



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on March 7, 2022

Rubio: No-fly Zone Over Ukraine “Means Starting WWII”

As the Russian war in Ukraine continues to heat up, the part America may wind up playing is an open question. And Sunday, while leaving that question open, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) told ABC’s *This Week* host George Stephanopoulos that he opposes the idea of NATO imposing a “no-fly zone” over Ukraine because “it means World War III.”

Rubio — who serves as vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee — is ordinarily a war hawk, but Sunday, he dialed it back a bit. When asked about his position on a no-fly zone — which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has asked multiple nations to implement — Rubio explained that “no-fly zone has become a catchphrase,” adding, “I’m not sure a lot of people fully understand what that means.” He went on to say:



AP Images
Marco Rubio

That means flying AWACs 24 hours a day. That means the willingness to shoot down and engage Russian airplanes in the sky. That means, frankly, you can’t put those planes up there unless you’re willing to knock out the anti-aircraft systems that the Russians have deployed — and not just in Ukraine, but in Russia and also in Belarus.

And such action would mean “starting WWII,” according to Rubio, who said:

So basically a no-fly zone, if people understood what it means, it means World War III. It means starting World War III. So, I think there are a lot of things we can do to help Ukraine protect itself, both from air strikes and missile strikes, but I think people need to understand what a no-fly zone means. It’s not just — it’s not some rule you pass that everybody has to oblige by. It’s the willingness to shoot down the aircrafts of the Russian Federation, which is basically the beginning of World War III.

Rubio is correct. A NATO no-fly zone would not be limited to patrolling Ukrainian airspace, though that would be bad enough. It would mean airstrikes against Russian anti-aircraft systems Russia is operating in Ukraine. And in Russia. And in Belarus. That would be seen as war. And America — which would do the heavy lifting as always — would be seen as the aggressor for waging war against Russia. Because to put in the for-what-it’s-worth column, Russia has not invaded or attacked the United States. Yes. Russia has invaded and attacked Ukraine. But if America jumps in, Russia will likely want to take the next step. And that step is on the edge of WWII.



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But while Rubio wants to pull up short of “starting WWII” with a no-fly zone, he is still — after all — a war hawk. He said he supports supplying Ukraine with fighter jets via a shell game involving other nations in Eastern Europe. When Stephanopoulos asked him:

How about this provision of fighter jets? We would provide the fighter jets to Poland, other Eastern European nations. They would send the jets they now have to Ukraine — do you support that?”

Rubio answered:

I do. If that can be done, that would be great. I do have concerns about a couple things. And that is sort of, you know, can they actually fly them given the amount of anti-aircraft capabilities that the Russians possess and continue to have deployed in the region?

By the way, yesterday was a terrible day for the Russian air force. They’re losing — they don’t have air control either there. But, generally speaking, it’s something I’d be supportive of, and we should do what we can to help them.

So, while Rubio is opposed to diving head-first into WWII, he favors dipping his foot in the pool and wading in gradually. After all, does anyone really think that (1) Russia will not see the United States supplying fighter jets by proxy as an act of war, or (2) that American entanglement and involvement in this war will stop there?

Granted, this is a sticky wicket. And there may not be a “right” way to prevent the Russian invasion of Ukraine from spilling over and igniting a larger-scale, multinational war. The foreign policy of the United States under many of our recent presidents has almost assured something like this. And Biden’s foreign policy (reversing Trump’s sanctions against Russia and giving a wink and a nod to Putin to invade Ukraine) has certainly exacerbated the situation.

By ignoring the wisdom of our Founding Fathers who warned us against “entangling alliances,” America has created — or at least *helped* to create — a situation that almost requires world wars. This writer is reminded of something Thomas Jefferson said about another situation in which America found herself because of bad policy. By allowing slavery, America created a growing problem that was already becoming untenable by Jefferson’s day. Describing the situation, Jefferson said, “We now have the wolf by the ears and we can neither safely hold him nor let him go.”

A war hawk, interventionist, empire-building foreign policy has served America — and the rest of the world — badly. And this time, if Rubio is correct, we may be facing WWII with a nation that (again, thanks to our self-destructive foreign policy) has nuclear weapons.



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