

Ukraine Receives Defensive Military Aid from U.K.

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A Ukrainian military serviceman walks along the front line in the separatist-held Donetsk region. **Anatolii Stepanov / AFP**

Britain has sent defensive weapons to Ukraine amid mounting worries that Russia could invade its ex-Soviet neighbor, which is asking for Western military aid.

British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace told Parliament that London delivered to Ukraine on Monday a small number of [anti-armor defensive weapon systems](#) as well as a small number of training personnel.

“This support is for short-range, and clearly defensive weapons capabilities; they are not strategic weapons and pose no threat to Russia,” Wallace said.

Canada also dispatched a small contingent of its special forces to Ukraine on Jan. 9, the country’s Global News broadcaster [reported](#), citing unnamed sources.

Neither the U.K. nor Canada specified the number of weapons and troops sent to Ukraine.

The Kremlin [said](#) Tuesday that the reported arms supplies will not ease tensions in the region and also play into Russia's concerns that Ukraine is being "exploited."

Kyiv asked Western governments for additional arms supplies in the face of Moscow's invasion threat after security talks between Russia and the U.S., NATO and the OSCE ended without a breakthrough last week.

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Following the talks, Russia demanded that the U.S. and NATO provide a written response to its list of security guarantees early this week. The demands — which Washington and NATO rejected — include banning Ukraine from ever joining NATO and removing the Western military alliance's troops and weapons from eastern Europe.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [warned](#) Friday that NATO's deployment of attack weapons in Ukraine would cross "another red line" for Moscow.

The White House warned last week that the Kremlin — which has an estimated 100,000 troops camping out on Ukraine's border — was working on creating a false pretext to attack. Lavrov dismissed the claim as "total disinformation."

Fears of a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine have been compounded by a cyberattack on Kyiv's government websites by unknown hackers; Belarus' announcement of joint military drills with Russia near the Ukrainian border; and a New York Times report that Russia nearly emptied out its embassy in Kyiv earlier this month.

The Russian Foreign Ministry [responded](#) to The New York Times' report by saying its embassy in Ukraine is operating as usual.

U.K. Defense Secretary Wallace said Monday he had invited Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to visit London as Western governments seek a diplomatic off-ramp.

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