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## **US involvement in the conflict in Ukraine**

On September 15, 2022 and February 21, 2023, the Foreign Ministry made demarches with protest notes to the US Embassy in Moscow in connection with numerous facts of the direct involvement of US citizens, including retired and active military personnel, in hostilities as part of formations subordinate to the Kiev regime.

Russian officials said the arms supplied to the Kiev regime and the personnel servicing them were regarded as lawful targets for destruction. We emphasised that to avoid negative consequences, the United States should immediately withdraw its military personnel, discontinue arms supplies and stop providing the Armed Forces of Ukraine with guidance in real time for striking the deployment sites of the Armed Forces of Russia and civilians.

Russian officials made it perfectly clear to the Americans that the abetting the mass war crimes committed by Ukrainian formations is confirmed by objective evidence that cuts through the standard arrogant official explanations. In particular, the note of the US Embassy in Moscow dated March 6, 2023 reproduced the well-worn claim that “the US does not use military force against Russia, does not operate weapons against Russian forces, does not direct or control Ukrainian forces, and does not engage Russian forces on the battlefield.” The note said that “all US military personnel in Ukraine work in support of the Embassy.”

The mass of publicly accessible data and information available to Russia suggests that the US has deliberately sought to unleash a proxy war and is siding with one party in the conflict with a view to achieving its central goal of inflicting a “strategic defeat” on Russia. In this “division of labour”, the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev regularly provides cannon fodder in exchange for unprecedented financial injections, some of which goes to line the pockets of Vladimir Zelensky and his entourage. The Kiev regime is also receiving supplies of arms and equipment, including high-tech combat hardware (to replace destroyed arsenals and the ruined Ukrainian defence industry). The Pentagon and NATO structures are also supplying Kiev with the full range of intelligence

information while NATO officials plan and directly command operations by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

While rejecting the obvious involvement of US military personnel in the hostilities, US officials do not conceal their intention to “continue to support Ukraine as long as it is necessary.” In the meantime, they are urging their clients to fight “to the last Ukrainian.” In public statements, Biden administration officials are justifying strikes on Russian territory.

Thus, speaking in the Carnegie Endowment on February 16, 2023, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland emphasised that “Russia has turned Crimea into a massive military installation... those are legitimate targets, Ukraine is hitting them, and we are supporting that.” In turn, when asked in a CNN interview on May 12, 2023 whether Ukraine should have weapons that can reach Russian targets in Crimea, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan replied: “We have not placed limitations on Ukraine being able to strike on its territory within its internationally recognised borders.”

In order to boost military supplies to Kiev amid combat operations of high intensity in coordination with allies, a new entity – the Joint Production Acceleration Cell (JPAC) – was formed at the Pentagon.

In general, since February 24, 2022, the Biden administration has provided Kiev with more than \$40 billion in military technical assistance. So far, 31 M1A1 Abrams tanks and 45 T-72B tanks, 20 Mi-17 helicopters, Patriot anti-aircraft missile battery and guided missiles, 8 NASAMS anti-aircraft missile systems and guided missiles, as well as 38 HIMARS MLRS, 650 armoured personnel carriers and many other weapons and military equipment, including M-777 howitzers, unmanned aerial vehicles, ship attack missiles, artillery shells, etc. have been supplied or are scheduled to be supplied.

The US administration is in the process of reviewing Kiev's requests for delivery of F-16 tactical fighters, multi-purpose UAVs MQ-1C Grey Eagle and MQ-9A Reaper and also ATACMS operational and tactical missiles (range up to 300 km) that can hit targets located deep inside Russian territory.

Since the beginning of the special military operation, US instructors have trained 13,600 Ukrainian servicemen (training is provided in Germany at the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels US Army training centres). Tactical, battle drill, and special arms tactical exercises, as well as driving and live fire exercises are conducted. Special focus goes to the training of artillery crews (M142 HIMARS MLRS, M109 self-propelled howitzers, M777 and M119 towed howitzers) and armoured fighting vehicle crews (Bradley fighting vehicles, M113 APC and

Stryker). The training of Ukrainian M1A1 Abrams tank crews will begin this summer at the US Army's Grafenwoehr Training Area and will last 2.5 months.

In 2022, the US military supplies were sent every 9 to 10 days averaging about \$630 million each. This year, shipments are made every 11 to 12 days, each averaging about \$1.3 billion.

In order to coordinate military aid to Ukraine and to involve as many countries as possible in this activity, Washington established the Ukraine Defence Contact Group in April 2022. Its meetings are typically held at the Ramstein Air Base, Germany, or via videoconference at least once a month and are chaired by US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

In addition, in November 2022 the US Department of Defence formed new headquarters within the United States European Command (Wiesbaden, Germany) called Security Assistance Group - Ukraine (SAG-U), staffed by 300 US Army officers. Its main tasks include organising supplies of Western-made weapons to Kiev and training Ukrainian troops at US training ranges and on the territory of its European partners, as well as sharing intelligence with the military leadership of Ukraine. US officers process and transmit in real time information about the movement of Russian troops, which is obtained with the help of Western technical means of surveillance. A separate subdivision in charge of special operations, including the organisation of clandestine and sabotage activities, has been created in conjunction with the Security Assistance Group.

