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Congressional Ukraine Caucus

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RADM (RET.) MARK MONTGOMERY

Senior Director and Senior Fellow
Center on Cyber and Technology Innovation
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

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Ukraine is the frontline test of whether an Axis of Aggressors – Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea – can erase an internationally recognized border by force.

Moscow has drawn material support from all three throughout its illegal war against Ukraine: North Korean troops and munitions, Iranian drones, and Chinese economic support and dual-use components feeding Russia's defense industrial base.

If Russia succeeds in annexing Ukrainian territory by conquest, Beijing will conclude that a sustained campaign against Taiwan can outlast Western resolve; Tehran will read it as license to press harder across the Middle East; and Pyongyang will see confirmation that provocation on the peninsula carries diminishing risk of a U.S. response.

The deterrence stakes are therefore global, not regional, and every ally watching Washington's response is drawing conclusions about American staying power and credibility.

Beyond deterrence, Ukraine's fight defends a founding principle of the postwar order: that borders cannot be redrawn by invasion.

That norm is the scaffolding on which the United States has built its alliance commitments since 1945. If it fails in Ukraine, it fails everywhere.

Even as we ask Ukraine to hold the line, America's ongoing policy choices are seemingly working against Ukraine's success.

The Administration has conducted a series of unexplainable actions.

First, it decided to import Russian diesel even as it threatens sanctions on other countries for buying Russian oil, a double standard our allies notice and that undermines American credibility. This will provide billions of U.S. dollars to Russia's war machine.

Second, President Trump signed an executive order invoking a national-interest waiver to bypass and suspend major Russian sanctions and tariffs mandated by the bipartisan Graham Act. The order suspends operative sections concerning Russia, including heavy tariffs on oil and gas, as well as bans on purchasing sovereign debt and financial sanctions.

Third, the Administration appears to have throttled Starshield performance in Russian occupied Ukraine. This means Ukraine cannot effectively communicate with its unmanned vehicles conducting mid-range strike – which limits attacks on command and control and logistics support to Russian forces thus placing Ukrainian front-line units at risk; nor can the Ukrainians communicate with some logistics drones, further placing their front-line units at risk; finally, it affects the performance of Ukraine's ground-based counter drone interceptors, this time placing

Ukrainian civilians at risk. This is an action that can only be implemented by the U.S. government. Each of these elements drives one outcome – dead Ukrainians.

Fourth, Ukrainian officials have publicly accused the United States of cutting off or failing to provide critical early-warning intelligence for incoming Russian ballistic missile strikes, leading to deadly surprises during recent attacks on energy infrastructure and cities such as Kyiv. It should be noted that the U.S. explicitly denies this – but the coincidental timing makes one wonder.

Other acts of omission by the Administration have occurred.

The President has refused to pressure Elon Musk to allow Ukraine access to Starlink services over Russian sovereign territory for even purely defensive measures. Ukraine could use this Starlink support to allow time-sensitive targeting of Russian ballistic missile launchers and shoot the "archers" not the "arrows" and protect Ukrainian cities and civilians. F-16s could reasonably attack ballistic missile launchers immediately before or after missile launch.

The Administration has not pressured our Greek allies to provide Ukraine with Patriot missiles – even when several hundred are allegedly approaching "expiration" timelines.

Europe has their struggles as well.

First, PURL funding – a program to have Europe buy Ukraine munitions from the US defense industrial base – remains unpredictable. Ukraine has identified roughly $15 to $16 billion in requirements for 2026, yet only a handful of allies contribute reliably. Kyiv cannot build a defense strategy against funding that arrives in fits and starts.

Second, Europe is continuing to import Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) at rates greater than 2025. France, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy are the primary European countries fueling Russia's war machine.

Even Congress has come up short. The current continuing resolution blocks new multiyear munitions contracts, so production lines for PAC-3 and AMRAAM interceptors cannot be restocked at the scale Ukraine's air defense requires. We are telling Ukraine that interceptors matter while declining to enable the contracts that would produce them.

Non-Military Recommendations

Clearly, these actions are collectively encouraging Russia to maintain their maximalist, unachievable, and unacceptable demands at the negotiating table. If the United States and Europe want to drive a successful negotiated peace, pressure on Russia needs to occur.

On the non-military side, there are at least four steps the United States and Europe can take to initiate such pressure.

First, close the diesel-import carve-out immediately and resume full enforcement of secondary sanctions against buyers of Russian oil and gas.

Second, Treasury and State should expand sanctions against the Russian shadow fleet, financial facilitators, and dual-use export networks sustaining Russia's war economy and missile production. These networks are well mapped; what is missing is enforcement, not intelligence or authorization.

Third, Europe should ensure everyone stops taking Russian LNG on 31 January 2027 when they had agreed to an end to long term contracts.

Fourth, Europe holds roughly $240 billion in frozen Russian sovereign assets sitting idle. Europe should use those assets to directly fund Ukraine rather than let legal caution leave that money on the sidelines indefinitely.

None of these steps requires an additional American soldier or appropriation, only the will to use tools already in hand.

Military Recommendations

On the military side, another five steps deserve immediate attention.

First, push Elon Musk to provide Ukraine expanded Starlink access over Russian territory to support time-sensitive targeting of mobile ballistic missile launchers before they fire.

Second, improve F-16 support to Ukraine. Ukraine has less than half of their F-16 aircraft available – NATO should work to fund surge maintenance capacity to fix the bottleneck in Belgium grounding more than half of Ukraine's fleet. An aircraft that cannot fly is not a deterrent. The U.S. can help by enabling long range strike missile – or ERAM – employment from Ukraine's F-16s immediately.

Third, increase Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funding to include funds for JDAM-ERs – an effective mid-range precision strike weapon.

Fourth, stabilize PURL contributions with formal allied commitments.

Fifth, pressure Greece to finally transfer the Patriot interceptors Ukraine has sought for years.

Each recommendation is achievable within existing authorities.

Ukraine's survival is not a sentimental cause; it is the clearest deterrence test the United States faces outside the Indo-Pacific, and the two are more connected than public debate acknowledges.

Many of the failures I have described – the CR's chokehold on munitions contracts, the diesel double standard, increase USAI funding and address PURL's unpredictability – are fixable by this Congress without waiting on events in Ukraine.

I urge the Caucus to treat them as urgent. Thank you.