



Written by [John Larabell](#) on May 31, 2024

NATO Gives Ukraine “Permission” to Hit Russian Territory With Western Weapons

In another step forward on the escalation escalator, NATO countries are now giving Ukraine official “permission” to use Western weapons for striking deep into Russian territory.

While Ukraine has fired missiles and drones into Russian territory periodically since 2022, Western nations officially discouraged the Kiev government from doing so in order to avoid escalation with nuclear-armed Russia.

Now, it seems as if NATO member states have done a U-turn. Several NATO countries, including the United States, have given Ukraine the green light to fire at Russia.



AP Images
Jens Stoltenberg

“The president recently directed his team to ensure that Ukraine is able to use US supplied-weapons for counterfire purposes in Kharkiv so Ukraine can hit back at Russian forces hitting them or preparing to hit them,” a U.S. official [told CNN](#) Thursday.

Today Secretary of State Antony Blinken [elaborated](#) at a NATO conference in Prague: “Over the past few weeks, Ukraine came to us and asked for the authorization to use weapons that were provided to defend against this aggression, including against Russian forces that are massing on the Russian side of the border.”

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg echoed Blinken’s comments, [stating](#), “Allies have for many years, or since this war started back in 2022, accepted that their weapons are used also for strikes against legitimate targets inside [Russia]. For instance, United Kingdom has provided Storm Shadow cruise missiles for a long time without any restrictions.... Russia has attacked Ukraine, [which] has the right to defend themselves. And that includes also attacking military legitimate targets inside Russia.”

Germany, once reluctant to provoke Russia, is jumping on the bandwagon as well. As noted by Politico:

“In recent weeks, Russia has prepared, coordinated and carried out attacks from positions in the Kharkiv area, in particular from the directly adjacent Russian border region,” German government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit said Friday.

Ukraine “has the right, guaranteed under international law, to defend itself against these attacks,” he added. “To do so, it can use the weapons supplied for this purpose in accordance with its international legal obligations, including those supplied by us.”

In recent days Chancellor Olaf Scholz had underscored Ukraine’s right to defend itself by striking targets inside Russia in accordance with international law, but had [remained vague](#) on whether Berlin had given Ukraine permission to use German-provided weapons to do so.



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Scholz has so far [refused](#) to send Ukraine its long-range Taurus cruise missiles, which could be used to strike deep into Russian territory, arguing it could bring Germany into direct confrontation with Russia. But Germany has provided other weapons systems that could potentially be used to strike targets inside Russia near the city of Kharkiv, including self-propelled howitzers and Mars II rocket launchers.

The reality is that such strikes are likely to go beyond merely attacking Russian forces gathered near the border of Ukraine. Medium-to-long-range missile and drone strikes on military bases, airfields, fuel depots, and oil refineries are possible.

Russia, for its part, has not remained silent on this new potential escalation.

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev [warned on Telegram](#), “NATO countries that have approved strikes with their weapons on Russian territory should be aware that their equipment and specialists will be destroyed not only in Ukraine, but also at any point from where Russian territory is attacked.... All their military equipment and specialists fighting against us will be destroyed both on the territory of former Ukraine and on the territory of other countries, should strikes be carried out from there against Russian territory.”

Medvedev also noted that Ukraine’s long-range missile systems are “directly operated by servicemen from NATO countries,” amounting to direct participation in the war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin [gave a warning of his own](#), telling reporters Tuesday while on a state visit to Uzbekistan,

If [Stoltenberg] is talking about potentially attacking Russia’s territory with long-range precision weapons, he, as a person who heads a military-political organisation, even though he is a civilian like me, should be aware of the fact that long-range precision weapons cannot be used without space-based reconnaissance. This is my first point.

My second point is that the final target selection and what is known as launch mission can only be made by highly skilled specialists who rely on this reconnaissance data, technical reconnaissance data. For some attack systems, such as Storm Shadow, these launch missions can be put in automatically, without the need to use Ukrainian military. Who does it? Those who manufacture and those who allegedly supply these attack systems to Ukraine do. This can and does happen without the participation of the Ukrainian military. Launching other systems, such as ATACMS, for example, also relies on space reconnaissance data, targets are identified and automatically communicated to the relevant crews that may not even realise what exactly they are putting in. A crew, maybe even a Ukrainian crew, then puts in the corresponding launch mission. However, the mission is put together by representatives of NATO countries, not the Ukrainian military.

So, these officials from NATO countries, especially the ones based in Europe, particularly in small European countries, should be fully aware of what is at stake. They should keep in mind that theirs are small and densely populated countries, which is a factor to reckon with before they start talking about striking deep into the Russian territory. It is a serious matter and, without a doubt, we are watching this very carefully.

As NATO nations become more desperate in their attempt to defeat Putin’s Russia, the risk of



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dangerous escalation increases. If America's leaders would simply follow the non-interventionist foreign policy of the country's Founders and stay out of Europe's wars, this conflict would end quickly. If not, there is a real potential for WWII breaking out over the next year.



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