

**Statement for the Record**  
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**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
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Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Russia's war against Ukraine is the worst crisis in European security since the end of the Second World War. It has upended peace and stability on the continent, poses a historic challenge to European Security, and without the U.S. and international response, would pose a dangerous example to autocratic regimes around the world.

Three decades ago, the collapse of the Soviet empire brought to Europe and Eurasia the possibility of a wider community of free, peaceful, and independent states. Instead, Russia has launched a war against Ukraine to change international borders and bend policies of vulnerable neighbors to its will.

Russia's war against Ukraine is thus an assault on European and global security. The security of the United States has long rested on the transatlantic community. American forces have been stationed across the Atlantic for decades to ensure peace in cooperation with our NATO Allies. As Secretary Austin said at the Halifax Security Forum this past November, "our support for Ukraine's self-defense is an investment in our own security and prosperity."

At the same time, Russia's war is also an assault on our bedrock values. In carrying out its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has wreaked unconscionable death and destruction, killing thousands of civilians, committing horrific atrocities, and attacking critical infrastructure.

Yet nearly a year after Russia's full-scale invasion last February, its attempt to eliminate Ukraine as an independent state has failed. Russia's ground offensives, its air attacks, its assaults to freeze and starve and subjugate—all this has only strengthened the spirit and resolve of the indomitable people of Ukraine.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been failing since it started in February 2022. Ukraine defeated Russia's strategic objective to seize Kyiv in the first months. Since then, we have seen Ukraine take the initiative, driving Russia's forces from Kharkiv and Kherson. Failing on the ground in conventional battle, Russia turned to

drone and cruise missile attacks on power and energy systems, but Ukraine's air defenses and infrastructure have so far proven resilient during the cold winter, with thanks due in large measure to international support. Now we are seeing intense fighting in the east—including around Bakhmut, where Russia's forces led by Wagner have been trying to take terrain for months at tremendous cost, and near Kremina, where the Ukrainians are on the offensive.

## **Positioning Ukraine for Further Success**

Russia is trying to gain momentum against increasingly capable Ukrainian Armed Forces along the front lines in Donetsk and Luhansk. Our near-term objective is to enable Ukraine's forces to regain control of their sovereign territory.

We are working to achieve that objective through enhanced and carefully targeted security assistance, working with allies and partners to provide critical new capabilities and training.

First, we have focused on enabling a layered and integrated approach to air defense. The United States and Germany each have committed to send Patriot systems, and the Netherlands has committed to send launchers and missiles. These will give Ukraine a significantly advanced, long-range capability alongside medium- and short-range air defense capabilities, such as NASAMS and Avenger systems, that we have already provided. Ukraine will have a layered air defense to protect its citizens and fight for its territory.

Second, to enhance Ukraine's ability to conduct complex maneuvers, in recent weeks the United States and several allies have committed to provide important armor capabilities. From the United States, this includes Abrams main battle tanks, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, and multiple types of armored personnel carriers, including Strykers. These armored vehicles will complement Challenger tanks committed by the UK, CV-90 infantry fighting vehicles from Sweden, AMX-10 light armored vehicles from France, and Marder infantry fighting vehicles from Germany.

Third, we have expanded U.S.-led training of Ukraine's forces to focus on combined arms and joint maneuver operations. This collective training is designed to integrate fires and maneuver—using infantry, armor, artillery, and other capabilities concurrently to defeat an adversary's ground forces. U.S.-led training will complement separate, specialized training conducted by the European Union and by individual Allies.

Fourth, we have made significant investments in the sustainment of complex weapon systems. This will support current operations as well as an enduring sustainment framework for meeting NATO standards that will persist long after this conflict is over. The U.S.-led framework enables robust and coordinated international capacity to more effectively support maintenance, repair, and overhaul operations under continuous, intense combat operations. Sustainment becomes increasingly important as we introduce new and different systems to Ukraine.

