the 'Belarusian' V marking. One of the pilots has been taken prisoner. pic.twitter.com/EymYhnohoe

— Tadeusz Giczán ?? (@TadeuszGiczán) [February 24, 2022](#)

Ukraine national police and emergency services have said there's been fighting throughout the entire country, with Russia conducting over 200 attacks, with **severe clashes ongoing in various parts of Ukraine.**

Footage of Russian soldiers hoisting the Russian flag on a hydroelectric plant building in Nova Kakhovka, 60km into Ukrainian territory. The Crimean front appears to have collapsed pic.twitter.com/nn4rThddZn

— Tadeusz Giczán ?? (@TadeuszGiczán) [February 24, 2022](#)

Russian tanks rolling past [@fpleitgenCNN](#) while he's live on air. "That is the road leading to Ukraine." pic.twitter.com/N02h0whaHQ

— Kaitlan Collins (@kaitlancollins) [February 24, 2022](#)

President Biden has vowed severe and far-reaching new sanctions, which he said will be announced in an address on Thursday. German chancellor Olaf Scholz and other Western leaders condemned what Scholz called a "reckless act by President Putin," and "terrible day for Ukraine and **a dark day for Europe.**"

Military airport in Lutsk, Ukraine destroyed. Tactical strikes on military installations continue. pic.twitter.com/YBDBRDIQQ9

— Live Monitor (@amlivemon) [February 24, 2022](#)

“There is no justification for any of this — this is Putin’s war,” Scholz said at a news conference in Berlin.

The large in scope Russian campaign is now being [widely described](#) as **Putin’s “shock and awe”** war – to borrow from America’s Iraq War – in the heart of eastern Europe. *Bloomberg* and others are calling it **Europe’s worst security crisis since World War II**.

by Tyler Durden

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1. History-Archaeology-Past Mysteries
2. Main
3. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

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