

Evolution of Defense Support for Ukraine Within NATO and “Capability Coalitions”

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Summary

In recent years, military support for Ukraine has gradually transformed from urgent deliveries of weapons packages into a systemic model combining multi-year financing, joint procurement, and the expansion of defense production.

From January 2022 to April 30, 2026, the volume of military assistance (allocated or announced) amounts to approximately 173 billion euros (Europe – 102.2 billion euros, the United States (US) – 64.6 billion euros, the rest of the world – 6.2 billion euros). The summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Ankara in July 2026 reinforced this trend: the allies committed to providing 70 billion euros for Ukraine’s defense needs in 2026 and to maintaining at least an equivalent level the following year.

Within these commitments, donor states themselves determine the procedure for their implementation. That is why it is important to assess not only the overall volumes of assistance but also how effectively the “capability coalitions”, regional formats, and NATO instruments – the CAP, NSATU, JATEC, as well as the PURL mechanism – interact. This issue takes on particular weight against the background of the shrinking role of the US, the transfer of a larger share of the financial burden to European allies, shortages of certain critical systems, and the need to support Ukraine and rearm the allies’ own armies at the same time. A critically important indicator of the effectiveness of the entire system for Ukraine is also the development of air defense.

The systemic risks of the assistance architecture for Ukraine’s Defense Forces being built by international partners require separate attention. Within this article, the author therefore focuses on the long-term effectiveness of the current mechanisms of military support for Ukraine, as well as on the existing and potential risks to their further implementation.

Current Role of “Capability Coalitions”

After the start of the full-scale war, the system of military support for Ukraine took shape primarily as a set of national assistance packages and multilateral initiatives, with the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (the Ramstein format) becoming their central coordination platform. Within this format, capability coalitions emerged, each led by individual states and responsible for developing a specific component of the Defense Forces.

Nine capability coalitions have been established to date. Let us review the main areas of their activity and the current challenges.

Air Force Capability Coalition. The Air Force Capability Coalition was launched in May 2023 under the leadership of the US, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Its initial tasks were training Ukrainian pilots, transferring F-16s, and creating training and maintenance infrastructure. The focus later expanded to Mirage 2000 aircraft, aviation surveillance systems, and aviation munitions. The coalition has thus ensured Ukraine's strategic transition from Soviet to Western combat aviation.

Still, the Air Force Capability Coalition has not provided Ukraine with a sufficient numerical advantage in the air, as the size of the aviation grouping remains a challenge. For example, back in June 2024 the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimated the needs of Ukraine's Air Force at 12 fighter squadrons (216 F-16s), plus a reserve to compensate for combat losses. As of summer 2026, partners had transferred 49 F-16s, while all existing F-16 commitments covered at least 79 aircraft. France has also transferred six Mirage 2000-5s and announced preparations for additional deliveries. The next stage envisages further fleet renewal: Sweden plans to transfer 16 Gripen C/Ds free of charge in early 2027 and to deliver 16 new Gripen Es. Ukraine and France have also agreed on a first batch of 16 Rafales as part of a long-term prospect of acquiring up to 100 aircraft. However, the first Rafales are expected in Ukraine around 2028–2029¹.

Thus, the main challenge for the Air Force Capability Coalition today is the transition from supplying individual platforms to building a full-fledged combat aviation ecosystem. A separate priority should be the deployment of airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft, notably the ASC 890s transferred by Sweden, which can substantially expand the radar picture, enhance situational awareness, and increase the effectiveness of fighter employment.

Integrated Air and Missile Defense Coalition. Formally, the coalition was established in February 2024 with the participation of 15 states under the leadership of Germany and France. It coordinates the supply of Patriot, SAMP/T, NASAMS, IRIS-T, HAWK, and Crotale air and missile defense systems, as well as projects to adapt Western missiles to Soviet launchers². Its key achievements include a substantial expansion of the multi-layered architecture of Ukraine's air defense, an increase in the number of Western medium- and long-range systems, and improved interoperability within a single air defense system.

