

Your guide to a disrupted world

Offer not available to existing subscribers

Save 33%

War in Ukraine

US warns Iran planning to provide drones to Russia for war in Ukraine

National security official says Tehran is preparing to ship 'hundreds' of unmanned aerial vehicles



US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the US had information indicating that Iran would train Russian forces to use the equipment © Bloomberg

Courtney Weaver in Washington YESTERDAY

Stay across the latest Ukraine coverage

 **Get instant email alerts**



Iran is preparing to supply Russia with hundreds of drones and other unmanned aerial vehicles to support Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, the White House said on Monday.

Jake Sullivan, the national security adviser of President Joe Biden, told reporters the US had information indicating Tehran was “preparing to provide Russia with up to several hundred UAVs . . . on an expedited timeline”. The shipment would include drones that could be used as weapons, Sullivan added.

He said: “Our information further indicates that Iran is preparing to train Russian forces to use these UAVs with initial training sessions slated to begin as soon as early July.”

Sullivan said it was unclear whether [Iran](#) was already delivering the equipment to Russia, or whether shipments would begin at a later date.

The claims from the White House come as Biden is to embark on his [first trip to the Middle East](#) since he became president, with Iran’s actions and role in the region expected to be one of the issues high on the agenda.

expected to be one of the issues high on the agenda.

Biden departs Washington on Wednesday for Israel and the West Bank. He will subsequently travel to Saudi Arabia, where he is expected to push for the world's biggest crude producer to increase production to help bring down global energy prices that have soared during the [war in Ukraine](#).

Sullivan said the US believed Opec producers including Saudi Arabia had the capacity to take further steps to stabilise the market. "We believe that there needs to be adequate supply in the global market to protect the global economy and to protect the American consumer at the pump."

Sullivan said the US administration was in "near daily contact" with Kyiv about how to defend the country against Russian advances while also "reclaim[ing] some of the territory that has been taken from them".

The "fundamental purpose" of the US strategy was "to put the Ukrainians in as strong a position as possible on the battlefield" so that Kyiv would have a better hand "at the negotiating table when diplomacy comes in", Sullivan said.

Russia had been somewhat successful in its attempt "to grind out kilometre by kilometre, inch by inch, some territory in the east [of Ukraine]", he added.

Iran has developed an increasingly sophisticated defence industry during decades of sanctions, including producing its own missiles and drones. The US and Gulf Arab states accuse Tehran of supplying drones to Houthi rebels fighting in Yemen's civil war and blamed the Islamic republic for a sophisticated missile and drone attack that struck the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure in 2019.

Iran considers its political relations with Russia as strategic and has expressed willingness to sign long-term economic agreements with Russian businesses.

Additional reporting by Najmeh Bozorgmehr in Tehran and Andrew England in London

