

Report by U.S. Senator Jack Reed on

# THE REED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO UKRAINE

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Image credit: Miguel Valenzuela



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**ARMED SERVICES**

U.S. Senator Jack Reed, Chairman

**REPORT BY U.S. SENATOR JACK REED  
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ON THE REED CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO  
UKRAINE**

**JANUARY 2023**

From January 4-7, I traveled to Kyiv, Ukraine to meet with U.S. and Ukrainian civilian and military leaders regarding the conflict in Ukraine and the international effort to supply Ukraine with military, economic, and humanitarian assistance. I was joined on the trip by my colleague Senator Angus S. King Jr. (I-ME).

*Among the key leaders we met with were:*

- Ukrainian President Volodymyr O. Zelenskyy
- The Honorable Bridget A. Brink, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine
- Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure Oleksandr M. Kubrakov and Mr. Volodymyr Kudrytskyi, CEO of Ukrenergo National Energy Company
- Mr. Andriy B. Yermak, Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, and several senior Ukrainian military leaders, including field commanders

**UKRAINE TRIP: INITIAL COMMENTS**

Putin ordered an illegal and savage attack, without provocation, against Ukraine. It violated international law and continues to pose an existential threat to the stability of the international order. Putin was motivated in large part by his obsession with rebuilding the “Russian Empire.” The first step for Putin was Ukraine, but it would almost certainly not be the last step if he was to achieve his objectives there. Putin has reminded the world that when an obsessed, paranoid, and politically unchecked autocrat is left unopposed, they can upset the international order and plunge the world into chaos.

Fortunately, several factors have thwarted his initial assault. First and foremost is the incredible courage and fighting skill of the Ukrainian people and the courageous and inspirational leadership of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Second is the remarkable statesmanship of the Biden Administration in forging and maintaining a strong and unified NATO response, leading worldwide condemnation of Putin, and championing support for Ukraine. This has been a multidimensional effort involving military advice and support to the Ukrainian

military, humanitarian and economic assistance to the people of Ukraine, unprecedented economic sanctions against Russia, and vigorous diplomatic efforts to isolate Russia and maintain international unity. Of particular note is the widespread support of every aspect of this effort by many nations, especially the NATO nations. Third is the surprisingly inept performance of Russian forces. The fighting has exposed a poorly led and poorly trained Russian army suggesting weak and corrupt leadership at every level, little understanding of the mission by individual soldiers, poor communications and electronic security, and woeful logistics.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the military aspects of international support to Ukraine, the Ukrainians have benefited from U.S.-backed training and investments in defense reform dating back to 2014, including the restructuring of their military away from the old Soviet model and toward a Western non-commissioned officer-based construct. This has enabled Ukrainian units to be more decentralized and improvisational than their Russian adversaries. The U.S. and our international partners, in turn, have benefitted from a strong relationship with the Ukrainian military, built over years of engagement. Initial efforts to advise and supply the Ukrainian armed forces have transformed into a sophisticated and highly effective remote collaboration, as Ukrainian forces carry out the fight in Ukraine while receiving external support from a broad international coalition. Similarly, the range and complexity of military equipment supplied to Ukraine have accelerated based on their need, their increasing capabilities, and a constant calculation and re-calculation of escalation consequences. The multi-billion-dollar packages of military equipment announced by President Biden recently are significant for their inclusion of advanced armored vehicles and enhanced long range fires capabilities. This assistance has been matched by other nations who also indicated their intention to supply armored vehicles, including tanks. As such, the Ukrainian armed forces are evolving into a combined arms force capable of offensive operations (and the exploitation of these offensive operations) to continue to expel Russian forces from their territory.

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<sup>1</sup> Blame for this surprisingly poor performance might also be attributed to the F.S.B., the Russian national intelligence service. It appears that they had a substantial role in the planning and perhaps equated this operation with success in Crimea in 2014. There, surprise and special operations led to a rapid conquest. Here, the failure to take into consideration conventional operational and logistical details and the cloak of secrecy that prevented vital information from being shared throughout military commands may have been a major contributing factor.

## **SPECIFIC ITEMS**

### **LONG RANGE FIRES**

The Ukrainian military has faced down and begun to beat back a numerically and technologically superior Russian force. One key to this effort has been the smart employment of a number of artillery systems, including the M777 Howitzers, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), the French CAESAR, and the German PzH 2000.

