



The Imperative of Continued U.S. Assistance to Ukraine

APRIL 2024

Why does Ukraine matter to America's interests?

Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine has exacted immeasurable costs on the Ukrainian people, threatened the very backbone of democratic values and freedom, and put at real risk **global stability not only to our European partners but to America itself**. Although Ukraine has made progress against Putin's aggressions, future progress is not guaranteed – and backsliding is very possible – as renewed U.S. assistance hangs in the balance.

- **America's former top military leaders [caution](#) that with** "Putin making Ukraine's economy another theater of war, the critical U.S. civilian economic and humanitarian assistance—alongside security assistance—will be just as vital to ensure Ukraine can continue to defend its territory and prevent Russian forces from pushing further into Europe."
- **National security experts [worry](#) that the ultimate U.S. cost of a Putin victory on the doorstep of America's top NATO allies would be "astronomical" in comparison to the cost of supporting Ukraine's self-defense. Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency General David Petraeus recently [argued](#):** "Right now, the most significant factor is whether there will be continued U.S. assistance or not... including, as you know, continued financial, economic and humanitarian assistance... Without that, I think Ukraine has a very tough road ahead."
- **The warnings are also increasing on the dire costs of inaction. Secretary Antony Blinken recently [remarked](#):** "Without [the supplemental], simply put, everything that Ukrainians achieved and that we've helped them achieve will be in jeopardy... we're going to be sending a strong and wrong message to all of our adversaries that we are not serious about the defense of freedom, the defense of democracy." **Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [is also speaking out](#),** arguing that "The vast majority of the American people understand that Ukraine hasn't asked for a single American soldier, or sailor or airman. They've simply said that your traditional role as the arsenal of freedom and democracy is something that we would be great beneficiaries of."
- **Across the political spectrum, [polls](#) show that [Americans continue to support](#) Ukraine.** According to [Pew Research Center](#), nearly **70 percent of Republican voters and 80 percent of Democratic voters say the war is "important to U.S. national interests."**

What has been the impact of U.S. assistance to Ukraine?

Approximately 40% of total U.S. assistance provides critical civilian support, which includes responding to humanitarian needs, re-building critical infrastructure, and keeping Ukraine's lights on and energy grid running. These are critical efforts to ensure Ukraine's government can continue to function and defend its territory. While the Russian military continues to launch massive waves of deadly strikes across Ukraine, **the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development have used [100 percent](#) of the funding it has received from Congress** for economic, humanitarian, and security assistance to support Ukraine.

- **Burden sharing with our allies is working – with European countries now committing more than \$3 to Ukraine for every \$1 from the United States.** On economic assistance alone, Europe spends more than \$6 to every \$1 from the U.S. Yet with Putin making Ukraine’s economy a pivotal target of the war, the Western coalition against Russia is gravely at risk if America does not pass new security and economic assistance after more than a year of no new U.S. support for our Ukrainian partners on the frontlines. **America has to have skin in the game** to ensure Ukraine succeeds and pursues reforms.
 - **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** recently [reiterated](#) that **“Europe will be at Ukraine's side for every single day of the war, and for every single day thereafter.”** Former UK Prime Minister and current **Foreign Secretary David Cameron** [wrote](#), “Since I last visited Washington before Christmas, **Europe has proven its determination to stay the course.** European states have provided more than half the support to Ukraine... The European Union has just agreed on a €50 billion multi-year funding package of its own. Germany doubled its military aid to Ukraine last month. And Britain has become the first country to sign a bilateral security agreement with Kyiv.”
- Thanks to U.S. leadership and investment – alongside support from more than 50 NATO allies and other partners that are sharing the burden – Russia has so far [failed](#) in its quest to erase Ukraine from the map.
 - **At the World Economic Forum, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged allies to “strengthen our economy, and we will strengthen your security.”** Economic support allows Ukraine to devote its resources to fighting the war and put itself on a path to self-sufficiency.
 - With support from the U.S. and allies, Ukraine’s economy grew faster than expected in 2023. Annual growth is expected to come to [5 percent](#) as more than [eight in ten](#) American companies in Ukraine are back up and running. However, high growth rates are not guaranteed, as Ukraine’s [export capacity](#) and the continued provision of economic support remains unclear.
 - Economic support has allowed Ukraine to protect its energy grids and tech sector, invest in its grain, steel and energy industries and exports, and continue providing basic and essential services to its citizens – including to keep the heat and lights on during the winter, to ensure hospitals remain open, and to support its first responders.
- **The war is at a new crossroads both on the battlefield and for Ukraine’s economy. Putin is betting against the West’s resolve and on his staying power.** In an annual address, Putin [reiterated](#) that his goals of aggression have not changed: “either reach an agreement or solve it by force... victory will be ours.”

