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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

ELIZABETH L. KING, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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October 17, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

In early August, I sent you a classified letter, which identified steps you could take to support Ukraine more aggressively. The letter contained detailed recommendations, including policy changes and suggestions to improve military assistance delivery and defense industrial base cooperation. My goal was to highlight ways that your administration could use its remaining six months in office wisely – to put Ukraine in the most advantageous position possible for your successor, whomever the American people choose. I followed up with you in a phone conversation in mid-September, and I have attended meetings with senior national security officials.

I am frustrated – and mystified – that your administration has accomplished so little in the last three months regarding the war in Ukraine. You seem poised to leave the next president a weak hand. Nonetheless, I maintain that a focused effort – directed by you – could make a substantial difference over your final 90 days as president.

Toward that end, I have included a list of 10 recommendations.

**Recommendation 1: Increase the pace of weapons transfers to Ukraine.** The current pace of Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) usage would drag on through calendar year 2025. This is true despite the agreement between Congress and your administration that the authority granted in the National Security Supplemental would last through calendar year 2024. That tempo led your administration to seek a \$5.5 billion extension of this authority last month.

The Secretaries of State and Defense exercised this authority to prevent its expiration, but your administration has said that the pace of deliveries will not change. Ukraine will continue to receive only about \$400 million in military equipment per month for the next 14 months.

I am troubled that your administration is using U.S. military readiness as an excuse to “manage” the conflict in Ukraine. Officials are making decisions about strategic and military risk, but they are not consulting Congress. You should direct the Secretary of Defense to provide you a plan that would deliver the remaining \$5.5 billion in Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) to Ukraine immediately.

**Deliver more vehicles.** Ukraine needs many more heavy vehicles, such as M1A1 Abrams tanks and Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, to form the core of combined-arms brigades. Ukraine also faces a significant shortfall of general protected vehicles (such as up-armored HMMWVs, ambulances, and MRAPs) to protect troops from Russian drones and artillery. The U.S. Army and Marine Corps possess ample stocks of these vehicles. Our industrial base can easily replace those that are transferred. Additionally, there is no near-term need for massive stockpiles of vehicles given the degraded state of Russian ground forces.

**Deliver more ATACMS.** Ukraine has used U.S.-provided ATACMS responsibly and effectively, but it needs more. We have a sufficient inventory of serviceable long-range ATACMS. A significant number of these should go to Ukraine. Although there may be division within your administration on this recommendation, I urge you to push the Army and the combatant commands to aid Ukraine's largely successful deep strike campaign.

**Deliver more drones and counter unmanned aerial systems.** U.S. attack drone and counter-UAS production can increase. The industrial base is expanding rapidly and has multiple solution options in each of these areas. Ukraine is quite receptive to using unproven systems.

**Recommendation 2: Allow greater flexibility on restrictions for U.S.-provided munitions.** One of Ukraine's key asymmetric advantages against Russia is its ability to target high-value Russian military targets and to do so rapidly. Your administration has hamstrung this crucial advantage. You should immediately revise any policies that limit the use of U.S.-provided munitions, including ATACMS, to strike military targets inside Russia. Any restrictions should be placed on the types of targets, rather than on the distance from a border that Russia does not even recognize. Numerous allies and partners already allow their long-range munitions to be used for deep strikes.

**Recommendation 3: Increase the cap of U.S. government non-military personnel allowed in-country.** You should direct Secretary Blinken to allow more State Department, Defense Department, and other government agency personnel inside Ukraine. The current number of personnel cannot manage a military aid effort in the tens of billions of dollars while conducting planning for future improvements in the Ukrainian industrial base and economy. As a result, anything beyond the day-to-day management is not getting done. Current staff is overworked, and more U.S. government personnel are required to manage security assistance and to conduct accountability and oversight work. Numerous allies already have a much more risk-tolerant government presence in Ukraine.

**Recommendation 4: Establish a regulated presence of U.S. military contractors inside Ukraine.** You should allow a limited number of U.S. military contractors to operate in Ukraine – under strict conditions – to increase Ukraine's ability to maintain its equipment. The current approach is too slow, as we remotely perform maintenance or move Ukrainian equipment to Poland for up-keep. The presence of U.S. contractors in-country would also help to mentor Ukrainian personnel to increase their self-sufficiency. U.S. contractors are well-prepared to execute such a mission. They have extensive experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. British, French, and Czech personnel are already in-country, or will soon be, to conduct similar missions.

**Recommendation 5: Expand training for Ukrainian land forces.** The United States should maximize the use of all available training capacity located in the European Command (EUCOM) area of responsibility, and it should build up Ukrainian brigades capable of combined arms warfare. Currently, improved Ukrainian recruitment is outpacing Ukrainian and allied training. EUCOM almost certainly has the ability to train even more troops per month than it does now, which would help cover the number of troops that Ukraine does not have the capacity to train.

**Recommendation 6: Deliver more shareable, commercially-derived intelligence.** The administration should use processes already in place to increase the delivery of available unclassified information to Ukraine, including disposition of Russian forces and location data. The National Reconnaissance Office has contract vehicles in place for commercial satellite services (such as RF data) that are instrumental in providing Ukraine with services for tipping and cueing (i.e., targeting) of Russian radars, air assets, defense systems, and other threats.

**Recommendation 7: Dramatically expand the Pentagon industrial base policy workforce.** U.S. industrial base expansion and industrial base integration with Europe is not happening fast enough because we lack the personnel to plan and execute these activities. You should direct the Secretary of Defense, in the next 15 days, to reassign at least 100 capable and motivated DOD civil servants, moving them into these offices and asking Congress for new hiring authorities and supplemental money to pay for this expansion. The short-staffed office that runs the Defense Production Act illustrates the need. Only a handful of people staff that organization, which is tasked with finding ways to rebuild our supplier base for solid rocket motors, missile casings, and more. DOD industrial base offices can also help allies and partners expand their own production, such as the Storm Shadow and SCALP lines in the UK and France, respectively. These U.S. offices include:

- Joint Production Acceleration Cell
- Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International and Industry Engagement
- Manufacturing Capability Expansion and Investment Prioritization (DPA & ICAM/IBAS)

**Recommendation 8: Rapidly accelerate contracting timelines.** I understand that many large contracts for Ukraine, especially those funded through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, are still taking a year or more on average. This is unacceptable. Section 1244 of the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA, as well as additional contracting authorities, grant broad flexibilities to the Department of Defense. By written instruction, you should formally direct the Secretary of Defense and the service acquisition executives to require all contracting officers to leverage – to the maximum extent possible – those contracting flexibilities. The Army has used section 1244 for the new 155mm artillery ammunition factory in Mesquite, Texas, and doing so brought it online two years faster than expected.

**Recommendation 9: Hold monthly high-level defense industrial base meetings.** You should direct the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Commerce to host monthly high-level defense industrial base meetings with Ukraine, key NATO allies, and defense industry officials. You should prioritize coproduction with Ukraine so it can better meet its own needs.

**Recommendation 10: Deliver more DPICMs.** In addition to ATACMS, Ukraine also has used Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions (DPICMs) effectively and responsibly. The U.S. inventory includes hundreds of thousands of serviceable 155mm DPICMs rounds. Each 155mm DPICMs round has the effect of 3–5 high explosive artillery projectiles. You possess the authority to send Ukraine \$250 million of DPICMs today. There is simply no way to offset the artillery advantage of the Russians without using DPICMs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger F. Wicker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Roger F. Wicker  
Ranking Member