



Forum for American Leadership

Abandoning Ukraine Would Be Failed American Leadership

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Nearly two years after Russia invaded Ukraine, and following Ukraine's courageous stand against Vladimir Putin's unprovoked attack, the war is at a critical juncture. Vital American national security interests are at risk. Though the battlefield is rife with action and constantly changing, the Ukrainians lack the military support crucial to victory. Delay advantages Russia. To hold the territory Ukraine has taken back from Russia and make further advancements, Ukraine needs additional security assistance, and quickly.

A Russian victory will not only embolden Vladimir Putin in his quest to rebuild the Soviet Empire, putting other European countries at risk, but it would be yet another example of failed American leadership on the world stage, which would embolden Beijing, Tehran, and Pyongyang. After the catastrophic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, America's adversaries doubted U.S. resolve as a global power. This contributed directly to Putin's invasion. Leaving Ukraine without the critical support it needs to defeat Russia would only encourage further adventurism by our enemies, particularly China and Iran.

A prompt Ukrainian victory is therefore crucial to U.S. national security on its own merits because it deters our adversaries. But the process of sending weapons to Ukraine also benefits our own military readiness and economy. Since the beginning of the conflict, the United States has sent more than [\\$44 billion](#) in security assistance from U.S. stockpiles in the form of air defense systems, artillery and ammunition, tanks, and unmanned aerial systems. In December 2023, the Department of Defense noted that another [\\$1 billion](#) in congressionally authorized funding for assistance to Ukraine would go towards replenishing U.S. weapons inventories. Supporting military aid to Ukraine is helping modernize America's own military stockpiles, while also supporting American industry and jobs.

This [Forum for American Leadership](#) brief outlines approaches that Congress and the White House should take to garner support for additional assistance to Ukraine:

- **Prioritize Defense Support:** With the European Union achieving an agreement to provide [\\$54 billion](#) in macro-financial assistance to Ukraine, the United States should prioritize military assistance. Since the beginning of the war, EU members have provided nearly \$92 billion to Ukraine, including \$43 billion to support the economy and \$29.2 billion in military aid. With our European allies focused on budgetary support to Ukraine, the United States can prioritize military assistance, as [recommended](#) by FAL in June 2023.
- **Finalize a Security Package:** Passing an assistance package through Congress and having it signed by the President prior to the Munich Security Conference will strengthen the United States' position vis-a-vis the Europeans, who already have an agreement on their assistance package. The combination of both packages will send a strong message to Russia

that its strategy of seeking to outlast Western support for Ukraine will not work.

- **Insist on Strong Accountability Measures from Ukraine:** Ukraine recently uncovered a \$40 million scheme to defraud the government of funds dedicated to much-needed ammunition. The country must increase its anti-corruption efforts and measures, particularly with regard to security support. Western allies should gain verifiable assurances from the Ukrainian government to combat any diversion of support away from Ukraine's strategic military priorities. Congress should also ensure any assistance package includes funding for additional oversight efforts.

This paper is a product of the Forum for American Leadership's [International Development Working Group](#).

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