

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 27, 2023

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

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin  
Secretary of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear President Biden and Secretary Austin,

It has nearly been one year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine ensued. The American people did not elect us to continually spend their hard-earned money into a conflict halfway around the world without demonstrating the ability to properly track the end use of weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles, and all other forms of security assistance that has been deployed. While the United States does not have operational control of the southern border, our country has experienced record high levels of illegal border crossings and encounters, drug smuggling, and human smuggling under your administration. It is shameful that the American taxpayer is continuing to subsidize the ongoing conflict in Ukraine while your administration is turning a blind eye to our own border communities and domestic national security posture.

Your recently announced deployment of 31 M1A2 Abrams tanks to Ukraine creates several logistical challenges. It will not only take several months to train Ukrainian forces to operate these highly sophisticated armored vehicles, but it will also take several months to get these vehicles onto the battlefield. This announcement also contradicts your Pentagon's top brass. According to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley and Secretary Lloyd Austin, they "recommended against sending M1 tanks to Ukraine."<sup>1</sup> According to Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Dr. Colin Kahl, "the Abrams tank is a very complicated piece of equipment. It's expensive. It's hard to train on. It has a jet engine. I think it's about three gallons to the mile of jet fuel. It is not the easiest system to maintain."<sup>2</sup> Not to mention, each M1 Abrams tank costs approximately \$9 million to build, and to date, Ukrainian aid and security packages have totaled over \$97 billion.<sup>3</sup>

The United States has also been by far the largest contributor of weapons, equipment, ammunition, and funds.<sup>4</sup> According to the Department of Defense, the United States' security assistance packages include, but have not been limited to, 38 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, 45 T-72B tanks and 109 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, 1,600+ Stinger anti-aircraft systems, 8,500+ Javelin anti-armor systems, 50,000+ other anti-armor systems, 700+ Switchblade Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems, 142 Howitzers, 126 Tactical Vehicles, 914,000+ artillery rounds, 1,500 TOW missiles, 13,000+ grenade launchers and small

---

<sup>1</sup> NBC News, [Top U.S. officials don't want to give Ukraine tanks despite German pressure](#), January 20, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The Defense Post, [US Not 'There Yet' on Abrams Tanks for Ukraine: Pentagon](#), January 19, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service, [U.S. Security Assistance Ukraine](#), January 24, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Kiel Institute for the World Economy, [Ukraine Support Tracker](#), December 7, 2022.

arms, C4 explosives and Claymore mines, and 59,000,000+ rounds of small arms ammunition.<sup>5</sup> The United States Army is also now “investing about \$2 billion to expand and boost production of the munitions that have played a critical role in the war in Ukraine.”<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, it “has depleted US stocks of some types of weapons systems and munitions,” which poses a national security challenge.<sup>7</sup> While it is without question that Ukraine is a strategic interest of the United States, it is not a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, and we are in no way obligated in any capacity to defend their borders.

Prior to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Ukrainian military showcased the inability to prevent the theft and sale of military property. According to a 2017 Small Arms Survey briefing on arms trafficking, over 300,000 small arms disappeared from Ukraine between 2013 and 2015 and only 13 percent were recovered.<sup>8</sup> In 2019, the Ukrainian Security Service uncovered a plot by Ukrainian soldiers to sell 40 RGD-5 grenades, 15 grenade launchers, 30 grenade detonators, and 2,454 rounds of ammunition for around \$2,900.<sup>9</sup> According to CNN, the United States also has “few ways to track the substantial supply of anti-tank, anti-aircraft and other weaponry it has sent across the border into Ukraine...”<sup>10</sup> While we agree that Russia’s unprovoked invasion has resulted in the senseless killings of innocent civilians and the destruction of a sovereign nation, this conflict’s escalation is continuing to occur at the expense of the American taxpayer.

In light of several challenges that come with sending M1 Abrams tanks into an unstable warzone with a history of arms trafficking, without demonstrating the ability to properly track recoup weapons, ammunition, armored vehicles, and all other security assistance that has been deployed, we ask the following:

1. What actions will you take to ensure that our military equipment is not falling into the hands of criminal networks, terrorists, or being sold for profit? Likewise, in what capacities will the White House and Department of Defense maintain that our military equipment and vehicles are operated safely by Ukrainian military officials and returned to the United States following their use?
2. How does the Department of Defense and Department of State track and account for military-grade weapons, military supplies, and American taxpayer dollars supplied to Ukraine forces or allies in defense against the Russian invasion?
3. How does your administration plan to account for the loss and destruction of any U.S. military security assistance items and reimburse the American taxpayers?

Given the time-sensitive nature of this pressing issue, we ask that you promptly respond to the above questions by February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Sincerely,



Troy E. Nehls  
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

<sup>5</sup> Congressional Research Service, [U.S. Security Assistance Ukraine](#), January 24, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Bloomberg Government, [US Army Puts \\$2 Billion Into Plants Making Ammo Vital to Ukraine](#), January 25, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Small Arms Survey, [Measuring Illicit Arms Flows](#), April 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> CNN, [What happens to weapons sent to Ukraine? The U.S. doesn't really know](#), April 19, 2022.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Boebert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauren" and the last name "Boebert" clearly legible.

Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eli Crane". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first name "Eli" and the last name "Crane" clearly legible.

Eli Crane  
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520