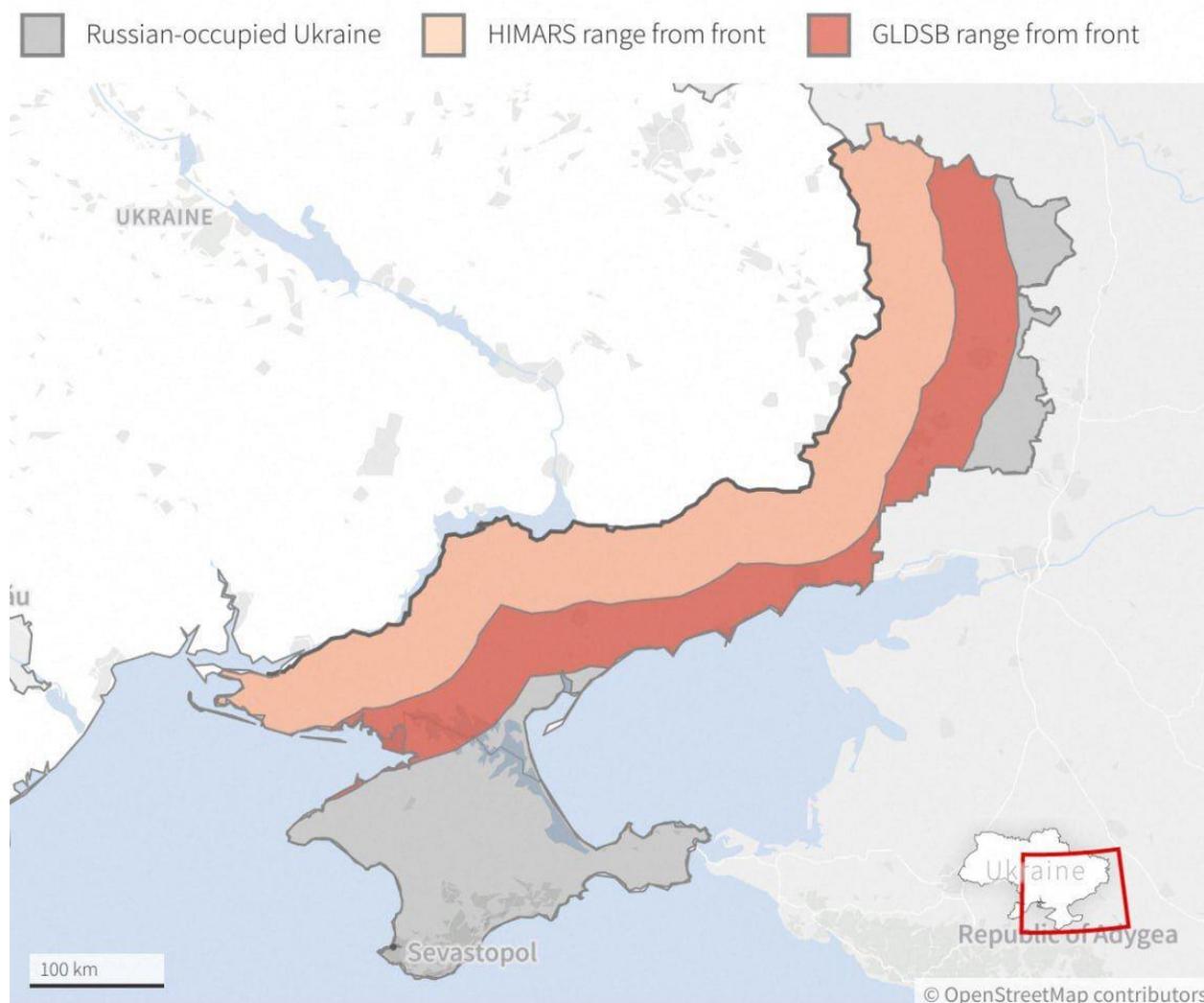
One of the most successful systems delivered to the Ukrainians was the HIMARS, a highly mobile and highly precise rocket artillery system capable of firing the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) missile and the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). Six GMLRS may be mounted on a HIMARS with a range of approximately 15-70 kilometers (km), while only one ATACMS may be mounted on a HIMARS, with a range of approximately 70-300 km.

In the initial operations of the HIMARS, Ukrainian forces were able to exploit proximity to the Russians and the mobility of the system to strike effectively at command and control centers and supply depots. The disruption of command and logistics was a significant factor in the success of the Ukrainian forces in mounting counterattacks that pushed back Russian forces. As the battle progressed, the Russians were unsuccessful in neutralizing the HIMARS. In response to Ukraine's remarkable effectiveness, Russia has adjusted its position on the battlefield by moving key installations and equipment beyond the range of the GMLRS.

In preparation for the anticipated increase in operational tempo in the spring, Ukrainian forces will need to once again maintain the ability to strike key locations deep within Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory. Recognizing this need, the Defense Department wisely announced the provision of the Ground Launched Small Diameter Bomb (GLSDB), which has a range of approximately 150 km and can be fired from the HIMARS and other multiple-launch rocket systems.

## New missiles will extend Ukraine's reach

As part of a new \$2 billion aid package from the United States, Ukraine will receive Ground Launched Small Diameter (GLDSB) glide bombs. With a range of 150 km, the new weapon will extend Ukraine's attack range deep into Russian-occupied Ukraine.



Note: Missile range calculated from the border of the Russian-occupied area in Ukraine.

Source: Occupied area from the Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project as of Jan. 31, 2023 (Infographic Reuters: “*Factbox: U.S. rocket-powered bomb would double Ukraine's strike range,*” February 1, 2023<sup>2</sup>)

The international coalition has not provided the ATACMS. Reluctance to do so seems to emanate from the valid concern that longer-ranged missiles could intentionally or unintentionally be fired into Russia. This is part of the constant evaluation of the likelihood of escalation. One possible approach to this issue is either a technological or procedural fix that would prevent ATACMS from

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-rocket-powered-bomb-would-double-ukraines-strike-range-2023-02-01/>

entering Russian territory. In a procedural approach, some level of fidelity on the intended target could be provided by Ukraine to international advisors in advance of use on the battlefield.

Mitigating the concerns of intentional and unintentional strikes on Russian territory are several factors. First, the Ukrainians have, to date, been very respectful of conditions placed on foreign-provided equipment. Second, the importance of a successful spring offensive by the Ukrainian military is such that they should have the means of destroying Russian command and control systems and logistic support systems.

If munitions like the GLSDB do not prove to be effective in destroying Russian command and control and logistical systems, international partners should provide available ATACMS, with suitable conditions, to the Ukrainians.

### AIR DEFENSE

During the initial phase of the conflict, the U.S. and NATO allies provided thousands of portable air defense missile systems, or MANPADS, such as Stingers and other similar weapons. The Ukrainians employed these weapons to great effect in protecting civilian areas and ground troops as they halted Russian offensive operations. As the nature of the fight has evolved and the brutality of Russia's tactics become more evident, the international coalition has adjusted as well, providing longer range air defense systems, including the S-300 from Slovakia; the HAWK, IRIS-T, and ASPIDE air defense systems from the U.S., Germany, and Spain; the Avenger air defense system from the U.S.; the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS) from the U.S. and Canada (along with AMRAAM munitions from many international partners); the Crotale from France; and the Gepard from Germany.