Today, the key challenge remains the insufficient number of systems capable of intercepting ballistic missiles, primarily Patriot and SAMP/T, as well as the shortage and relatively low production rates of interceptor missiles amid Russia's growing combined strikes.

Artillery Coalition. The coalition, led by France and the US, was launched in January 2024. It has systematized support for a large fleet of artillery systems, including Caesar, PzH 2000, Krab, Archer, M109, Zuzana, Dita, M777, and HIMARS, and has coordinated ammunition, counter-battery radars, repairs, and the transition to the 155 mm caliber³.

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At the same time, one of the key challenges remains the heterogeneity of the transferred systems, each of which requires separate spare parts, repair procedures, and personnel training, significantly complicating logistics and maintenance.

Armored Vehicles and Maneuver Coalition. The coalition began work in March 2024 at Poland's initiative; Germany and Italy also became co-chairs. Its work covers the supply and operation of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and engineering equipment, as well as repairs, the training of crews and technical personnel, the creation of spare parts stocks, and the development of maneuver units in line with Western standards⁴.

At the same time, one of the main challenges remains the excessive heterogeneity of the armored vehicle fleet: the simultaneous operation of a large number of platforms of different origin significantly complicates logistics and requires separate spare parts supply chains, specialized equipment, and repair centers. An additional problem has been the sharp rise in the vulnerability of armored vehicles on the modern battlefield. This is gradually shifting the coalition's focus from simply increasing the volume of armor deliveries to building a comprehensive system for its combat employment and sustainment.

Maritime Coalition. The United Kingdom (UK) and Norway launched the Maritime Coalition in December 2023 for the long-term development of Ukraine's Navy and for ensuring security in the Black Sea⁵. Practical results include the transfer to Ukraine of mine countermeasures vessels, patrol and specialized boats, maritime unmanned systems, and reconnaissance equipment, as well as the establishment of a training center in Romania for Ukrainian marines.

In the medium term, the strategic task of the Maritime Coalition is to adapt the future structure of the Navy to the experience of the war, which has demonstrated the high vulnerability of surface ships to unmanned systems and, at the same time, the effectiveness of naval drones.

Drone Coalition. The coalition was formally established on February 14, 2024, at the initiative of Latvia and Ukraine; the UK became a co-chair. Participating countries have directed or planned around 4.5 billion euros to support Ukrainian capabilities in unmanned systems in 2024–2025. As of summer 2026, the Drone Coalition had transferred to Ukraine more than 215,000 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), including more than 45,000 FPV drones, more than 150,000 interceptor drones, and more than 20,000 long-range strike drones⁶.

This coalition is one of the most dynamic, since the development cycle of unmanned systems is much shorter than that of traditional types of weapons. Its effectiveness depends on scaling up serial production and promptly modifying unmanned platforms in line with combat experience and changes in Russian electronic warfare (EW) and counter-drone capabilities. A separate strategic task remains reducing dependence on Chinese and other external components, primarily engines, optics, electronics, and communication and navigation equipment.

IT Coalition. The IT Coalition was created in September 2023 under the leadership of Estonia and Luxembourg to develop the digital infrastructure and command-and-control systems of Ukraine's Defense Forces. Its work covers secure communications and network infrastructure, data centers, cybersecurity, software and licenses, as well as support for combat and management information systems. The coalition contributes to the development of the DELTA ecosystem and the digitalization of military command⁷.

The key challenge remains the need to rapidly scale digital solutions while ensuring their resilience to cyberattacks, EW, and the physical destruction of infrastructure. Further development requires deeper integration of various reconnaissance, command, and strike systems into a single digital loop, secure data exchange between command levels, and compatibility with NATO systems.

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Demining Coalition. The coalition, led by Lithuania and Iceland, was established in February 2024. Its work covers combat and humanitarian demining, the training of sapper units, and the supply of armored and engineering equipment, robotic systems, and more. The coalition has united more than 20 states and has moved from individual deliveries to centralized procurement through a dedicated fund⁸.

