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U.S. Confirms Authorization for Ukraine to Use Long-Range Missiles Against Russia

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U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols. **OEA - OAS / flickr**

The U.S. State Department confirmed Tuesday that President Joe Biden authorized Ukraine to use long-range missiles to target Russian territory, a move that the Kremlin has warned would lead to "significant escalation."

The policy shift, first reported by the New York Times and Washington Post on Sunday, follows Ukraine's repeated requests to use the weapons against targets in Russia and allegedly comes in response to North Korea sending troops to aid Moscow's war effort.

Assistant Secretary of State Brian Nichols, who confirmed the reports, told the Brazilian news outlet O Globo that the decision was aimed at pressuring Moscow into peace talks.

"Perhaps it will begin to negotiate peace or, better yet, will simply withdraw from Ukrainian territory," Nichols was quoted as saying at the G20 summit in Rio.

Nichols emphasized that the weapons would enhance Ukraine's defense capabilities and signal to the Kremlin that efforts to seize Ukrainian territory through force would fail.

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Earlier, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller declined to confirm the reports, saying that the U.S. would continue to adjust its support to Ukraine as needed.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga described the authorized use of U.S.-made ATACMS long-range missiles against targets inside Russia as a potential "game changer."

"The longer Ukraine can strike, the shorter the war will be," Sybiga said ahead of a UN Security Council meeting marking 1,000 days since Russia's full invasion.

At the G20 summit, Biden reiterated U.S. support for Ukraine's sovereignty. "Everyone around this table, in my view, should as well," he said.

Earlier this week, the Kremlin accused Washington of seeking to escalate the war. And on Tuesday, President Vladimir Putin approved changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine, expanding conditions for nuclear use.

AFP contributed reporting.

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