



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

EU Will Miss Key Ukraine Arms Target, Again — Zelensky

On February 26, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that besides missing its target to give Ukraine one million artillery shells by March, the EU will likely also miss a revised target of 520,000.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell admitted last month that the bloc would not meet its promise to deliver one million 155mm artillery shells to Kyiv by March. Owing to delays in production, Borrell said that 52 percent of that number would reach Ukraine by next month, with the remainder due by the end of 2024.



Speaking at a press conference in Kyiv, Zelensky said that “out of the million shells that the European Union promised us, not 50% came, but 30%, unfortunately.”

If Zelensky’s figures are accurate, no shells have been delivered since November, when Bloomberg reported that 30 percent of the one million had been sent to Ukraine. The EU thus has only three days to hand over 220,000 shells in order to meet Borrell’s revised target of 520,000.

With a \$60 billion military aid bill stalled by Congress in the United States, and Europe’s military industry unable to shore up production to meet demand, Kyiv’s forces have grappled for several months with a shortage of ammunition.

Western media outlets have warned that the ammo deficit could cause a complete “collapse” of the Ukrainian military on the conflict frontlines. Zelensky claimed last week that his troops were forced to ditch the key Donbass stronghold of Avdeevka due to an “artificial shortage of weapons” seemingly enforced by the West.

Speaking at a conference on February 25, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov claimed that half of all the weapons and ammunition promised by the West have arrived late.

“Allies are supposed to deliver aid on time during this war,” Umerov said. “We have a plan. We’re working to execute the plan. We’re doing everything possible — and impossible — but we struggle without timely supplies.”

Without these supplies, Ukraine will “lose people, [and] lose territories,” the minister added.

Russian forces in Donbass have continued to advance westward after taking Avdeevka, with the Russian Defense Ministry announcing the capture of the nearby village of Lastochkino on February 26. Lastochkino fell just days after the ministry reported that the village of Pobeda was also in Russian hands.

Meanwhile, Russian troops have entered the village of Rabotino in Zaporozhye Region, local official Vladimir Rogov told TASS on February 25. Notably, this was one of a handful of settlements retaken by Ukrainian forces during their ill-fated summer counteroffensive. The entire offensive cost Kyiv more than 160,000 men and thousands of pieces of heavy equipment, as per the Russian Defense Ministry.



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The Pentagon's inspector general has opened more than 50 cases into possible "theft, fraud or corruption, and diversion" of military aid to Ukraine. Allegations of graft surfaced almost immediately after the aid began flowing to Kyiv, and Inspector General Robert Storch has declared that more investigations are likely to follow.

Speaking at a briefing on February 22, Storch said that though no allegations have been substantiated yet, "that may well change in the future," according to Bloomberg. More investigations will be necessary "given the quantity and speed" of weapons being sent to Ukraine, he declared.

One case underscored by Storch involved unidentified items arriving in Poland as part of a wider weapons shipment, before disappearing from a shipping manifest when they were sent across the border into Ukraine in June.

While the case of the disappearing equipment was highlighted in a report by Storch's office last year, the inspector did not say at the time whether the items had been lost or stolen. Rather, his office stated that Pentagon personnel "did not have required visibility and accountability of all types of equipment during the transfer process."

So far, none of Storch's reports to date have identified any outright criminality. However, his recent announcement marks the first time he has admitted that his office is probing potential cases of "procurement fraud, product substitution, theft, fraud or corruption, and diversion."

In the two years since Russia's military operation in Ukraine began, the United States has spent around \$113 billion on military, economic, and humanitarian aid for Kyiv. Around \$45 billion of that amount has been spent on weapons, ammo, and other military support for Kyiv's forces.

In the summer of 2022, a CBS News report suggested that only around 30 percent of the weapons sent by the West actually made it to the front lines in Ukraine. Around the same time, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu warned that weapons intended for Ukraine were surfacing in Middle Eastern arms bazaars.

Storch's office has since deployed more than two dozen people to Ukraine to monitor U.S. arms shipments. However, allegations of corruption have persisted, with the graft often beginning before supplies even enter the country. Last month, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) revealed the uncovering of a major embezzlement ring at the country's Defense Ministry. Per the SBU, five suspects attempted to steal 1.5 billion hryvnia (around \$39.6 million) in state funds intended for the purchase of mortar shells.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Aleksey Reznikov was dismissed from his post over graft allegations in September. His successor, Rustem Umerov, announced in January that an audit had uncovered \$262 million in theft-related costs in weapons procurement.

Also, U.S. journalist Tucker Carlson said on February 27 that most Americans naively believe that Ukraine could defeat Russia because the media has told them so, adding that what the United States has done has undermined both Ukrainians and Americans.

He looked back at his conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a three-hour podcast hosted by Lex Fridman.

"I reject the whole premise of the war in Ukraine from the American perspective," Carlson added. "There's a war going on that is wrecking the U.S. economy in a way and at a scale that people do not understand."



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The current policy of the American government is only accelerating the demise of the dollar and the world is “resetting to the great disadvantage of the U.S.,” Carlson said.



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