

# Pentagon Denies U.S. Is Providing Ukraine Intel to Kill Russian Generals

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*The Pentagon denied Thursday that the U.S. has shared intelligence with Ukraine with the intent of targeting and killing senior Russian military leaders, stressing that the goal of U.S. intelligence is simply to allow Ukrainian forces to defend themselves against Russia’s invasion.*

**Why it matters:** The New York Times published [a report](#) Wednesday suggesting that U.S. intelligence-sharing has played a key role in the death of “many” of the Russian generals who have been killed in action during the war.

- Ukrainian officials claim their forces have killed at least 12 Russian generals — an [attrition rate](#) that has exceeded the pace of senior commanders killed during Russian or Soviet campaigns in Syria, Chechnya and Afghanistan.
- The U.S. sharing specific, real-time targeting intelligence with Ukraine would be seen as highly provocative in Moscow and have “few precedents,” according to the Times.

**What they’re saying:** “The United States provides battlefield intelligence to help Ukrainians defend their country. We do not provide intelligence on the location of senior military leaders on the battlefield or participate in the targeting decisions of the Ukrainian military,” Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said at a briefing Thursday.

- “Ukrainians have, quite frankly, a lot more information than we do. This is their country, their territory, and they have capable intelligence collection abilities of their own,” he continued.
- “Ukraine combines information that we and other partners provide with the intelligence that they themselves are gathering on the battlefield, and then they make their own decisions and they take their own actions.”

**Kirby refused to comment** on the specifics of the New York Times report, which said U.S. intelligence has had a “decisive effect on the battlefield” by “confirming targets identified by the Ukrainian military and pointing it to new targets.”

**The big picture:** The Biden administration’s fears of provoking Vladimir Putin with overt military assistance to Ukraine have largely dissipated as the scale of Russian atrocities has become clear.

- The U.S. and its European allies are now providing Ukraine with artillery, armored vehicles and other heavy weaponry deemed necessary for the battle in the eastern Donbas region.
- It’s a stark departure from the early weeks of the war, when the Pentagon was hesitant to even discuss [sending Stinger anti-aircraft missiles](#) that are now viewed as a staple of Western military aid.
- The Pentagon has also resumed [training Ukrainian forces in Germany](#) and at other sites in Europe, taking credit for some of their battlefield success even as the U.S. has gone to great lengths to avoid being directly sucked into the conflict.

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