The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kremlin Warns of Major Escalation After U.S. Allows Ukraine to Strike Russia With Long-Range Weapons

November 18, 2024



duma.gov.ru

Allowing Ukraine to target Russia with U.S.-supplied long-range missiles would trigger a "significant new round of escalation" in the war, the Kremlin's top spokesman said Monday, as the conflict approaches the 1,000-day mark since Moscow's full-scale invasion.

U.S. media reported late Sunday that President Joe Biden gave Kyiv long-sought permission to strike targets inside Russia using the Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS). This decision was said to have come in response to the deployment of thousands of North Korean troops to Russia.

"If such a decision has indeed been formulated and communicated to the Kyiv regime, it marks a significant escalation and a fundamentally new stage in terms of U.S. involvement in this conflict," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists when asked to comment on the reports.

He added that, so far, authorities in Moscow had not seen official confirmation of the U.S. media reports, but said that Russia's position on this issue of long-range strikes was "articulated extremely clearly and unambiguously" by President Vladimir Putin earlier this year.

Related article: Biden Authorizes Ukraine to Use Long-Range U.S. Missiles Inside Russia – NYT

Putin warned in September that allowing the use of long-range missile attacks in Russia "would in a significant way change the very nature of the conflict."

"It would mean that NATO countries, the U.S., European countries, are at war with Russia," the Kremlin leader said at the time. "If that's the case, then taking into account the change of nature of the conflict, we will take the appropriate decisions based on the threats that we will face"

Just days later, Putin announced plans to broaden Russia's rules on the use of its nuclear stockpiles. These include allowing a nuclear response to a "massive" air attack and against an attack by non-nuclear states supported by nuclear powers.

Axios, citing an anonymous source familiar with the matter, reported that the White House had authorized Ukraine to use ATACMS missiles only in the Kursk region, where North Korean troops are believed to have been deployed to help Russia recapture territory from Ukrainian forces.

Ukraine plans to conduct its fire long-range attacks into Russia "in the coming days", Reuters reported, citing an anonymous U.S. official familiar with the decision.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/11/18/kremlin-warns-of-major-escalation-after-us-allows-ukraine-to-strike-russia-with-long-range-weapons-a87044