

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 6, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
United States Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

We write today in support of Ukraine's efforts to resist the unprovoked invasion by Russia. The military aid the United States and other NATO countries provided to Ukraine gave its forces the defensive ability to stop Russia from conquering Kyiv and installing a puppet regime. That is a significant accomplishment. But it has not stopped the war, nor brought Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table to seriously discuss a potential end to hostilities. What will stop the war and bring Putin to the peace table is to start pushing Russian forces out of southern and eastern Ukraine. That will likely require different types of weapons platforms. We have several questions for the Department of Defense (DoD) and request that the DoD provide the weapons the Ukrainian military has requested, including air assets.

The Department has now recognized that the Ukrainian military needs heavier weapons to defeat Russian forces. While we are pleased the Biden Administration will assist with the transfer of tanks to Ukraine, we urge the administration to also provide Ukraine with the air assets it needs to win. As Air Force veterans, we know that in any conflict with an opposing military, one of the first actions our Joint Forces will take is to establish air supremacy. Based on public reporting, neither the Ukrainians nor the Russians have established air superiority. We believe the U.S. and our NATO allies can help Ukraine change the situation in the air domain and give Ukrainian forces a decisive advantage in the war.

Last week the Ukrainian Air Force (UAF) released a public statement that emphasized the critical need for air assets:

- “Air superiority is the deciding factor in the war. Air superiority has played a key role in all wars since WWII.”
- “Ukraine's air force cannot close the sky over Ukraine or gain air superiority due to a large discrepancy in equipment and technologies.”
- “To date, our allies have not answered our call for air defense support (fighter jets and SAM).”
- “In the sky, the greatest need is for fighter jets – F-15s and F-16s of the fourth generation or higher would be sufficient; Ukrainian pilots can learn to fly these with just 2-3 weeks of training.”

The Ukrainian military is telling us that they need fighter jets, they need surface to air missile systems, and they are willing to take their personnel off the battlefield to get trained on more advanced systems. We also note that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy directly informed Congress that Ukraine needs fighter jets. Ruslan Stefanchuk, Speaker and Chairman of the Parliament of

Ukraine, sent a letter to Congress on March 8 stating Ukraine needs additional aircraft. We are requesting that the Administration do all that it can to get air assets to Ukraine. The country's survival is at stake. With that in mind, we request you answer the following questions by April 13, 2022:

1. The DoD stated that transferring MiG-29s to Ukraine would be "high risk." Why would transferring tanks to Ukraine not be considered high risk but transferring MiGs would be?
2. The DoD has conducted joint training with the Ukrainian military. It is our understanding some Ukrainian pilots can fly the A-10. Does the DoD agree?
3. How long does DoD assess it would take to train a Ukrainian pilot to fly an A-10?
4. How long does DoD assess it would take to train a Ukrainian pilot to fly a F-15 or a F-16?
5. How long does DoD assess it would take to train a Ukrainian pilot to fly the MQ-9 Reaper offensive strike unmanned aerial vehicle?
6. How long does DoD assess it would take to train Ukrainian military personnel to fly the MQ-1C Gray Eagle unmanned aerial combat vehicle?
7. We understand the above weapons platforms require support and maintenance, some more than others. How long would it take to train Ukrainians to provide the support and maintenance for the above weapons platforms?
8. Have any S-300 air defense systems been transferred to Ukraine yet? If not, why not?

Considering the recent disclosure of depraved and horrific war crimes by Russian forces in Bucha and elsewhere, providing Ukraine with the air assets it needs to win becomes even more urgent.

We stand ready to work with your administration to ensure that our Ukrainian allies have the military support they need to finally restore their territorial integrity. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State