Recently, the Biden Administration made a critical and prudent decision to supply the Ukrainians with a PATRIOT air defense system and to train Ukrainian operators at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Germany and the Netherlands followed with commitments to provide additional PATRIOT systems of their own. However, these three systems will not provide the defense in depth necessary to adequately protect Ukrainian air space. More air defense systems are needed to counter Russian air strikes.

Having been repulsed on the ground, the Russians have begun an indiscriminate air assault with air- and ground- launched missiles fired from within the protection of their territory. They have focused on the electrical grid and terror attacks on civilian targets with the intent to break the will and fighting capacity of Ukraine.

Despite these attacks, the Ukrainians have remained steadfast. However, they must be able to effectively protect themselves from these air attacks. Ukraine's priority is to protect its electrical grid which is the source of electricity and heat for its civilian population and power for its continued industrial production, which is striving to keep the economy afloat. The Ukrainians also believe an effective air defense system protecting major cities would induce the return of many individuals who left Ukraine or are internally displaced. This combination of returning people and dependable electricity would help revive their economy.

Thus, we must encourage other nations to provide PATRIOTS or other complementary systems like IRON DOME. And, we must accelerate as rapidly as possible their deployment.

The air space in Ukraine remains highly contested. Russia has been unable to effectively employ aerial firepower from its sizeable force of bomber and fighter aircraft inside Ukraine. Instead, it has relied on air- and sea-based cruise and ballistic missiles fired from significant standoff range to strike targets throughout the country, including the brutal and malicious strikes on Ukraine's energy grid as winter set in last year.

Similarly, due to the complicated air picture, most of Ukraine's air assets must fly low to avoid Russian air defenses. This means existing Ukrainian aircraft, all Soviet-era platforms like the MiG-29 and Su-24, -25, and -27 fighters, and the Mi-8, -17, and -24 helicopters have had to adapt their tactics. The helicopter force has proved very adept at such operations, successfully flying resupply, medical evacuation, and close air support missions. Tragically, in doing so they have also suffered heavy losses. The U.S., Slovakia, and Latvia have provided Mi-17s and the Czech Republic has provided Mi-24s to maintain the Ukrainian helicopter inventory.

There are growing calls to equip the Ukrainian Air Force with western fighter jets like the F-16. It is certainly true that in the medium- to long-term, the Ukrainian Air Force will need to modernize and recapitalize, and we should begin now to develop this strategy with a strong preference for western military equipment. That is why last year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included a requirement for the Defense Department to identify the priority capabilities, and associated training, maintenance, and sustainment requirements, for Ukraine over the next 3, 6, 12, and 24 months. The United States is committed to partnering with Ukraine for the long term. However, the preponderance of the effort must remain on developing and supporting the capabilities that will enable the Ukrainians to prevail under current battlefield conditions.

## COMBINED ARMS MANEUVER

Recent assistance packages have focused on enhancing Ukraine's mobility and survivability. The announcement that the United States would provide M1 ABRAMS tanks, BRADLEY Fighting Vehicles, STRYKER combat vehicles — in addition to more than 1,000 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV), and hundreds of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAP) already provided, will be a significant boost to Ukrainian maneuver capabilities. These capabilities will be further multiplied when combined with the French contribution of light tanks, the British CHALLENGER tanks, and the recent announcements by Germany, Poland, Spain, Canada, Portugal, and Norway that they will provide LEOPARD 2 tanks. The recent announcement that the United States will contribute the M1 ABRAMS tank appears to have been a critical catalyst in spurring this multi-national contribution of tanks. Given the approximately 2,000 LEOPARD tanks throughout NATO, the relative familiarity of Ukrainian crews with this platform, and the sustainment advantage of the LEOPARD, the rapid employment of these vehicles will likely have a dramatic effect on the battlefield. Maintaining and sustaining the wide variety of platforms in the field will be a challenging task. In addition to the provision of the actual hardware, contributing nations must ensure they are making themselves available to provide Ukraine with "reach back" capabilities to work through any maintenance and sustainment challenges.

These contributions give the Ukrainians the opportunity to begin to restructure their forces into combined arms teams which feature armored vehicles, infantry, and supporting fires. Such forces will be more capable of breaching trench lines established by the Russians and rapidly consolidating territorial gains. This capability will be essential for a successful offensive operation in the near term.

The rapid increase of fighting vehicles, especially tanks, and the training of Ukrainian operators to successfully conduct combined arms maneuver are the most pressing issues at this time. Training takes time and constituting appropriate supply lines and logistical operations takes time also. There is little time to waste. Without successful Ukrainian offensive operations this spring, momentum could shift to the Russians or continued attrition by the Russians could buy them time which they believe would be to their advantage.

## U.S. and PARTNER NATION STOCKS

As we rapidly respond to Ukrainian requests for additional equipment and ammunition, the United States and our allies must maintain sufficient stocks to execute our existing operational plans and to be ready for future contingencies.

The Pentagon is accelerating its support for the increased production of critical arms. This is in large part a reaction to the language in the fiscal year 2023 NDAA to significantly invest in the defense industrial base to rapidly boost production (this language triggered a \$1.9 billion increase for additional production.) Over the last few years, many production lines for military equipment shut down as demand by the Pentagon decreased due to relatively robust stocks, the focus on new and more technologically advanced and precise weapons, and the relative stability of near-peer competition. These factors also likely masked an underlying error in our assumptions about the needs for munitions demands in a high-intensity conflict, and thus what the right level of stockpiling and production capacity should look like. This all dramatically changed with the Russian assault on Ukraine.

The Army is now ramping up its production of 155-millimeter artillery shells from a rate of 14,000 shells per month prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the current rate of 20,000 per month, with a goal of producing 85,000 shells per month by fiscal year 2028. These unguided artillery shells have been the "cornerstone" of the Ukrainian conduct of the war. In many respects, the provision of unguided projectiles does not stress our stocks as much as precision guided munitions. Thus, production of these shells requires a ramping up of the traditional industrial base, which may be more suited to rapidly expand capacity. The Army is taking similar steps to increase production of other high-demand munitions, including GMLRS and Javelin anti-tank missiles. In addition, the Army is also committing \$1 billion a year over the next 15 years to modernize government-owned production facilities.

