

Obama to Arm Ukrainian Neo-Nazi Militants? Senate Bill Would Authorize \$350 Million Weapons Transfer to Kiev Forces

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Global Research, September 18, 2014

<u>Infowars</u>

Region: Russia and FSU
Theme: US NATO War Agenda

In-depth Report: **UKRAINE REPORT**

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A new bill introduced in the U.S. Senate yesterday would authorize the Obama administration to send \$350 million dollars worth of sophisticated weapons technology to Ukraine despite the fact that neo-nazi militants are openly fighting alongside Kiev forces.

The bipartisan <u>Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014</u>, introduced by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Bob Corker (R-TN), is set to be discussed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee later today.

Despite attempts to de-escalate the crisis in Ukraine after a shaky cease fire was called, the legislation would intensify sanctions against Russia, forcing Moscow to "pay an increasingly heavy price" for its "aggression" in the region. The bill would also authorize President Obama to provide military assistance to Ukraine to the tune of \$350 million dollars.

From the bill;

Providing defense articles, defense services, and training to the Government of Ukraine for the purpose of countering offensive weapons and reestablishing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including anti-tank and anti-armor weapons; crew weapons and ammunition; counter-artillery radars to identify and target artillery batteries; fire control, range finder, and optical and guidance and control equipment; tactical troop-operated surveillance drones, and secure command and communications equipment. It authorizes \$350 million in fiscal year 2015 to carry out these activities.

The notion that such weapons are not "offensive" and can only be used for defensive purposes is clearly a misnomer. <u>Anti-tank weapons include rocket-propelled grenade launchers and bazookas</u> which can be used to target aircraft as well as fortifications and buildings.

With the administration already facing criticism for its decision to arm so-called "moderate" Syrian rebels despite clear evidence that <u>FSA militants have sold weapons to ISIS</u>, the likelihood of powerful weaponry ending up in the hands of neo-nazi militants who are openly aligned with and have fought alongside Kiev forces is extremely troubling.

As the <u>Telegraph reported last month</u>, Kiev is now deliberately working with armed neo-nazi paramilitaries on the front lines of the battle with pro-Russian rebels, men who proudly display SS tattoos on their necks in honor of the feared Waffen SS – the armed wing of Hitler's Nazi party.

When the Ukrainian government was asked about their policy of supporting and using neonazis in battle, Kiev's Anton Gerashchenko was unrepentant, commenting, "The most important thing is their spirit and their desire to make Ukraine free and independent."

The Senate bill risks seeing weapons transferred into the hands of what <u>Foreign Policy</u> <u>magazine calls</u> the "fascist defenders of freedom," including the Azov Battalion, an "openly neo-Nazi unit has suddenly found itself defending the city against what Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called a Russian invasion."



Earlier this month, German television broadcast video which showed Azov militants proudly wearing Nazi SS symbols on their helmets.

The Azov Battalion has also recently been converted into a regiment, making it a de facto part of the Ukrainian Army. <u>The paramilitary group forms</u> "the backbone of the forces fighting against the local self-defense militia advocating independence from Ukraine."

"Azov fighters do more than wave a Swastika-like flag," writes Robert Parry, "they favor the Wolfsangel flag of Hitler's SS divisions, much as some of Ukraine's neo-Nazis still honor Hitler's Ukrainian SS auxiliary, the Galician SS. A Ukrainian hero hailed during the Maidan protests was Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera whose paramilitary forces helped exterminate Jews and Poles."

The prospect of using American tax dollars to arm fascists is unlikely to sit well with millions of Americans whose family members fought to defeat Hitler and Japanese imperialism during World War II.

Following last year's coup d'état, Kiev <u>also handed key positions</u> within the newly formed government to members of the neo-nazi Svoboda Party, despite the fact that one if its top members, Yuriy Mykhalchyshyn, founded a think tank named the Joseph Goebbels Political Research Centre as an homage to the Nazi propaganda minister.

Despite their clear neo-nazi connections, Senator John McCain and others have repeatedly called on the Obama administration to arm pro-Kiev militants.

Plans to further bolster Kiev forces also arrive in the aftermath of numerous incidents involving <u>Ukrainian air strikes on villages</u> which have killed scores of civilians, primarily in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

The one hour video below exhaustively documents how neo-nazi militants were involved in both the overthrow of the elected Ukrainian government as well as fighting on the front lines alongside post-coup Kiev forces.

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