

Le Pen Criticises Macron’s “Irresponsible” Long-range Missiles Promise to Ukraine

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Global Research, July 14, 2023

[InfoBrics](#)

Region: [Europe](#)

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Marine Le Pen, former leader of France’s right-wing Rassemblement National (National Rally) party and current parliamentary leader of the party in the Assembly, said French President Emmanuel Macron was “irresponsible” for promising long-range missiles to Ukraine. Her statement comes as Rassemblement National continues to gain popularity in the aftermath of the riots that gripped France at the end of June.

“It seems irresponsible to me to take this decision, and I don’t understand why Emmanuel Macron isn’t fully focused on organising a peace conference to end this war,” Le Pen was quoted as saying by [French](#) media on July 12.

The leader of the Rassemblement National in the lower house of parliament warned during a trip to Beauvais, which was severely hit by the recent riots, that an attack “hitting a third country [Russia] could trigger a third World War, which I don’t want to see happening (...). We don’t know what reaction a third country hit by a weapon delivered by France might have.”

Macron’s decision to supply Ukraine with SCALP missiles, the French equivalent of the UK’s Storm Shadows, provoked a strong reaction from both political wings in France. The right-wing branded it an escalation, while leftist La France Insoumise (France Unbowed) warned of possible direct conflict with Russia.

However, this “irresponsible” decision is consistent with Paris’ reckless policy towards the Ukraine crisis. The French Parliament on July 13 approved a military spending bill to increase the budget to a record €413 billion in 2024-2030.

The French Senate supported the bill by a majority vote. According to the Senate website, 313 voted in favour and 17 against. The French National Assembly, the country’s

lower house, adopted the bill a day earlier. Like several other EU and NATO Member States, France has increased its military spending by sending resources to the Kiev regime and training Ukrainian soldiers.

It is recalled that on July 11, France announced the delivery of long-range SCALP cruise missiles to Kiev to support the Ukrainian military's failed offensive. According to the Kremlin, the French missile - which can hit targets 250 kilometres away - and any other Western weaponry delivered to Ukraine only escalate regional tensions.

In addition to military equipment, Paris offered military training to 5,200 Ukrainian soldiers and [plans to train a total of 7,000](#) military personnel by the end of 2023, as announced on July 12.

All military spending by Ukraine's allied states and their corresponding budget increase are in line with NATO deliberations and US President Joe Biden's appeals for the bloc's expansion to Eastern Europe in an attempt to isolate Russia. Paris is absolutely no exception to this, even though it faces a major domestic crisis.

More French are embracing a hard line against immigration following the rioting and other violence that occurred after 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk, a French-born criminal of North African descent, was killed by police on June 27.

"We know the causes [of] France's unrest," Bruno Retailleau, head of the Senate Republicans that dominates the French Senate, said in early July on broadcaster France-Info. "Unfortunately for the second, the third generation, there is a sort of regression toward their origins, their ethnic origins."

Retailleau was accused of racism for his remarks, even though they reflect the current line of his mainstream party, The Republicans, whose priorities are to keep France "from sinking durably into chaos" and "stopping mass immigration."

"As soon as we want to be firm," Retailleau said Tuesday on RTL radio, "they say, 'Oh la la. Scandal! The fascists are arriving! You're like the Rassemblement National. We're sick of being politically correct.'"

This is a major shift in French politics, particularly as Rassemblement National's popularity grows in the aftermath of the riots. The party gained a major stronghold in parliament in the 2022 legislative elections with 88 lawmakers, and Le Pen now sits at the heart of institutional France, thus wielding great influence. It is recalled that she won more than 41% in the runoff presidential vote last year.

"There are practically no more categories of the population immune to a (far-right) vote," polling agency Ifop said after a recent survey showed a steady rise in voters supporting Rassemblement National.

So long as Macron continues prioritising Ukraine's needs rather than the well-being of the average French citizen and building a united society, the Rassemblement National will continue gaining popularity. The recent riots and economic issues rooted in the Ukraine crisis saw Macron's popularity decline and Le Pen's party again gain more traction.

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