The Russians are also encountering supply constraints as their factories have not been able to keep up. Public reports indicate that they are seeking compatible artillery ammunition from North Korea and increasing the workday of their factories. Moreover, Ukrainian reports suggest that the Russian volume of artillery fire has decreased, potentially reflecting supply constraints.

In addition to increased production, the United States is tapping into worldwide reserves. The United States had turned to its stocks located in allied countries to bolster the flow of ammunition and munitions sent to Ukraine. For example, 300,000 rounds of 155-millimeter ammunition were pulled from U.S. stocks located in Israel. These rounds draw down from strategic stocks of the United States established over many years.

South Korea also has agreed to release American stockpiles of 155-millimeter shells to backfill American deliveries to the Ukrainians. Indeed, it is estimated that a significant portion of the United States' pledge of one million rounds to Ukraine came from stocks in these countries.

The world community must be able to signal to the Russians that they can match and exceed their ammunition and weapons availability without degrading their war stocks. This is a significant and costly challenge since one of Putin's major assumptions is that he can simply outlast the Ukrainians and their international supporters.

## ESCALATION

This battle is one of the few times in the "atomic" Age that we have had a surrogate fight that draws nuclear powers into a confrontation that could transcend the boundaries of the immediate fight and trip a nuclear confrontation. This possibility cannot be dismissed or ignored.

The Russians brought to the battle a strategy of "escalate to de-escalate;" in short, threatening the use of tactical nuclear weapons to shock its opponent into a mode of acceptance of Russian aggression and recklessness. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Putin authorized nuclear exercises to underscore this potential option.

All of this was designed to signal to the West that he was ready to engage in a nuclear conflict, even if for relatively minor gains. The seizure of Ukraine would not immediately and fundamentally alter the international balance, but it would position Russia to rapidly erode the international order to its advantage and begin to resurrect the "Russian Empire."

Russian nuclear threats cannot be ignored, but they also cannot be seen as determinative and uncontested. They must be a factor in decision making. And, they must be constantly evaluated as rhetoric or reality. In this regard, the posture of Russian nuclear forces is a key factor. Words without actions are merely words. Actions speak louder than words.

As a growing nuclear power, China has made a notable contribution to this potentially apocalyptic issue. Although eager to see a Russian humiliation of the West and aiding Russia to that end, China has reportedly been a moderating force with regard to nuclear escalation. In November of last year, following a number of provocative statements from Russia, Chinese President Xi Jinping offered a rare public criticism of Putin, calling for Russia to avoid the use or the threat of use of

nuclear weapons. China professes a no-first-use policy, as well as a strategy of deterrence through “assured retaliation.” The use of a nuclear weapon would go against this long-stated Chinese policy and could put Beijing in an awkward position on the international stage. At the same time, Beijing and Moscow have repeatedly cited their “no limits” partnership, despite the nuclear saber rattling and the ongoing atrocities in Ukraine. Just last week the Chinese and Russian foreign ministers met by phone and reaffirmed “the high level of mutual trust and firm mutual support between China and Russia.”

Often, in the context of escalation, the decision focuses on “red lines.” The presumption is that each side has a clear trigger for all-out response, including nuclear weapons. “Red lines” have use in signaling a possible shift to weapons of mass destruction. For example, any attack on a NATO country could trigger Article V where all members would come to the defense of the attacked country. But, even this “red line” does not automatically trigger a nuclear response.

In the context of Ukraine, the United States has carefully orchestrated a “battle rhythm” that has sought to mitigate the risks of escalation while increasingly supporting Ukraine. Some argue that this measured approach has been too slow to equip and train the Ukrainians for the critical battle this spring. Many of the criticisms ignore the possibility, remote as it may be, of nuclear escalation. They ignore the fact that our actions must be unanimously embraced by NATO members, whose sensitivity and proximity to nuclear attack are more acute than our own.

Taking an incremental approach to potential points of escalation has so far proven to be an adequate measure to avoid nuclear escalation. It is not possible to say with certainty what will trigger a massive and/or nuclear retaliation by the Russians. But, recognizing this aspect of Russia’s doctrine gives Ukraine room for planning and executing operations that will weaken Russia and minimize the risk of nuclear escalation.

Undergirding this critical discussion of escalation is the need for established lines of communication, which can be activated when Russian actions on the ground signal a movement toward nuclear response or, in general, if the situation has reached a point that hostilities on both sides do not provide an advantage to either side. We must begin to establish such lines without conceding the Ukrainian mission to free all its territory. Such a task might be initiated by a neutral country on a very informal basis. We must be prepared to seize the moment when further military action on both sides is viewed as unproductive. We must think about “off ramps” now, not in the middle of a chaotic situation on the battlefield.

As a final point, international support to Ukraine to resist Russian aggression may be an important aspect of non-proliferation. If Russia succeeds in seizing Ukraine it could be interpreted by some as the irreversible leverage a nuclear power has over a non-nuclear nation. This could further weaken restraints on proliferation.

### RUSSIAN MANPOWER RESERVES

Russia has a distinct advantage with the sheer number of personnel that it can throw into the fight. The Kremlin has already mobilized several hundred thousand individuals and, through the Wagner Group, contracted with thousands of convicts and foreign mercenaries to enter the fight. Although generally poorly trained, these conscripts and criminals can make up in mass some part of what they lack in training. Additionally, Russia is adapting to the lack of skills in their forces by adopting defensive positions; digging in through successive positions to make infantry-led offensive operations costly for Ukraine. The Russians hope that these defensive operations will balance the skill differential and retard the mobility of Ukrainian infantry forces. The Russians feel that time is on their side in weakening the Ukrainians militarily and economically and undermining international support, as the cost of support to Ukraine increases and economic effects in the international community may undercut domestic support.

