

British Soldiers in Ukraine Would be Legitimate Target for Russia

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UK's new defense secretary, Grant Shapps, is already involved in controversy, publicly proposing escalations in the Ukrainian conflict. During an interview to a Western media outlet, Shapps revealed that he plans to send British soldiers to Ukrainian territory, where they are expected to train Kiev's troops. The case generated a Russian reaction and a failed attempt at clarification by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

The newly appointed secretary stated that there are plans for the British training program for Ukrainian soldiers to be conducted inside the Ukrainian territory. Furthermore, he said that British production of weapons and military equipment for Kiev could also be relocated to Ukraine, mainly in the west of the country, where the damage from the conflict is not so significant.

"I was talking today about eventually getting the training brought closer and actually into Ukraine as well (...) Particularly in the west of the country, I think the opportunity now is to bring more things 'in country', and not just training... but also we're seeing BAE [an UK defense firm], for example, move into manufacturing 'in country', for example. (...) I'm keen to see other British [military] companies do their bit as well by doing the same thing. So I think there will be a move to get more training and production in the country", he told [The Telegraph](#)'s journalists.

In the interview, Shapps also claimed to have spoken with President Vladimir Zelensky and other Ukrainian state officials about the possibility of British Royal Navy assisting Ukrainian "civilian" vessels, protecting commercial ships from attacks launched by Russian armed forces. He did not clarify how this "help" would be possible, but his words suggest that the British Navy could use direct deterrent methods against Russia, which sounds like a serious threat.

Obviously, all the measures suggested by Shapps will significantly escalate the conflict if they are actually implemented. British soldiers on Ukrainian soil would be a legitimate target for Russian attacks, even if their role on the battlefield is only to instruct Ukrainian troops, without directly participating in the fighting. All foreign military personnel working on Kiev's side in Ukraine are legitimate targets, regardless of their role.

In the same sense, British weapons factories would also certainly be targeted by Russian artillery. Enemy military infrastructure will always be a target for Moscow, which is why British defense companies planning to move to Ukraine must be aware that their facilities will be at great risk due to the high-precision strikes regularly carried out by the Russian armed forces.

As far as vessels are concerned, the situation seems even more delicate. Russia decided to [neutralize](#) all Ukrainian ships in the Black Sea because Moscow's intelligence discovered that many allegedly civilian vessels were carrying weapons and ammunition hidden in containers of grain and food items. This is a strategic decision by the Russian authorities and no country is able to prevent these attacks from occurring. If the British Navy becomes involved in hostilities in the Black Sea to "protect" Ukrainian ships, the consequences could be disastrous, as Moscow will not accept any type of Western direct "deterrence" within the special operation zone.

Russian authorities commented on the case, emphasizing the consequences of Shapps' plans. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev even observed on how this could lead to [World War III](#), as the Russians would be forced to attack NATO military personnel - no longer as mercenaries, but as UK's official troops.

So, reacting to comments on the topic, the day following Shapps' irresponsible statements, British Prime Minister [Rishi Sunak](#) made a declaration trying to "clarify" the situation. He said that no UK instructors will be sent to Ukraine now, asserting that Shapps only meant that "it might well be possible one day in the future for us to do some of that training in Ukraine."

"But that's something for the long term, not the here and now, there are no British soldiers that will be sent to fight in the current conflict. That's not what's happening," he explained.

Sunak however failed to clarify how the British Navy could play a more active role in "protecting" Ukrainian ships, as promised by Shapps. It appears that Sunak just tried to minimize the public impact of Shapps' irresponsible words, but, in practice, the Prime Minister's "clarification" was not enough to ease tensions and rule out the possibility of escalation.

Also, by stating that British soldiers could go to Ukraine "in the future", Sunak is also making it clear that the UK will continue to promote a bellicose policy in Ukraine. One of the objectives of the Russian operation is to make Ukraine a neutral country after the demilitarization process is completed. Obviously, a neutral country cannot receive NATO troops to train its soldiers, so Sunak is just making it clear that London will not cooperate for peace at any time.

In reaction to this, it remains for the Russians not only to seek absolute victory through military means, but also to liberate even more territories, preventing Ukraine from returning

to being a NATO occupation zone after the end of hostilities. For Moscow, the absence of NATO troops in Ukraine is an existential and non-negotiable condition, which is why all necessary measures to achieve this objective will be taken.

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Featured image: UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak greets Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky outside Chequers, the prime minister's countryside residence, where the president arrived by helicopter on Monday seeking pledges of further military support. The UK promised hundreds of air-defense missiles and drones to Ukraine. / UK Government photo.

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