

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to urge you to lift the remaining restrictions on Ukraine's use of U.S.-provided long-range systems, specifically Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), against legitimate military targets deeper inside of Russia. These restrictions have hampered Ukraine's ability to defeat Russia's war of aggression and have given the Kremlin's forces a sanctuary from which it can attack Ukraine with impunity.

Your decision earlier this year to partially lift the total ban on Ukrainian strikes on targets in Russia with U.S.-provided weapons was welcome but came too late. Reports indicate that this change in policy helped blunt Russia's offensive in Ukraine's Kharkiv region. However, if the change had come sooner, Russia's offensive against Kharkiv might have been prevented altogether, which in turn would have allowed Ukraine to focus on critical parts of the frontline in the Donetsk region.

We would argue that, of the two main excuses the Biden-Harris administration has provided for not removing the remaining restrictions, neither passes muster. Even if, as has been reported, Russia has moved many of its glide bomb-equipped aircraft out of range of U.S.-provided weapons, there remain numerous other legitimate military targets in range in Russian territory. The Institute for the Study of War assesses that, excluding airfields, there are over 200 legitimate military targets within range of U.S.-provided weapons to include military bases, logistics nodes, fuel depots, ammunition warehouses, and command and control systems.¹

Moreover, the administration's concerns about escalation have been consistently invalidated since Day One of the war. Neither Ukraine's use of U.S.-provided weapons in Russia nor its military incursion into Russia's Kursk region – the first foreign occupation of Russian territory since World War II – have triggered a Russian escalatory response. Recent reports that the real reason your administration opposes lifting these restrictions is not to endanger a future reset with Russia are extremely alarming.² The failed Obama-Biden Russia reset in the wake of Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia made clear Vladimir Putin does not respond to appeasement and olive branches. This conflict will end only when tougher sanctions and Ukraine's battlefield successes

¹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/interactive-map-hundreds-known-russian-military-objects-are-range-atacms>

² <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/08/23/ukraine-biden-weapons-restrictions-00176210>

convince Vladimir Putin that he has nothing left to gain through war and must come to the negotiating table.

We were also deeply disappointed to read reports that the Biden-Harris administration is preventing the United Kingdom and France from permitting Ukraine to use their Storm Shadow and SCALP long-range missiles against legitimate targets in Russian territory, despite their willingness to change their policies. Similar to the Biden-Harris administration's shameful delay in approving our allies' transfer of F-16 jets to Ukraine, the administration is once again stopping our forward-leaning allies from helping Ukraine win.

As long as it is conducting its brutal, full-scale war of aggression, Russia must not be given a sanctuary from which it can execute its war crimes against Ukraine with impunity. The Biden-Harris administration's senseless restrictions, combined with the longstanding slow-rolling of critical weapons approvals and deliveries, are hindering Ukraine's ability to bring this war to a victorious conclusion. It is far past time the administration reverses course and lifts the remaining restrictions on Ukraine's use of U.S.-provided weapons against legitimate military targets in Russia.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee



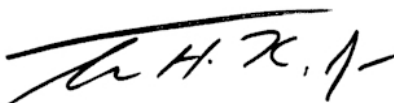
Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee



Michael R. Turner
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence



Ken Calvert
Chairman
Defense Subcommittee, House
Appropriations Committee



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Chairman
Europe Subcommittee, House
Foreign Affairs Committee



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress
Commissioner, Helsinki Commission