



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 25, 2023

Zelensky Secures \$325 Million in U.S. Military Aid, Biden Pledges \$24 Billion in Funding

On September 21, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with U.S. President Joe Biden in the White House to garner more military support amid a faltering Ukrainian counteroffensive against Russia.

During Zelensky's visit to the White House, Biden pledged a new military aid package worth \$325 million, as per Reuters [reports](#).

The package would entail air-defense systems, artillery ammunition, and armored vehicles. Besides, Biden stated, the first U.S. Abrams tanks, which it pledged in January this year, are slated to arrive in Ukraine soon.



AP Images

"Mr. President, we're with you, we're staying with you," Biden told Zelensky, to which the latter declared that the new military aid package was "exactly what our soldiers need now."

Although Zelensky has managed to obtain some hundreds of millions more, he still has to return to Ukraine without his sought-after Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) — a tactical ballistic missile system able to attack targets up to 190 miles away.

In a [press briefing](#), U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan mentioned that Washington has not completely ruled out supplying Ukraine with ATACMS.

"As he [President Biden] weighed all that up, to date, he has determined that he would not provide ATACMS, but he has also not taken it off the table in the future."

Nonetheless, the issue of continued U.S. military aid to Ukraine has been a controversial topic among Republicans in Congress.

During his previous visit to Washington, Zelensky received a warm welcome from Congress following his speech. However, this time the Ukrainian leader faced a less-welcoming audience, with unhappiness rising within the GOP over Biden's proposal for a new aid package worth \$24 billion, for which he requires Congressional approval.

A CNN report indicated that a [source](#) revealed that Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy refused Zelensky's request to address a joint session of Congress owing to a lack of time.

Talks with leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives, including McCarthy, and the Ukrainian leader also happened that day, but in private, rather than a formal House session.

Again, according to CNN, McCarthy even attempted to avoid being photographed with Zelensky, having denied official photographers access to the room where the meeting happened.

On September 19, McCarthy questioned, "Was Zelensky elected to Congress? Is he our president? I don't think so. I have questions for where's the accountability on the money we've already spent. What



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is the plan for victory [over Russia]?”

Since McCarthy’s party, which hopes to focus on domestic issues instead of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, has a majority in the House, it could obstruct Biden’s request.

When questioned on how he could circumvent the GOP’s opposition, Biden said the only way forward was authorization by the U.S. Congress. “I am counting on the good judgment of the United States Congress. There is no alternative,” he said.

Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), a critic of the current White House policy toward Ukraine, lamented that the executive branch desired indefinite funding with no clear assurance of a Ukrainian victory.

“What was it, \$24 billion? That is not the end, they made it very clear. It’s not close to the end,” he said of the briefing. “What we were basically told is ‘Buckle up and get out your checkbook.’”

In its ongoing counteroffensive, the Ukrainian military has been facing strong Russian resistance and has been incurring considerable losses in manpower and weaponry. Consequently, both the Kyiv regime and the White House have adjusted their messaging to highlight the counteroffensive’s slow but steady progress in the long haul.

Zelensky, for his part, has connected Ukraine’s persistent combat against Russia to continued U.S. military assistance, according to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.).

“There was a single sentence that summed it all up, and I am quoting him verbatim. Mr. Zelensky said: ‘If we don’t get the aid, we will lose the war,’” the lawmaker told journalists after meeting Zelensky on Capitol Hill.

Regarding the Biden administration’s request for an additional \$24 billion in spending for Ukraine, a group of more than two dozen GOP senators and representatives sent a letter to the White House on September 21, voicing fears about fund allocation and asking for clarification on the progress of the counteroffensive.

“The American people deserve to know what their money has gone to. How is the counteroffensive going?” the letter read.

“Are the Ukrainians any closer to victory than they were 6 months ago? What is our strategy, and what is the president’s exit plan? What does the administration define as victory in Ukraine?”

On its part, Washington hopes Warsaw would clarify its position on further weapons deliveries to Ukraine, Bloomberg reported on September 22, citing a senior U.S. defense official. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced on September 21 that his nation would stop providing Kyiv arms and would focus on Polish national defense instead. Morawiecki also said that Kyiv failed to understand “the degree to which Poland’s farming industry has been destabilized” by Ukrainian grain.

According to the U.S. official, Poland assured that it remained committed to backing Ukraine, but its exact stance was unclear. Kyiv and Warsaw have been undergoing tensions due to Ukrainian grain exports that Warsaw pointed out were undermining its own agricultural market.

The United States still thinks that the rift between Poland and Ukraine has not yet reached the point where it could jeopardize the “unity” of the Western coalition of Ukraine’s supporters, Bloomberg reported, adding that military aid to Kyiv “would likely stretch into multiple years.”

Besides, a European diplomat told Bloomberg that Polish diplomats had privately told foreign counterparts that Warsaw’s military aid for Ukraine would continue, albeit on a smaller scale. The



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source also claimed that losing Poland's support totally would risk "undermining NATO unity."

Later, the Polish government tried to backtrack on the prime minister's words by stating on the same day that it would still deploy military supplies to Kyiv in line with current agreements.

On September 22, Polish President Andrzej Duda added his view on the matter, stating that Morawiecki's comments from the previous day had been "interpreted in the worst way possible." Duda also said that Poland would basically supply Ukraine with some older weapons it does not need. Thus, Warsaw would not deploy weapons needed to modernize the Polish Army but could deliver decommissioned weapons to Ukraine instead, Duda said.

Separately, Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau said on September 22 that Poland was forced to "pay the bill twice" as it provided military aid to Kyiv and had to face "unfair economic competition" from Ukraine when it came to grain exports.

Poland, together with Hungary and Slovakia, had previously disagreed on the EU's move to lift the embargo on Ukrainian grain. Warsaw justified the unilateral move by stating it was protecting its farmers.

Kiev slammed the move by calling it "illegal" and stating that it would file a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO).



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