The coalition has one of the most detailed long-term programs among the capability coalitions: the approved roadmap for 2024–2034 envisages the creation of modern Ukrainian combat and humanitarian demining units that are NATO-compatible and capable of autonomous operation. The key challenge remains the scale of mine contamination and the constant emergence of new minefields in the combat zone, which requires simultaneously increasing the number of sapper units and of mechanized and remote demining assets, and protecting them from drones and fire damage.

Electronic Warfare Coalition. The EW capability coalition was launched in April 2025. Germany became its leader, and from June 2025 Sweden took over co-leadership. The coalition focuses on procuring EW assets, training personnel, and developing relevant doctrines and policies; its tasks cover electronic reconnaissance, the detection and suppression of drones, the protection of communications and navigation, and strengthening the troops’ resilience to Russian electronic warfare⁹.

The key challenge is maintaining a high tempo of technological adaptation of EW assets and unmanned systems: effective solutions can lose their edge as soon as the adversary changes frequencies, communication channels, or control algorithms. This requires a short cycle from identifying a new threat to testing, procuring, and upgrading systems, as well as closer integration of EW with reconnaissance, unmanned systems, and air defense.

Ammunition Initiative. Launched by Czechia in 2024, the initiative became one of the key mechanisms for supplying Ukraine with artillery ammunition at a time when NATO countries’ own production did not meet the needs of the front. Prague took on the search for available stocks on world markets, the vetting of suppliers, and the coordination of procurement, while financing is mostly provided by partner states. By April 2026, the cumulative volume had exceeded 4 million rounds¹⁰.

After the change of the ruling coalition following the elections in Czechia, the initiative survived: the new government kept Czechia’s role as coordinator but refused to continue financing procurement from the Czech state budget. In 2026, the number of donor states halved – from 18 to 9. However, this does not mean a proportional drop in overall assistance: some states switched to direct procurement. At the same time, the mechanism’s attractiveness was negatively affected by the change in Czechia’s political course after Andrej Babiš’s return, Prague’s withdrawal of its own financing, a general shortage of resources among donors, and debates over the transparency of procurement and the role of private intermediaries.

It is worth noting that in January 2025 the leaders of eight coalitions approved roadmaps for developing the corresponding Ukrainian capabilities until 2027¹¹. The documents define the target capabilities Ukraine is to achieve and are meant to synchronize national deliveries, procurement, personnel training, repairs, investment in production, and a gradual transition to NATO standards. As of 2026, funding for individual areas is gradually being specified: for example, a separate long-term plan for 2024–2034 has been agreed for the Demining Coalition¹².

PURL: Operational Resilience Against Long-Term Constraints

The PURL mechanism was launched by NATO and the US in July 2025 against the background of Washington's shift to a model under which American weapons are paid for by European allies and other partners.

Under the procedure, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) regularly forms packages of the equipment and ammunition that Ukraine needs. Partner states then voluntarily take on the financing of a specific package, while NATO coordinates its delivery, notably through the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) mechanism.

Thus, unlike the capability coalitions, which are oriented toward the long-term development of individual components of the Defense Forces, the Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) mechanism is meant to cover Ukraine's current needs in repelling Russian aggression. PURL has by now turned from a temporary mechanism for sustaining American deliveries into one of the central channels of military assistance to Ukraine. On July 22, 2026, US Ambassador to NATO Matthew Whitaker stated in Kyiv that the total volume of the program had approached 8 billion dollars (referring to the volume of funding actually raised)¹³. PURL is of particular importance for air and missile defense: according to the Ukrainian mission to NATO, in summer 2026 Ukraine received around 90–92% of its Patriot interceptors through this mechanism¹⁴.

However, this year the depletion of US stocks of precision-guided munitions further demonstrated the risk of competition between Ukraine's needs and those of other theaters. PURL is therefore an effective short- and medium-term model for preserving Ukraine's access to critical American systems, but in the long term it must be complemented by the scaling up of Europe's defense industrial base and by joint production of American systems in Europe and Ukraine.

