

Putin Warns of War with NATO if Ukraine Launches Long-Range Missiles

Russian President Vladimir Putin's warning to NATO leaders that approval for Ukraine to use long-range Western-made missiles that could penetrate deep into Russia "would mean that NATO countries, the United States and European countries, are at war with Russia."

When asked by reporters about the Putin threat, President Joe Biden essentially dismissed his warning, saying after a meeting Friday with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, "I don't think much about Vladimir Putin." Biden said he wanted to make clear that "Putin does not prevail in this war."

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Dmitri Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, asserted Saturday that a pending decision by the U.S. and NATO nations to approve Ukraine's deployment of the missiles would possibly prompt Russia to use nuclear weapons, and he cautioned that Kyiv could be turned into a "gray melted spot."

For much of this month, there have been indications that the U.S. and NATO might change the policy and allow Ukraine's request to use the missiles. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken hinted at such a change on a visit to Kyiv earlier in September.

The head of NATO's military committee, Admiral Rob Bauer from the Netherlands, indicated Saturday that Ukraine would be legally and militarily justified in launching the weapons.

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“Every nation that is attacked has the right to defend itself. And that right doesn’t stop at the border of your own nation,” Bauer declared.

Still, the Biden administration has been slow to agree to the change, perhaps due to divisions within the White House.

The Associated Press reports that two unnamed U.S. officials said they believed one reason for the British prime minister’s visit to Washington was to seek Biden’s approval to allow Ukraine to use British Storm Shadow missiles for expanded strikes in Russia.

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