The Ukrainians remain confident that they can effectively match the increase of Russian forces through their population enhanced by the skill and tenacity of their fighting forces. This force differential also suggests that timely, well-coordinated offensive operations would enhance the Ukrainian position by upsetting the attrition warfare embraced by the Russians. It would also lessen the likelihood of international qualms about support for Ukraine prompted by potential domestic discontent with the economic costs of long-term continued support.

### BAKHMUT

After the successful Kherson operation by the Ukrainians, the battle lines have hardened, and throughout most of the front, conditions remain static. The exception has been intense fighting around Bakhmut. This city has little strategic value on its own, but it is caught up in the political and symbolic aspects of the fight. The Russians commenced an assault against Bakhmut led by the Wagner Group, the mercenary force led by Yevgeny Prigozhin. The Wagner Group and Prigozhin have been condemned worldwide as a criminal force operating as an undeclared part of the Russian Ministry of Defense and, ultimately, under the direction of Putin. The Wagner Group is notorious for its perpetration of war crimes and total disregard for the Law of War.

The Bakhmut fight was initiated by the Wagner Group as an attempt to claim a victory with the seizure of a city after the Russian retreat from Kherson and their withdrawal from significant portions of Ukraine. If successful, their gains could be translated into propaganda that Russia is once again on the front foot. In addition, it appears that the battle for Bakhmut may also serve as a way for Prigozhin to posture himself and the Wagner Group as more effective than Russian military forces. This could allow Prigozhin to make the claim that he should be in charge of operations, not the Ministry of Defense, including the distribution of resources in Ukraine. Prigozhin has been engaged in a running battle with the Russian General Staff over the conduct of the war and the role that he should play. Prigozhin's efforts have not yet produced a clear-cut victory in Bakhmut, but they have contributed to the shake-up of Russian military commanders, and in recent weeks, Russia has been slowly gaining ground.

The Ukrainians have fought fiercely against the Russian assault on Bakhmut for several months. However, reports indicate that Russia is also increasing attacks across several front-line areas in the Donbas. A question that must be continually assessed is whether the resources committed are comparable to the strategic importance of Bakhmut, particularly as Ukraine balances the need to build and enhance combat power for the anticipated Russian offensive.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

In our meeting with President Zelenskyy, we emphasized the importance of accountability for all of the international resources that are flowing into Ukraine. We stressed that the diversion of these resources or improper use would give fuel to those who do not support our mutual efforts to resist Russia and defend democracy against autocracy. The President emphatically agreed and understood how damaging insufficient accountability would be. In subsequent meetings with Ukrainian Ministry of Defense personnel, we were pleased to discover that Ukraine is undertaking a number of efforts to track and account for equipment and supplies at every step in the process. This includes technological tools like the Logistics Functional Area Services (LOGFAS) system, the same system employed by NATO for accounting and logistics of military equipment.

These efforts are matched by rigorous scrutiny by U.S. Embassy personnel. We heard great detail regarding the efforts of the Office of Defense Cooperation to find innovative ways, including technological solutions, to conduct end use monitoring in conflict areas. They also highlighted the resumption of on-site inspections to assess weapons stocks in areas where security conditions allow. Embassy staff also

stressed that we have not seen any credible evidence of the diversion of U.S.-provided weapons from Ukraine.

On humanitarian and development assistance, Embassy personnel detailed a number of transparency and accountability efforts. USAID recently facilitated a partnership with the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Center for Audit Excellence to provide training and technical assistance to the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine, Ukraine's supreme audit institution. Under the agreement, GAO will provide training and technical assistance to help the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine improve its auditing capabilities, including for auditing U.S. financial assistance flowing to the Ukraine government. In addition to GAO's efforts, the Ukrainian government has opened its doors to the international consulting firm Deloitte, to assist in accounting for aid, including direct budget support. USAID is providing direct budget support in coordination with the World Bank to keep basic government services like hospitals, schools, and utilities running and to sustain essential support for personnel like emergency responders, teachers, and firefighters. All of the salary support is carried out on a reimbursement basis, meaning the Ukrainian government expends funds and then submits receipts to the Embassy. This provides yet another layer of transparency to the process.

## GOVERNMENT REFORMS

We also stressed to the President the need to continue reforms aimed at eliminating corruption. Ukraine has, over the years, acquired a reputation for corruption, which, if unchecked, would undermine the willingness of the international community to continue the significant aid that is being committed while also eroding the sense of a free and fair democracy - the ideal which the world ascribes to the heroic fight of the Ukrainians. President Zelenskyy immediately grasped this point and indicated his commitment to anti-corruption activities. (One must, of course, recognize that Ukraine is in an existential fight for survival, and such reforms are multiyear, whole-of-government endeavors even in the best of conditions.)

International organizations are also continuing to press for broad-based reforms. The European Commission has accepted Ukraine as a candidate to join the EU, a momentous decision in and of itself. However, with candidate status comes a commitment to work on specific reform efforts as a precondition to full membership. The Commission identified seven reforms: (i) reform of the Constitutional Court; (ii) continuation of judicial reform; (iii) anti-corruption, including the appointment of the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office; (iv) anti-money laundering; (v) implementation of the anti-oligarchic law; (vi) adoption of a media law that aligns Ukraine's legislation with

the EU, particularly as regards to empowering the media regulator, transparency of media ownership, and equal market conditions; and (vii) changes in legislation on national minorities.<sup>3</sup> The 24<sup>th</sup> EU-Ukraine Summit concluded in early February. At the Summit European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen noted among other things “progress in ensuring the independent and effective operation of the anti-corruption institutions” in Ukraine.