Washington and its allies widely use space and aerial reconnaissance assets to provide the Ukrainian Armed Forces with information about the Russian Armed Forces. The orbital constellation includes about 450 satellites, most of which are commercial Earth remote sensing and radiotechnical monitoring satellites. They provide high-frequency observation of target areas, accurate identification of reconnaissance objects, and interception of messages sent by radio communication channels. In the interest of detailed strike planning, three-dimensional digital models of targets and surrounding terrain are compiled and refined on the basis of the US and allied intelligence, and optimum routes for UAV missiles to bypass Russian air defence zones are developed.

In addition to space systems, reconnaissance aircraft and UAVs, which perform daily flights from air bases in Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania and Türkiye, are widely used to monitor the situation. The headquarters of the US forces in Europe and NATO forces use the data obtained by space and aviation means to carry out a comprehensive analysis of Russian troop movements and developments in the area of the special military operation.

Transmission of the processed data to the Armed Forces of Ukraine is carried out via available telecom lines (satellite, radio relay, cellular, fiber-optic and internet). An important role is assigned to the US commercial satellite communications system Starlink.

At the hearings in US Congress as early as in March 2022, Lieutenant General Scott Berrier, Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency, described the exchange of information between Washington and Kiev as “unprecedented.” In turn, General Paul Nakasone, Director of the National Security Agency and Head of the US Cyber Command, said at the same hearings that throughout his service he had not seen a better exchange of accurate, relevant and actionable intelligence information. He emphasised that the Pentagon was supplying the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the latest information.

On April 22, 2022, NBC News published online an article “US intel helped Ukraine protect air defences, shoot down Russian plane carrying hundreds of troops.” Citing current and former US officials, NBC News wrote: “As Russia launched its invasion, the US gave Ukrainian forces detailed intelligence about exactly when and where Russian missiles and bombs were intended to strike, prompting Ukraine to move air defences and aircraft out of harm’s way.” It noted that this “near real-time intelligence-sharing also paved the way for Ukraine to shoot down a Russian transport plane carrying hundreds of troops in the early days of the war, the officials say, helping repel a Russian assault on a key airport near Kyiv.”

On May 11, 2022, the Washington Post presented an editorial entitled “Intelligence-sharing with Ukraine designed to prevent wider war.” It said that “information about the location and movements of Russian forces is flowing to Ukraine in real-time, and it includes satellite imagery and reporting gleaned from sensitive US sources”.

On September 8, 2022, CIA Director William Burns made a statement confirming that the US purposefully declassified its intelligence information on the special military operation to expose Russia’s actions and plans in Ukraine.

On September 13, 2022, the New York Times published information about the direct involvement of US officials in planning combat operations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the east of the country. It named US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark A. Milley, American Defence Attaché, Brigadier General Garrick Harmon, and the now retired Defence Undersecretary Colin Kahl.

On September 24, 2022, the Politnavigator website carried an article about a publication by the Beregini hacker group. This group published documents

proving that the Armed Forces of Ukraine had received information from the US Defence Intelligence Agency on targets for missile and artillery strikes in the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics and the liberated regions, the movement of Russian troops and data on the vulnerabilities of the Russian Armed Forces.

On December 21, 2022, the Wall Street Journal carried an article entitled "US Has Eased Intelligence-Sharing Rules to Help Ukraine Target Russians." It said that the US had been providing Kiev "reams of data on the location and movements of Russian troops and equipment and other battlefield information under a vastly expanded intelligence-sharing arrangement."

On February 9, 2023, the Washington Post published an article on how the Armed Forces of Ukraine had attacked targets following guidance from the US. It cited a comment by Pentagon Press Secretary Brigadier General Patrick Ryder. "We have long acknowledged that we share intelligence with Ukraine... and we have optimised over time how we share information to be able to support their requests and their targeting processes at improved speed and scale."

A document by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff of February 15, 2023, analysed how the Armed Forces of Ukraine attacked Russian targets with US JDAM guided air-to-surface weapons. This is also evidence of the Pentagon's direct participation in the preparation and planning of such strikes.

According to the Pentagon's leaks published online (for instance, by Politico on April 14, 2023), there are about 100 representatives of the US Defence Department in Ukraine, including employees of its central office, intelligence centres and units of task forces and radioelectronic intelligence.

As for mercenaries from among US citizens, Washington does not recognise their participation in the conflict. At the same time, the US diplomatic mission in Moscow periodically refers to media reports or information from relatives and demands observance of the Geneva conventions as regards imprisoned militants.

At present, there are three American private military companies in the theatre of hostilities: the Mozart Group, the Sons of Liberty and Academi (formerly Blackwater). In February 2023, head of the Mozart Group Andrew Milburn said his group would leave Ukraine, but did not rule out it could resume its job under another name. According to open sources, about 20 US soldiers of fortune were eliminated during the special military operation (on May 29, 2023, the Washington Post described the destiny of some of them in the article "The American military veterans who've fallen in Ukraine.")

Late last April, the United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) sent to Ukraine a task force of 43 experts to help Kiev under the programme of Hunt Forward Operations. Major General William Hartman, commander of the USCYBERCOM Cyber National Mission Force, reported this at the RSA Conference held in San Francisco, CA, on April 24-27, 2023.

According to leaks in the media, the US Special Operations Command supervises the work of the centres of information and psychological operations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In turn, the Pentagon's Cyber Command and the National Security Agency are planning and coordinating cyberattacks under the Ukrainian flag at Russia's critical information infrastructure. The key targets include Russian banks and financial institutions, transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure, large industrial facilities and network resources providing government services at federal and regional levels. Ukrainian hacker groups affiliated with US intelligence agencies are actively involved in these attacks.



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