Evolution of NATO Member States’ Approaches Within CAP, NSATU, and JATEC Mechanisms

During 2024–2026, the Alliance took over an ever larger share of permanent coordination, logistics, training, and planning, transforming assistance to Ukraine into an institutionalized system.

Let us review the main elements of the architecture for organizing assistance to Ukraine.

The Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine was launched at the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016 as a response to the Russian aggression of 2014. At first, its activities reflected the cautious nature of the Alliance’s engagement with Ukraine: NATO helped reform defense institutions and develop military education, logistics, cyber defense, and countering hybrid threats, while avoiding the transfer of lethal weapons. Today, the CAP finances secure communications, transport, medical equipment, demining, soldier welfare, and veteran rehabilitation programs. As of June 2026, partners had channeled more than 1.4 billion euros into the CAP trust fund¹⁵.

The practical scope of the CAP is much broader than equipment supplies. In particular, NATO and Ukraine conducted a Strategic Defence Procurement Review with recommendations for bringing Ukraine’s defense procurement system into line with Euro-Atlantic practices.

NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine. The command, established in 2024 with headquarters in Wiesbaden (Germany), coordinates the supply of military equipment, the training of Ukrainian troops, and a significant share of the logistics of international assistance. The significance of NSATU lies above all in the shift from ad hoc coordination of individual assistance packages to a permanent military structure capable of aligning Ukraine’s needs, donor states’ offers, training, transportation, and long-term planning.

At the same time, Western analysts point to problems that do not yet allow the system to be considered complete. For example, the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) draws attention to potential duplication between NSATU and the existing capability coalitions on the question of shaping Ukraine’s future forces¹⁶. Another problem is short staff rotations, which hamper the accumulation of institutional expertise.

The NATO–Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC) institutionalizes experience in the opposite direction – from Ukraine to the Alliance. Opened in February 2025 in Bydgoszcz (Poland), the center systematizes Ukraine’s combat experience and translates it into recommendations for doctrine, training, technological development, and operational planning. This includes, in particular, countering drones, air defense, the protection of critical infrastructure, digitalization, resilience, maritime operations, and the conduct of high-intensity warfare.

The key challenge facing JATEC lies in the speed of converting the experience of Ukraine’s Defense Forces into changes within NATO. Updating the Alliance’s doctrines, training programs, procurement

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procedures, and capability requirements traditionally happens much more slowly than changes in the tactical theater of war.

CEPA also highlights a structural problem: a significant part of NATO’s defense system still relies on long procurement cycles and traditional platforms, whereas Ukraine’s experience demonstrates the effectiveness of short cycles of development, testing, and modernization based directly on combat feedback¹⁷. The effectiveness of JATEC will therefore depend on whether it can become not only a venue for exchanging experience but also a mechanism capable of promptly implementing these lessons through the system of exercises, doctrines, and weapons procurement.

Thus, the CAP, NSATU, and JATEC perform different but interconnected functions: the CAP transforms institutions and standards; NSATU provides permanent coordination of assistance and training; JATEC converts Ukrainian combat experience into knowledge and practices shared with NATO; PURL provides operational access to scarce American systems. Together they create an institutional framework within which national assistance and the activity of the capability coalitions can be better aligned with the current needs of the war and the long-term transformation of the Defense Forces.

The further evolution of the described mechanisms may proceed along the lines of deeper integration and a division of functions. The CAP will increasingly focus on institutional transformation, standards, procurement, and long-term interoperability; NSATU – on standardizing deliveries, logistics, and training and on shaping the future structure of the Defense Forces; JATEC – on accelerating the transfer of Ukrainian combat experience into NATO doctrines and technological development. The common challenge for all three mechanisms remains the transition from fragmented support to a predictable multi-year system capable of simultaneously meeting the current needs of the war, reducing duplication between structures, and accelerating the adaptation of the Alliance and Ukraine to rapid changes on the battlefield.