Finally, we continue to deliver a steady flow of artillery rounds and other ammunition to ensure Ukraine can sustain its fight against Russia's forces, which continue to rely on mass artillery fires to compensate for poorly trained forces.

### **Sustaining U.S. Support for the Long Term**

Russia has discovered that the United States and our Allies and partners are serious when we have said that we are committed to supporting Ukraine for the long haul.

Our assistance to Ukraine has been made possible by extraordinary support from Congress. The Department of Defense appreciates the most recent Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act that provided an increase in Presidential Drawdown Authority, replenishment funding for the military services to replace items sent to Ukraine, and additional funding for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI). Using Presidential Drawdowns, we are able to get Ukraine the critical capabilities it needs quickly from our own stocks. Through USAI, we have been able to contract with industry for new and innovative solutions, as well as building for Ukraine's longer-term defense.

With congressional support, we are also ramping up defense industrial base production of critical munitions and equipment—doubling or tripling capacity in many cases. Allies have stepped up impressively on bolstering global production as well.

Accountability for U.S. assistance also remains a top priority. The U.S. Government has not seen credible evidence of any diversion of U.S.-provided weapons outside of Ukraine. Instead, we see Ukraine's frontline units effectively employing security assistance on a large scale every day on the battlefield. Nonetheless, we are keenly aware of the possible risk of illicit diversion, and we are proactively taking all possible steps to prevent this from happening. We have worked to adapt our accountability practices for the combat environment in Ukraine, through expanded reporting mechanisms and site inspections. These measures go above and beyond prior practices and programs.

## **Leading a Global Coalition, Fortifying NATO**

While the United States is committing significant resources to Ukraine's defense, we are far from alone. Secretary Austin has marshaled a coalition of some 50 nations through the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG), to provide security assistance now and to make investments in a sustainable industrial base.

On January 20, we held the eighth meeting of the UDCG, at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. This forum continues to generate significant commitments from allies and partners—including in the top capability priority areas of air defense, artillery, and armor. The most recent meeting highlighted contributions at levels in scale, variety, and likely battlefield impact even greater than the successful meetings in 2022.

And we have increased our own defense to deter future aggression by Russia. Our transatlantic defense alliance is stronger than ever, and NATO has bolstered its forward defenses and enhanced its forces. Since last February, we have deployed or extended more than 20,000 additional U.S. forces to Europe. In Poland, we have established the first permanent U.S. forces on NATO's eastern flank. And we look forward to welcoming Finland and Sweden to NATO's ranks. U.S. forces maintain a persistent combat credible presence across Europe in support of NATO, including forward on NATO's eastern flank.

## **Russia's Diminished Standing**

Even as Russia's standing and strength are quickly eroding as a result of its ill-considered war against Ukraine, Moscow continues in its attempts to project influence around the globe. But one only needs to look to Russia's neighbors to see how it is failing. As NATO's cohesion and unity of purpose are reinforced, Russia's standing is fraying among the countries on its borders, which it seeks to dominate.

In Georgia, the United States is deepening our defense partnership and undertaking significant new defense capacity building and reform programs. Elsewhere, such as in Moldova, Armenia, and the states of Central Asia, Russia is no longer seen as a reliable or even desirable security partner. The Defense Department welcomes opportunities to deepen our own defense relations with these and other states as part of a whole of government approach that reinforces these states' sovereignty, independence, shared values, and the rule of law.

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Ultimately, when you take into account the fierce resistance of the people of Ukraine, the strengthening of the transatlantic alliance, and the massive costs to Russia, this war has already demonstrated that aggression is not worth the price paid by the aggressor. That is a lesson that should reverberate around the world—including among autocratic leaders everywhere. The United States and our allies and partners will not tolerate living in a world where borders can be changed, or spheres of influence imposed, by force.

As Secretary Austin has said, “free people always refuse to replace an open order of rules and rights with one dictated by force and fear.” We are determined to support Ukraine’s fight to defend its freedom, democracy, and independence against Russia’s aggression—and by doing so, to defend the American interests and values that are so clearly at stake.