Why does additional civilian emergency assistance to Ukraine remain critical?

What happens in Ukraine is not only what happens on the battlefield. Putin is aggressively pursuing a two-pronged approach in this way, attempting to destroy Ukraine’s military and attacking its economy. Continued American support is critical to help Ukraine push back against both fronts.

- **Ensuring Democracy.** With democracy under threat around the world, **Russia, Iran, and China are fueling war, conflict, and instability in every corner of the globe.** President Putin’s recent killing of **Aleksei Navalny**, his most formidable political opponent, reiterates the disdain America’s competitors have for the democratic values we are fighting for. [Reports](#) also suggest that Moscow is spreading disinformation in the U.S. to amplify isolationist arguments against Ukraine. As such, the outcome in the war is decisive for America’s competition with autocratic adversaries – including Beijing’s strategic calculations about Taiwan and Iran’s aggression in the Middle East – and the long-term durability of U.S. global leadership and democratic resilience.

- **Protecting Critical Economic Sectors.** Although Ukraine’s economy has experienced unexpected growth amidst Putin’s relentless missile and drone attacks, it remains **25 percent smaller today than it was before the war**. With devastating attacks on civilian targets, energy infrastructure, and Ukrainian exports, continued economic assistance is essential to enable Ukraine to devote its domestically generated resources to fighting the war and to eventually rebuild a self-sustaining economy.
 - **As Special Representative Penny Pritzker emphatically stated:** “The case for American economic support has been just as important as that for security assistance. Economic resilience is a core tenet of Ukraine’s war effort. Ukraine’s security and economy form a double helix — indelibly intertwined in the country’s effort to beat Putin.” Pritzker adds that if “we can help Ukraine ramp up grain and steel exports to 8 million tons a month, [it] could add up to \$5 billion per year to Ukraine’s government coffers” and help make them more self-sufficient.
- **Enabling Ukraine’s Self-Defense.** In early December, Russia [increased](#) the size of its armed forces by 170,000 troops as it continues to pursue close ties with Iran, China, and North Korea to backfill its weapons stockpiles. Following Russia’s recent sham “elections,” Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu [announced](#) the Russian Armed Forces will create two new combined armies, 14 divisions, and 16 brigades by the end of the year “to strengthen the Russian military proportionately to emerging threats to our country’s security.” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [told](#) Congress in December that without additional security assistance, **the conflict will turn more deadly in the coming months**.

How is U.S. assistance to Ukraine accountable? Is Ukraine pursuing anti-corruption reforms?

American security, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine is one of the most highly scrutinized and accountable aid programs that the United States has ever delivered to a partner country with dozens of Congressional delegations helping provide oversight.

- **All U.S. assistance to Ukraine is overseen by three independent U.S. inspectors general from the State Department, USAID, and the Pentagon.** Collectively, these three Offices of Inspector Generals have more than 250 personnel supporting oversight efforts of U.S. assistance to Ukraine.
- **All U.S. funding for direct budgetary support to Ukraine, delivered through the World Bank, is reimbursed [only](#) after the Ukrainian government has verified its expenses.**
- **Despite wartime pressures, Ukraine is one of the few countries in the world that improved its corruption score** over the last year, according to Transparency International. In March 2023, the Council of Europe’s anti-corruption body issued an interim report praising Ukraine’s reforms and progress to root out corruption as the country pursues EU membership.

Bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for Ukraine

Top Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress continue to speak out on why U.S. support to Ukraine is critical for U.S. national interests:

- **Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY):** “The challenges facing America and our allies today are not an a la carte menu of projects we can address at our leisure. No – the most dangerous threats we face are linked together.... America doesn’t have the luxury of facing these threats individually. Our ability to contend with complex, simultaneous threats is exactly what our adversaries

are testing. Russian war in Europe, Chinese aggression in Asia, Iran-backed terror in the Middle East... This is the reality we face. Right now.”

- **Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY):** “Now is not the time... to take our foot off the gas when it comes to helping Ukraine. The single worst thing we can do right now is give Putin any signal that we are wavering in our commitment to defend democracy in Ukraine and around the globe.”
- **Joint Statement by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Jim Risch (R-ID) and Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID):** “The United States cannot be the policeman of the world, nor can we engage in every conflict, which is why we must support allies who will stand with us in what is a very dangerous time globally.
- **Senate State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Chris Coons (D-DE):** “More than 40 countries around the world are helping Ukraine... We have to continue to stand by Ukraine. Their fight is our fight. They are on the front lines of freedom, for the world, for this century, and I am determined that we will continue this fight to Ukrainian victory.”
- **Senate Republican Whip John Thune (R-SD):** “Vladimir Putin's war of aggression in Ukraine, increased Chinese belligerence, and Hamas' October 7th attack enabled by Iran are all powerful reminders of the fact that there will always be malign actors in this world who must be confronted. These events are also a powerful reminder of something else and that is the need for American leadership on the global stage. Nature abhors a vacuum and if the United States and other free countries don't lead, other countries will fill the void. Countries like Iran, Russia, and China.”
- **Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC):** “Why am I so focused on this vote? Because I don't want to be on the pages of history that we will regret. If we walk away, you will see the alliance that is supporting Ukraine crumble. You will ultimately see China become emboldened. And I am not going to be on that page of history.”
- **Senator Todd Young (R-IN):** “We cannot abandon these allies and partners as they face existential threats... In the aftermath of the last two decades, the American people are understandably tired and reluctant to sacrifice. But we cannot ignore the cost of such divestment to our global leadership role. Abandoning our allies and partners will empower and embolden authoritarian powers such as China and Russia. Leadership comes with a price, but it also comes with rewards.”
- **Senator John Boozman (R-AR):** “An increasingly dangerous world underscores the need for strong, reliable, and resolute American leadership. The Senate has taken the first step to ensure the U.S. continues to play this vital role, especially with respect to supporting key partners and allies facing serious threat... This is not a moment to shrink back from our responsibilities at home or abroad.”
- **House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY):** “It's not just between two countries. It's a battle between freedom and tyranny, it's a battle between democracy and autocracy, it's a battle between truth and propaganda... If Ukraine prevails, the free world prevails, and that's good for all of us.”
- **House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX):** “Despite the recent eruption of the Hamas-Israel war and the growing threat of the CCP around the globe, we cannot lose sight of the importance of the war in Ukraine. These conflicts are all interconnected. Russia, China, and Iran were all working together to undermine the security of the United States and our closest allies and partners. If Putin were to succeed in Ukraine, it would only embolden our adversaries and undermine our national security interest.”
- **House Foreign Affairs Ranking Member Gregory Meeks (D-NY):** “Congress and the American people will continue to stand with the brave Ukrainians who are defending their rights and freedom. Ukrainians did not ask for this unjust war of aggression. They are only asking for our support as they defend their home and their sovereignty. And it is in our national interest to provide that support to Ukraine.”

- **House Intelligence Chairman Mike Turner (R-OH):** “Overwhelmingly, there is support for continuing aid to Ukraine, so that they can continue to fight against this aggression of Russia.”