Role of NB8 in Long-Term Support for Ukraine

The Nordic and Baltic states (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden) have formed one of the most consistent regional formats of support for Ukraine – the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8). As of 2026, these countries had made military contributions (appropriations, contracts, and international programs) totaling around 12.5 billion euros¹⁸.

The main change in the NB8’s approach has been a gradual shift from transferring weapons from stockpiles to financing new production. Support increasingly covers direct procurement of Ukrainian defense industry products, joint production, the localization of Ukrainian technologies in partner countries, and the integration of Ukrainian enterprises into European production chains.

The most illustrative example is the so-called Danish model, under which partners finance production directly at Ukrainian enterprises in line with needs defined by Ukraine.

In 2026, Norway formed the largest single national financial framework for military support among the NB8 states (the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine): 85 billion Norwegian kroner (around 7.7 billion euros) of assistance to Ukraine, of which 70 billion kroner (around 6.4 billion euros) is allocated to military support¹⁹. At the same time, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) warns against equating the size of appropriations with real combat effectiveness: what matters critically is the speed of political and administrative decisions, the ability to conclude contracts, the availability of products on the market, and the timelines of their delivery to Ukraine²⁰.

Sweden combines multi-year financing with the transfer of technologically sophisticated systems and the development of industrial partnership. For 2026–2027, Stockholm has earmarked a military support framework of 80 billion Swedish kronor (around 7.3 billion euros). The assistance covers deliveries of CV90 infantry fighting vehicles, Archer self-propelled howitzers, Leopard 2 tanks, boats, radars, missiles, and air defense assets, as well as two AEW&C aircraft²¹. Programs of joint production and of support for Ukrainian defense companies are also expanding.

A distinctive feature of the Baltic states’ contribution is the attempt to depoliticize the annual volume of assistance as much as possible by pegging it to gross domestic product (GDP). Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have set a benchmark of channeling at least 0.25% of GDP annually to military support for Ukraine. An ever larger share of these funds is being used for procurement from their own and Ukrainian producers.

In a joint study by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) and the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS), analysts Hiski Haukkala and Kristi Raik note that the NB8 can play a dual role: shaping common positions within NATO and the European Union (EU) and acting where a smaller regional format allows faster movement²². At the same time, the authors warn that the proliferation of formats – the NB8, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF), and others – creates an additional administrative burden for national governments and can lead to excessive expenditure of time and resources on coordinating the numerous mechanisms for implementing political decisions on supporting Ukraine.

The second limitation is the gap between political will and real defense-industrial capacity. NUPI concludes that the political readiness of many European states to help Ukraine considerably exceeds the volume of military resources they can quickly mobilize²³. That is why the shift to joint procurement, Ukrainian production, and cooperation between defense enterprises is a necessary condition for maintaining the current level of support.

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Ultimately, despite the current high level of consensus, the political sustainability of support should not be taken for granted. From a political perspective, the problem is that the burden of military support for Ukraine is distributed unevenly among European states. The leaders of the Nordic and Baltic countries regularly stress that they are among Ukraine’s largest donors in relative terms and call on other European partners to increase their contributions. This problem is clearly confirmed by Kiel Institute data. In 2025, the countries of Northern Europe provided around 33% of all European military assistance to Ukraine while accounting for only around 8% of the combined GDP of European donor states²⁴.

This risk is amplified by external information pressure. In a joint statement in summer 2026, the NB8 governments explicitly named Russian hybrid operations, cyberattacks, sabotage, and disinformation as components of the threat to the region’s security²⁵.

Air and Missile Defense Initiatives

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, air and missile defense has been one of the key areas with a direct impact on Ukraine's ability to protect its civilian population and critical infrastructure in the rear.

As for the Integrated Air and Missile Defense Coalition discussed above, in January 2025 the Ramstein format approved its transition from predominantly urgent deliveries of individual systems and munitions to long-term planning of the development of Ukraine's air and missile defense. In parallel, as early as April 2024 Germany launched the Immediate Action on Air Defence (IAAD) initiative, aimed at finding air defense systems, missiles, radars, and components in the existing stocks of NATO member states, the European Union (EU), and other partners, and, where necessary, at financing compensation for countries willing to hand over their own systems to Ukraine.

