

# *U.S. sending F-16s to Ukraine from Denmark and Netherlands*

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Washington, August 18 (RHC)-- The U.S. military has decided to send F-16 fighter planes to Ukraine from Denmark and the Netherlands as soon as the training of Ukrainian pilots is completed. A U.S. official said on Thursday Washington has assured both countries that it will expedite approval of transfer requests for F-16s to go to Ukraine when their pilots are trained, Reuters reported.

The US must approve the transfer of F-16s from its allies to Ukraine. A coalition of 11 countries was due to start training Ukrainian pilots to fly fighter jets this month in Denmark. U.S. officials have privately said that the F-16 fighter jets would be no game changer when they arrive given Russia's air defense systems and its air superiority.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sent letters to his Danish and Dutch counterparts assuring them that the requests would be approved, the US official said. "I am writing to express the United States' full support for both the transfer of F-16 fighter aircraft to Ukraine and for the training of Ukrainian pilots by qualified F-16 instructors," Blinken said in a letter to the two officials, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

Blinken said the approval of the requests would allow Ukraine to take "full advantage of its new capabilities as soon as the first set of pilots complete their training."

Washington has provided more than \$42 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia launched its special military operation in late February 2022. Despite Washington's continued military support to Kiev since then, the Biden administration has been clear that there will be no US combat forces fighting against the Russians in Ukraine.

Russia, which strongly opposes the supply of Western weapons to Kiev, has repeatedly pointed out the dangers of flooding Ukraine with weapons and munitions. Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned in May that Western-supplied arms and munitions were being smuggled out of Ukraine and sold on the black market.

Responding to a survey, most Americans say the US should stop short of providing more military assistance for Ukraine.

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