

FACT SHEET

Equipping Ukraine for the Spring Counteroffensive

May 2023

Ukraine's spring counteroffensive may soon begin, but its armed forces still lack certain weapon systems that could prove decisive in overwhelming Russia's entrenched troops. Hudson Institute experts have long argued that the United States should equip Kyiv with a range of weapons and equipment—some of which the Biden administration has thus far withheld—for Ukraine to liberate its territory. As the world awaits Ukraine's counteroffensive, the US should move with speed to arm Ukraine with the following items:

155mm Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions (DPICM)



DPICMs possess a 155mm-class artillery shell that sprays grenade-like munitions with a shrapnel-like effect. These cover a larger area than traditional artillery shells, making them highly effective against fortified positions. DPICMs would help Ukraine penetrate Russian defenses and serve as an artillery force multiplier that could propel operational breakthroughs.

Maneuver Short Range Air Defense (M-SHORAD)



This capability integrates air defense guns, air defense artillery, and missiles into highly mobile platforms that accompany principal maneuver units. Ukraine has received a few of these capabilities—12 Avengers with Stinger missiles and 37 Flakpanzer

Gepard systems with 35-mm twin aircraft cannons—but a large-scale counteroffensive would benefit from many more.

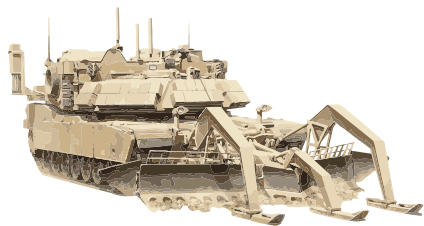
MQ-9 Reaper Drones and MQ-1C Gray Eagles



MQ-9s would allow Ukraine to eliminate Russian artillery stationed inside the Donbas or Crimea. MQ-9s, which can carry AIM-9X Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, would also shoot down Iranian-

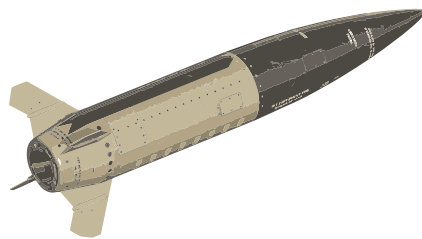
supplied drones at a lower cost while deterring future attacks. With hundreds of these units scheduled for retirement, MQ-9s would provide a sizable boost to Ukraine’s air defenses at minimal cost to US readiness. For its part, MQ-1C Gray Eagles would enable Ukraine to attack command centers and supply lines in addition to providing real-time intelligence for targeting. Both drones would give Ukraine a naval deterrent in the Black Sea, which it currently lacks.

M1150 Assault Breacher Vehicle (ABV)



This heavily armored and highly mobile platform is equipped with a mine plow and demolition charge systems that would detonate Russian explosives from safe distances, clearing the way for follow-on combat formations to penetrate heavily mined areas of operation.

MGM-140 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS)



Western-supplied Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and Turkey’s TB-2 drones proved critical in Ukraine’s past offensives. ATACMS come with the benefit of more than triple the range of Ukraine’s High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, and would enable Ukraine to strike critical targets and launch sites now out of reach.

M198 Howitzer



The M198 would provide Kyiv with a powerful 155mm-class asset without pulling equipment from operational American combat formations’ arsenals; open-source writings suggest that

Washington has up to hundreds of these assets in storage. While the M198 is aged by US standards, it would stack up well with other Cold War-era artillery being used in the conflict.

Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) Systems and Adequate Ammunition



Large numbers of AMRAAM missiles for the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) can serve a similar purpose as an F-16 at a much lower cost, offering crucial protection against withering Russian airstrikes.

Without these systems and munitions, Ukraine will be waging its upcoming counteroffensive at an unnecessary disadvantage. While offensive operations may soon commence, they will not be over quickly. It is not too late for the US government to supply Kyiv with the arsenal it needs to regain its territory and push back Putin’s invading army. The time to act is now.