By the end of 2025, however, the possibilities for further drawing ready-made systems from the allies' stocks had shrunk considerably. The situation is further complicated by the sharp rise in global demand for PAC-3 interceptors for Patriot because of the conflict in the Middle East. According to CSIS estimates, as of late July 2026 the American stock of Patriot interceptors had fallen to fewer than 1,000 units, while annual production capacity was estimated at roughly 600–800 missiles²⁶. This means that Ukraine is competing for a limited resource not only with other US allies but also with the needs of the American armed forces themselves.

In the medium term, licensed production of PAC-3 could partially mitigate the problem. At the same time, industry specialists acknowledge that fully deploying new production can take from one to several years. Given the constant threat of Russian missile and drone strikes, a more realistic first stage could be to locate such production in one of the European states, with the prospect of later relocating part of the production capacity to Ukraine.

Even in the event of a positive decision, licensed production would not mean full technological autonomy. Japan's experience is illustrative: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries produces PAC-3 under a Lockheed Martin license, yet the production cycle is not fully autonomous. One of the critical constraints remains dependence on American components, notably seeker heads.

Against this background, the expansion of the European segment of Ukraine's missile defense is gaining importance. In July 2026, Ukraine announced its intention to purchase four SAMP/T NG systems with funds from the European Ukraine Support Loan. Until the production of the new systems is complete, France is to transfer two existing SAMP/T systems to Ukraine as an interim solution.

At the same time, the SAMP/T NG should not for now be regarded as a full-fledged replacement for Patriot in ballistic missile defense. The system's real capabilities against such Russian assets as the Iskander-M or the Kinzhal, especially during massed combined attacks, have far less combat verification than Patriot with the PAC-3 MSE. A further constraint is missile stocks: even with high technical effectiveness, the contribution of the SAMP/T NG will depend on the availability of Aster 30 missiles, including the prospective Aster 30 B1NT, while European production capacity remains limited compared with Ukraine's potential needs. Licensed production of Aster 30 in Ukraine could partially solve this problem in the future, but implementing such a project would also take several years.

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The most ambitious long-term project is the Integrated Anti-Ballistic Missile Coalition, established on July 13, 2026, with the participation of Ukraine, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden²⁷. Its goal is to build a joint European anti-ballistic capability based on agreed operational requirements, technical working groups, a joint governance mechanism, and a roadmap for creating the first operational capabilities.

The project builds on the Ukrainian–German agreements of June 2026 on the joint development of a system to counter ballistic missiles. Its central element is to be the Freyja (FP-7.x) system. According to the manufacturer’s statements, Fire Point is working on the interceptor and the launch component, Hensoldt on the radar component²⁸, and Diehl Defence on infrared seeker heads²⁹. Eurosam, Leonardo, Thales, Saab, and other European companies are showing interest in the project.

The advantage of the Ukrainian–European project lies in the prospect of creating a system that will be less dependent on American export controls, stocks, and production queues. At the same time, this does not solve the current shortage problem: even with accelerated development, the path from prototype to serial production, integration, and the build-up of a sufficient stock of interceptors will be measured in years.

An alternative to a purely passive build-up of missile defense is the concept of active defense. Missile strikes on facilities of Russia’s military-industrial complex involved in producing ballistic missiles and critical components for them can slow production rates, disrupt production cycles, and lengthen stock recovery times. Overcoming the interceptor shortage thus lies in expanding the capabilities of Ukraine’s cruise and ballistic missile program.

Current Risks in Ukraine’s Military Support Architecture

Fragmentation of governance. Ukraine’s support architecture consists of parallel mechanisms – the capability coalitions, NSATU, the CAP, JATEC, PURL, bilateral programs, and regional formats (NB8). Each format performs a separate function, but without a single planning cycle, shared priorities, and a clear division of responsibility, the risk of duplicated procurement grows. This risk is particularly relevant for long-term planning and the development of the capabilities of Ukraine’s Defense Forces.

