“The Ukraine train-and-assist mission is in many ways unprecedented, and we owe it to the American people to conduct commensurate and unprecedented oversight. . . . The American people deserve full knowledge of what weapons are being sent and proof that aid is being used as intended: to kill Putin’s mercenaries.”

—Congressman Mike Rogers, statement to the author

Americans are raising questions about the tracking and oversight of aid to Ukraine. Russia has long sought to dominate Ukraine, and wherever Russia hooks its tentacles, corruption naturally follows. By helping Ukraine defeat Russia on the battlefield, the United States can strike a major blow against corruption in Europe.

In the meantime, the US government is carefully tracking American aid to Ukraine. The Department of Defense (DoD) established a Security Assistance Group Ukraine last fall that tracks military shipments. (By contrast, the US did not establish a similar effort in Afghanistan until seven years into the war).

Moreover, Congress required significant reporting on oversight and accountability in each major assistance package passed to date: the four Ukraine supplementals, the FY2023 NDAA, and the FY2022 and FY2023 omnibus bills.

Specifically, Congress mandated the creation of a list of all security assistance and defense articles provided to Ukraine—and enhanced monitoring of that equipment once it enters Ukraine. Congress also mandated that the DoD reports on all end-use of military equipment. As of this
writing, the DoD has found no evidence of Ukraine diverting US-supplied defense equipment. This makes basic sense: a smaller, weaker country like Ukraine could not defeat its much larger Russian adversary if Western weapons were not reaching the front lines.

Indeed, Ukraine’s battlefield successes follow a basic rhythm. In June, the US released Harpoon coastal defense systems to Ukraine. Later that month, the British Defense Ministry announced that Ukraine used this Western system to sink a Russian ship on its way to Snake Island, causing the Russians to abandon the strategic outpost. The HIMARS launcher, first sent last summer, propelled Ukraine’s counteroffensives in the south and east, enabling Ukraine to liberate Kherson and take back major territories in the Kharkiv region. And the US shipment of over 100 M777 Howitzers proved effective against Russian equipment at a time when the Ukrainians were running dangerously low on artillery systems.

Still, in keeping with its responsibilities, the new Republican majority in the House is standing watch and directing new efforts. Earlier this month, Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, led a congressional delegation to Romania and Poland to oversee the distribution of Ukraine aid.

Following the trip, the bipartisan group of lawmakers agreed that they “came away with a clear understanding of the various safeguards the US government, in partnership with the Ukrainians and other nations, have put in place to ensure each article is accounted for and tracked to the frontline of the war.” Because Congressman Rogers sees oversight as a top priority of his committee, he will press the point in an oversight hearing on Tuesday, February 28.
About the Authors

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