Indeed, just recently Ukraine’s National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) uncovered a scheme by several government officials to embezzle public funds and accept bribes from a company seeking government contracts to restore critical infrastructure and generators. The NABU detectives detained one of the officials, a deputy minister of infrastructure, after he received \$400,000 for facilitating the award of several contracts for the purchase of equipment and generators at inflated prices. In a statement following the detention, the NABU confirmed several others were detained and the investigation is ongoing.

After these revelations, President Zelenskyy took swift action, firing a number of government officials at the central and regional levels and making clear that misuse of government funds would be met with severe consequences. Among those removed from their posts were a deputy prosecutor general who received public criticism for vacationing in Spain with his family during the war, a deputy minister of defense, and five governors from regions, including Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. An official in Mr. Zelenskyy’s office also offered his resignation following criticism that he misused a vehicle donated for humanitarian missions as his own personal travel. While there is much work to be done to reform Ukrainian institutions and modernize its business climate, it is commendable that President Zelenskyy has taken the right initial steps, demanding political accountability and sending the message that such actions will not be tolerated in his government.

## ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

Much of the international attention is focused on warfare. But, perhaps, the most significant leverage with Russia is economic. In the first few days of the war, we saw a remarkable and unified effort to cut off and collapse the Russian economy. Initially, we saw evidence that it might succeed, but the Russian economy stabilized in relatively quick order. Some of that stabilization is attributable to the difficulty in disengaging from Russian oil and gas. In addition, while Putin had significant reserve assets that were quickly frozen by Western governments, it appears that he had stashed away considerable foreign reserves to buffer Russia

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission, "Commission Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union" (June 17, 2022) ("European Commission Opinion"), pp. 20-21:<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10321-2022-INIT/en/pdf>.

against international sanctions. Despite deriving a significant benefit from record-high energy prices, the IMF forecasts Russia's economy will contract by 2.2 percent this year.

The unprecedented international export controls and sanctions regime has restricted Russia's access to key advanced technology. The State Department reported in October that these efforts have forced Russia to cannibalize existing airline parts they can no longer access abroad, and that hypersonic ballistic missile production had nearly ceased due to the lack of necessary semiconductors used in the manufacturing process.

However, Russia is both improvising and substituting for these products, and also leveraging its experience from many years of avoiding sanctions and export controls. Russia is turning to less technologically advanced countries like Iran and North Korea for supplies, equipment, and support in evading sanctions. The Senate must continue to support and strengthen the sanctions and export control review and enforcement capabilities at the Treasury Department and the Commerce Department that have proven critical to restricting Russian economic means to date.

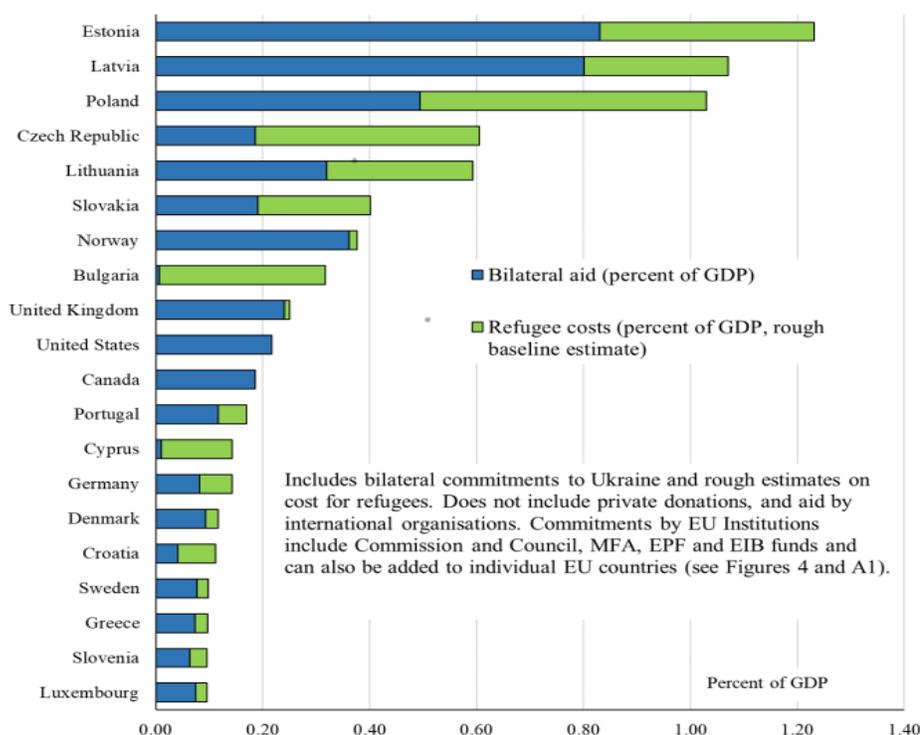
Russia's ability to continue its attack on Ukraine fundamentally rests on its economic viability in terms of supporting expensive, ongoing military operations and maintaining a standard of life that Russians have been accustomed to. Sanctions against Russia are intended to undercut both, as the lack of resources will restrict military activities and undercut civilian morale. Both objectives rest on the willingness of countries to resist self-aggrandizement and embrace a unified effort to reject military action meant to subvert the international order and embolden autocracy.

The international embrace of this generational challenge has been uneven, to say the least. The European Union (EU) has stepped up dramatically and nobly. The EU has enacted several rounds of sanctions and export controls and frozen the assets of key Russian banks, government officials, and oligarchs. In the energy sector, in particular, the EU has banned the import of Russian coal last August. All oil shipped by sea was banned last December. And, all petroleum products will be banned this month. The EU has also put forth a plan to phase out all Russian fossil fuel imports before 2030.