A separate challenge for the further implementation of the coalition roadmaps remains the absence of centralized multi-year financing. Although the volumes of military assistance announced by the allies for 2026–2027 create an overall financial basis for developing Ukraine’s future capabilities, these funds are not tied directly to the coalitions’ roadmaps. As a result, their implementation continues to depend on annual political decisions, national budgets, and fragmented assistance packages.

“Bottleneck” in deliveries of American military capabilities. Ukraine and its European partners remain dependent on the US in a number of critical areas: satellite and other strategic intelligence, ballistic missile defense (Patriot), part of long-range and precision-guided munitions, and targeting and reconnaissance assets. In the event of a further reduction in US involvement, the problem will lie not only in the volumes of assistance but also in the availability of alternative European equivalents, which take years to create.

Dependence of support on political and budget cycles. Most support mechanisms are formally oriented toward several years, but real financing continues to depend on annual budgets, parliamentary votes, elections, and changes of government coalitions. This creates a gap between military planning, which requires predictability, and the political cycle, within which already agreed priorities can be revised.

Competition between support for Ukraine and rearmament of NATO countries. European states are helping Ukraine while needing to rearm their own armies against the long-term Russian threat. For the US, an additional burden is created by the protracted conflict with Iran, which has already led to a significant expenditure of Patriot, THAAD, and long-range precision missile stocks. At the same time, China’s large-scale build-up of conventional military capabilities is forcing the US to reserve an ever greater share of resources for deterring China in the Indo-Pacific region. This intensifies competition for production capacity and weapons among the European, Middle Eastern, and Indo-Pacific directions and limits Washington’s ability to compensate for the shortfalls of European allies and Ukraine.

A separate “bottleneck” is the shared shortage of interceptor missiles among all Patriot operator countries. For Ukraine, this means that even with financing and additional batteries available, access to PAC-3 will depend on the global distribution of limited stocks among the US, European allies, Middle Eastern states, and Indo-Pacific partners. In the event of simultaneous escalation in several theaters, Ukraine risks facing a prolonged absence of PAC-3 deliveries.

Formation of a false sense of security after a hypothetical ceasefire. The cessation of active hostilities may reduce the allies’ political readiness to sustain the current volumes of assistance at the very moment when Ukraine will need to rapidly replenish stocks, modernize its army, and build

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deterrence against a new attack. Russia, by contrast, may use the pause to restore personnel, accumulate missiles and ammunition, expand production capacity, and prepare new operations. Meanwhile, the confrontation will likely continue below the threshold of a major war – through cyberattacks, sabotage, information operations, political interference, and pressure on critical infrastructure. A ceasefire should therefore not automatically mean scaling back the support mechanisms; on the contrary, this very period may prove decisive for building the capabilities that will make repeated aggression too costly for Russia.

Risk of Russian hybrid and information operations. The expansion of weapons production for Ukraine and the deepening of its integration with Europe’s defense industrial base create additional targets for Russian hybrid operations. Moscow may combine information campaigns and public threats against states, governments, and defense companies with cyberattacks, intelligence activity, and sabotage against production and logistics facilities. Information pressure may take the form of intimidating the leadership of defense companies as well as local communities. The goal is to intensify domestic debates over the advisability of further assistance and to influence electoral discourse in order to bring to power political forces that will lobby for cuts in defense spending.

Risks of opacity and corruption suspicions. The urgent nature of arms procurement, the involvement of intermediaries, and the limited publicity of data on suppliers, prices, and routes objectively complicate civilian oversight. As a result, room emerges for manipulation and for accusations of price inflation. A telling example is Czechia, where on the eve of the 2025 parliamentary elections the “ammunition initiative” turned into an object of domestic political struggle. The key challenge therefore remains combining the necessary confidentiality of wartime procurement with sufficient audit and oversight capable of minimizing both real abuses and the political risks associated with how they are perceived.

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