

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 20, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin,

We write in our capacity as members of the U.S. House of Representatives to convey our strong support of several urgent requests on behalf of our Ukrainian colleagues:

- (1) Authorizing the Use of U.S.-Provided Weapons to Strike Strategic Targets within Russian Territory Under Certain Circumstances:** Our Ukrainian allies are requesting permission to use certain weapons provided by the United States to conduct operations on strategic targets inside Russian and Russian-controlled territory. According to a May 14th report by Politico, the Biden Administration's current policy is handcuffing Ukraine's ability to push back on Russian forces near Kharkiv with U.S.-origin weapons.¹ Ukrainian officials have watched for weeks as Russian troops have attacked Ukrainian communities from Russian territory with impunity. Ukrainians have been unable to defend themselves due to the Administration's current policy. It is essential the Biden Administration allows Ukraine's military leaders an ability to conduct a full spectrum of operations necessary to respond to Russia's unprovoked attack on their sovereign land.
- (2) Training Additional F-16 Pilots:** Last year, the Biden Administration approved the transfer of F-16 fighter jets to replace Ukraine's aging and declining fleet of MiG-29s, Su-24s, and Su-25s.² While this was an encouraging step, there remains a critical need for a substantial number of trained pilots to operate these aircraft as the F-16 fighter jets become available to Ukraine. According to the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. is on track to graduate only 12 pilots from F-16 training by the end of 2024. Graduating 12 Ukrainian pilots is simply insufficient. Ukraine is at war and slots for Ukraine must be prioritized over other foreign countries.
- (3) Air Defenses:** Ukraine has demonstrated an ability to take out a sizeable percentage of Russian missiles fired at Ukrainian territory. However, Russian missiles continue to rain down on large urban areas, leaving a significant number of innocent civilians and critical infrastructure in danger. To meet this continued and unrelenting threat, our allies have requested upwards of seven (7) additional Patriot batteries to protect large urban areas in Ukraine.

¹ [Ukraine presses Biden to lift ban on using US weapons to strike Russia - POLITICO](#)

² ["The Air War Over Ukraine." Reuters, 14 December 2023.](#)

The Ukrainian people continue to demonstrate a strong willingness to resist Russian efforts to take sovereign Ukrainian territory by force. Recent reports indicate that aid to Ukraine is not arriving in sufficient quantities and in a timely manner, exacerbating the dire situation on the ground. Ukrainian officials have expressed grave concerns, stating that the situation is worse than ever. We ask that you work with us to expedite resources as our friends in Ukraine continue to defend their territory against Russia's brutal assault and aggression.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Chairman, House Permanent
Select Committee on Intelligence
Head of Delegation – U.S.
Delegation to NATO
Parliamentary Assembly



Jim Himes
Ranking Member, House
Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence



Gerald Connolly
Member of Congress
Past President – NATO
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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André Carson
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