In addition, European nations have stepped up to provide aid to Ukraine on a massive scale. The Kiel Institute for the World Economy maintains a database of military, financial, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. As of December 2022, the Kiel Institute reports that Estonia leads the international coalition, with

contributions of over 1.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Estonia is followed closely by Latvia and Poland which are both over 1 percent. The United States is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in terms of overall contributions as a portion of GDP, estimated to be just over 0.2 percent.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that Kiel’s data scientist acknowledge that such data likely undercounts the significant expenses incurred by European nations as they have welcomed millions of Ukrainian refugees into their borders, the cost of which is difficult to capture (e.g. how does one account for the thousands of private citizens in numerous European cities who have opened their homes to Ukrainians fleeing violence?).

Figure 13. Government support including estimated refugee costs - percent of donor GDP (top 20 of 40 donor countries)



(Infographic: Kiel Institute for the World Economy<sup>5</sup>)

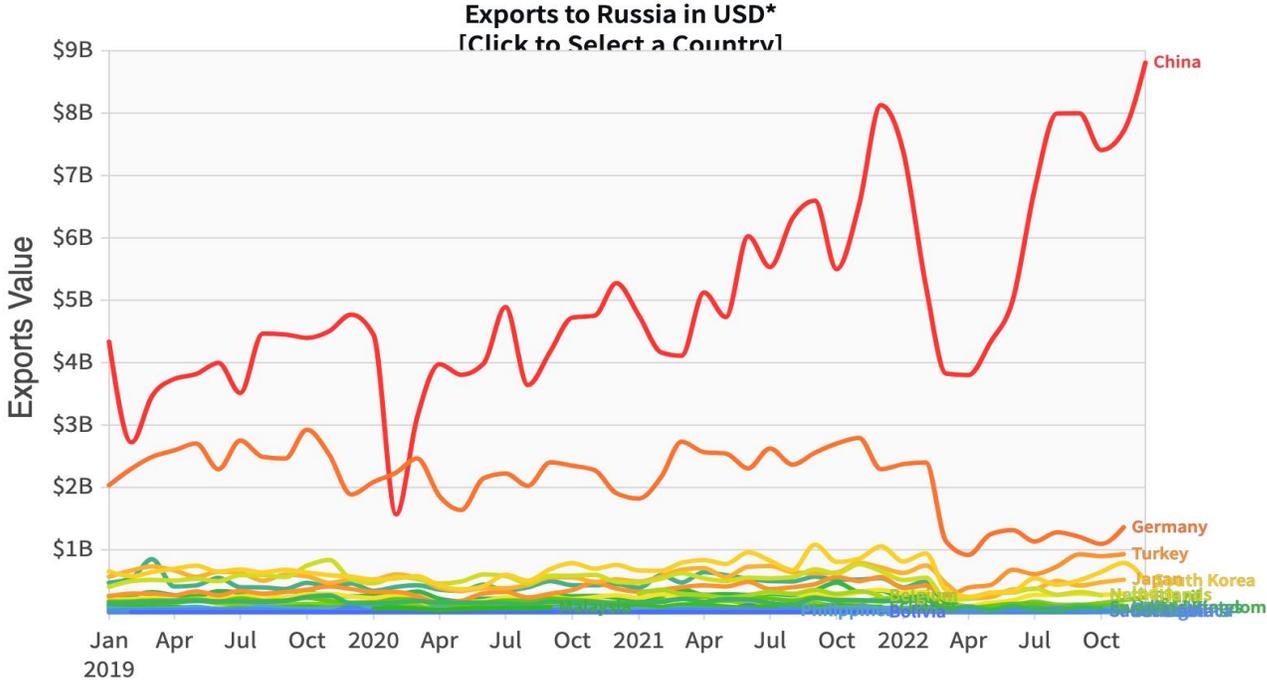
On the other hand, countries like China and India have continued to support Russia because of affinity or naked economic self-interest. China is by far Russia’s largest trading partner, with imports from Russia growing 98 percent year over year. The vast majority of this growth has been in discount petroleum and coal. Simultaneously, China has seen its exports to Russia grow by 24 percent, largely

<sup>4</sup>Ukraine support tracker - A database of military, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Kiel Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2023, from <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

replacing key items needed to support Russian military activities which are sanctioned by the West, such as computers, telephones, and cars.<sup>6</sup>

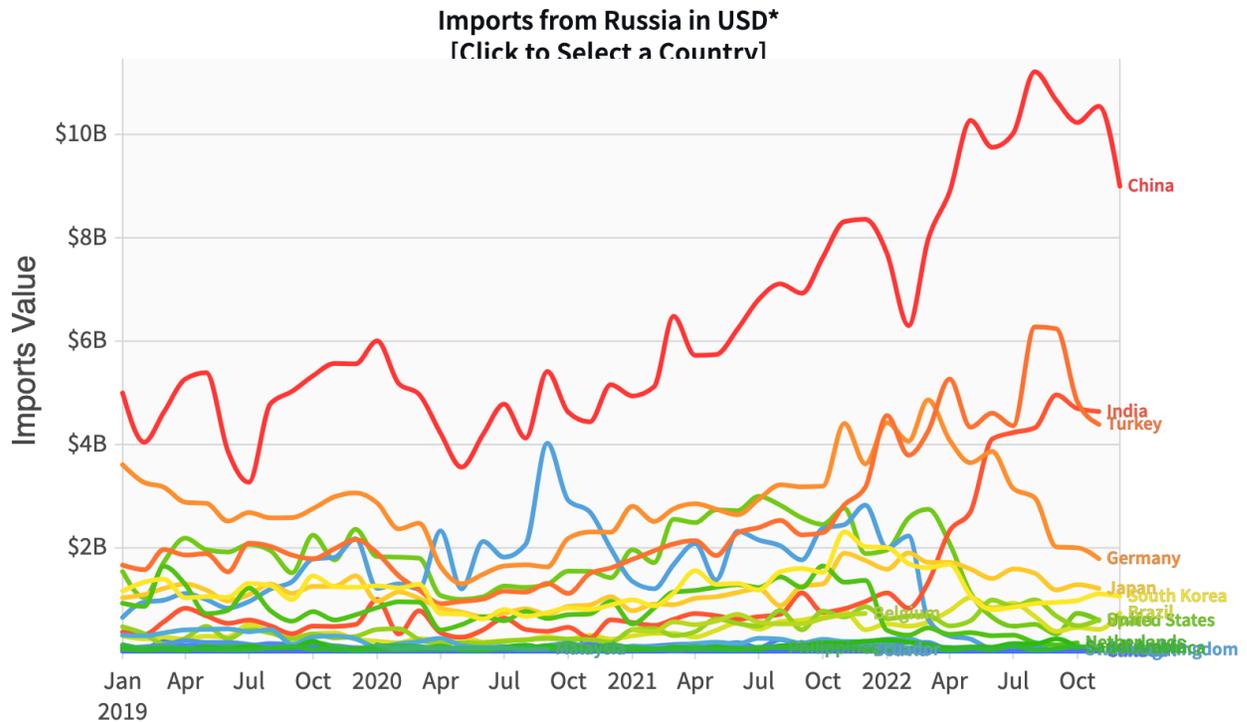
Since the invasion, India has actually seen a decrease of 19 percent in exports to Russia. However, India is fueling the Russian economy with a staggering 430 percent increase in imports, most notably hydrocarbons.<sup>7</sup>



