



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on January 28, 2024

U.S. to Amend Ukraine Strategy: WaPo

In an article published on January 26, the *Washington Post* reported that the United States is working on a new strategy for Ukraine that would signal a departure from the botched forward push of 2023 and instead concentrate on frontline defense. These supposed adjustments come in response to Kiev's failed counteroffensive last year, the newspaper added.

The emerging plan is a sharp change from last year, when the United States and allied militaries hurried training and sophisticated equipment to Kyiv in hopes that Kyiv could quickly counter Russian forces occupying eastern and southern Ukraine. That effort failed, largely on Russia's strongly fortified minefields and frontline trenches.



Yaraslau Mikheyev/iStock/Getty Images Plus

"It's pretty clear that it will be difficult for them to try to mount the same kind of major push on all fronts that they tried to do last year," a senior administration official said, as cited by the newspaper.

Rather, current plans, which are less ambitious than previous ones, are to ensure that Kyiv does not forfeit any more ground to Moscow, the anonymous staffer admitted to reporters.

Such a change, nonetheless, does not mean that Ukraine's military will remain in their trenches, with what is described as a "swapping of territory" still likely in small cities and villages, the source told WaPo.

The U.S. plans are part of a multilateral effort by almost three dozen countries backing Ukraine to provide long-term security and economic support, in wake of the lackluster outcomes of last year's counteroffensive and the realization that a similar effort this year would likely bring the same outcome.

Each country in the aforementioned multilateral arrangement is preparing a document detailing its specific commitments to Ukraine spanning up to 10 years. Last week, the U.K. released its 10-year agreement with Ukraine, signed by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. The agreement outlined contributions to "Maritime Security, Air, Air Defense, Artillery and Armor" as well as fiscal support and access to its financial sector.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian Vice Admiral Aleksey Neizhpapa told Sky News that Kyiv is open to obtaining two Royal Navy warships that London is reportedly about to decommission. Earlier this month, *The Telegraph* claimed that the HMS *Westminster* and HMS *Argyll* would be retired later this year, amid challenges in recruiting enough sailors to operate the vessels.

In mid-December, the U.K. Ministry of Defence declared plans to supply Kyiv with two mine-clearing ships as part of a new maritime coalition, which also involves Norway. Nonetheless, these vessels have yet to arrive in Ukraine, after Türkiye refused to let them pass through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, which link the Black Sea with the Mediterranean.



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When questioned whether Ukraine would be interested in London's two Type 23 frigates during an Sky News interview on January 27, Neizhpapa said, "Of course, the [Ukrainian] Navy needs warships.... If such a decision is taken concerning the possibility of handing over two frigates to the Navy, we will be very happy."

Earlier this month, *The Telegraph* quoted an unnamed defense source as explaining the reason to retire HMS *Westminster* and HMS *Argyll*: "We will have to take manpower from one area of the Navy in order to put [it] into a new area of the force."

France is [scheduled to follow suit](#), with an expected visit to Ukraine by President Emmanuel Macron. The *Post* added, however, that the success of the multilateral strategy hinges almost entirely on the United States, by far Ukraine's largest donor of money and equipment, and coordinator of the multilateral effort.

This spring, the administration of Joe Biden plans to publish its own 10-year commitment, now being compiled by the State Department with the backing of the White House, assuming that Congress approves Biden's \$61 billion request for supplemental Ukraine funding.

"Definitely the leadership and the engagement of the United States in the long term, but also in this very important phase, is paramount," a senior European official said. "The supplement is a must-have to continue ... not only on the ground, but as a show of Western resolve ... to make [Putin] understand that he will not win."

Under the would-be accord, Washington would commit to boost Kyiv's military as well as enhance its industrial and export base, among other things, the WaPo report claims.

Based on the report, pro-Ukraine supporters hope that Washington's long-term agreement with Ukraine would make it more challenging for Donald Trump to reduce aid, should he win the U.S. presidential elections in November.

On Saturday, during a speech to a crowd of supporters at a campaign event in Las Vegas, Trump cautioned that NATO will not come to the America's rescue if the country was attacked, slamming Biden for providing military aid to Ukraine during its conflict with Russia.

"We're paying for NATO, and we don't get so much out of it," Trump claimed.

"And you know — I hate to tell you this about NATO — if we ever needed their help, let's say we were attacked, I don't believe they'd be there," the former president added. "I know the people," he added.

As per Article 5 of the NATO Charter, an armed attack against one member state must be considered an attack against all of them.

"We don't have ammunition for ourselves, [yet] we're giving away so much," Trump also said last year.

Trump has repeatedly questioned continued massive allocations for Kyiv, and vowed, if returned to the White House, to end the bloodshed "in one day, 24 hours."

President Zelensky, however, said that Trump's claim was unrealistic. Asked by NBC News in November if he believed that Trump would continue supporting Ukraine, Zelensky replied, "Really, I don't know."

Besides, the *Post* reported that the Ukrainian army in Zaporozhye Region is already preparing to mimic the Russian defense line that halted their own advance last summer.



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Kyiv's Western backers also want it to concentrate more on long-distance missile strikes against Russian forces, including the Black Sea Fleet based in Crimea.

News outlet Politico also reported that Washington and Brussels realized that a "total victory" for Ukraine was unlikely, at least in 2024, and that the United States and EU are discreetly redirecting their efforts toward an eventual negotiated settlement.

Last week, CNN reported that the Biden administration was hoping to get "as much aid [as possible] in before January 2025" amid worries that Trump could halt the flow of cash, if reelected.



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