(Graphs: Observatory of Economic Complexity)

<sup>6</sup> *Russia (RUS) exports, imports, and trade partners*. Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC). (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2023, from <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/rus>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



[oec.world/en/profile/country/rus?latestTrendsFlowSelectorNonSubnat=flow1&latestTrendsScaleSelectorNonSubnat=Trade%20Value](https://oec.world/en/profile/country/rus?latestTrendsFlowSelectorNonSubnat=flow1&latestTrendsScaleSelectorNonSubnat=Trade%20Value)

(Graphs: Observatory of Economic Complexity)<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting that the United States remains the largest trading partner for both China and India.

In a unified effort to resist Russian aggression, preserve a free and democratic Ukraine, and maintain an international order based on law rather than reckless aggression, we cannot tolerate this economic enablement. In collaboration with our allies, we must step up the pressure on Russia. We also must recognize that this unprecedented pressure campaign will affect us at home, as constrained Russian exports will continue to contribute to inflation and fluctuating energy prices. Nonetheless, America and our partners must continue efforts to expose economic support flowing to Russia and seize the opportunity, particularly with India and other-like minded nations, to re-orient their long-term disposition away from Russia. With respect to India, we face a strategic opportunity to increase collaboration on economic, technology, and security issues, including by accelerating efforts to replace India's legacy Soviet-era military equipment with U.S. manufactured capabilities.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

Ultimately, the will of the Russian people may be the decisive factor in how this war ends. Will they continue to tolerate the monomaniacal aggression of Putin? Or will they resist in ways that signal there must be an end to this aggression?

First, we must understand that Putin has created a state which suppresses opinion and individual autonomy. His enemies are jailed. Newspapers and other independent media have been driven out. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been banned. Media, to the extent it does exist, merely amplifies his political objectives and anyone spreading what the government determines to be “false information” can be punished with up to 15 years in prison

Second, Putin has attempted to create a narrative that engages the Russian people in a powerful attachment to their history. He speaks of Ukraine as an inseparable part of “Mother Russia.” He paints the Ukrainians as “Nazis” who seek to reengage the great conflict of World War II. (This must be shocking news to President Zelenskyy, a Ukrainian Jew who would have been one of the first targets of the Nazis).

All of this is reinforced and amplified by Russian media, with the helpful assistance of Tucker Carlson and Fox News. Leaked emails from the All-Russia State Television and Radio Company (V.G.T.R.K.), Russia’s largest state-owned media company, show Russian news producers encouraging the rebroadcast of a Carlson segment. “Be sure to take Tucker” a Russian producer wrote to their colleague, referring to a Carlson segment that described the Chinese-Russian partnership that “emerged under Biden.” (Carlson’s amnesia about Trump is profound).<sup>9</sup>

The Russian people rely on television for the majority of their news, and V.G.T.R.K. is the centerpiece for Putin’s propaganda. V.G.T.R.K. has roughly 3,500 employees and operates some of the country’s most-watched channels. The company receives about \$500 million a year from the Russian government.<sup>10</sup>

In the face of this propaganda tsunami, the Russian population has had to observe the invasion of Ukraine and cast their judgement upon the conflict. Their reaction, with crushing irony, appears to be continued support for Putin.

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Mozar, et al. “An Alternative Reality: How Russia’s State TV Spins the Ukraine War.” *The New York Times*. December 15, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/15/technology/russia-state-tv-ukraine-war.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Many of those who sensed the outrageous barbarity of the Russian assault left the country. Others, with mixed feelings, fled the likelihood of conscription. The sum of these departures left Putin stronger as many dissidents fled rather than take to the streets. Those who have remained and were brave enough to voice opposition have faced brutal crackdowns and swift arrest.

One factor contributing to this obedience is the fact that “many Russians are utterly beholden to the state. According to official statistics, the proportion of social payments in the real incomes of the population is greater now than it was in Soviet times.”<sup>11</sup> In sum, the Russian people are beholden to a state crafted and dominated by Putin and are reluctant to give up what they have for principled rejection of him.

This reality should further emphasize the need for international economic policies that restrict Russian income and limit the economic hold Putin has on his citizens. Initially, this will not affect the security services that will continue their repression. But, it is a path to trigger the Russian people to begin to question Putin. This dynamic also calls for more creative information operations to break through the censorship and disinformation that dominates Russia.

Practical steps like these, along with accelerated military and economic support to Ukraine, will help turn the tide of this war and usher in the peace that is desperately needed.

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<sup>11</sup> Andrei Kolesnikov. “How Russians Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the War.” *Foreign Affairs*. February 1, 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/how-russians-learned-stop-worrying-and-love-war>.