

“We Meant It”, No More Weapons: US Stresses There Is No Other Military Package for Ukraine

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The White House strategic communications coordinator, John Kirby, at a time when Kiev insists that it needs more weapons to combat Russian forces, said once again that Washington has no more funds for Ukrainian troops and stressed that there is not another package “in the works right now.” His statement comes as the Ukrainian foreign minister attempts to manipulate Congress using a Russian disinformation narrative.

“There isn't another one in the works right now or being scheduled for announcement or delivery. We meant it when we said it at the time, that that was the last one for which we had replenishment authority. And there's — there's not another one in the in the works right now,” the American official said during a press conference on January 16.

Two days before, the Pentagon acknowledged that it could no longer extract weapons from its arsenals to send them to Kiev since all the funds it used to replenish military material had been exhausted.

“We don't have the funds available to us to replenish those stocks should we expend that. And with no timeline in sight, we have to make those hard decisions. And so the most important thing right now is securing additional funding from Congress, and we'll continue to work closely with them on this important security — international security issue,” said Department of Defense Pat Ryder.

Currently, the Biden Administration is negotiating with Republicans in the House of Representatives to unfreeze a new military aid package valued at about \$106 billion, of

which \$61.4 billion would go to Ukraine and \$14.3 billion to Israel. However, the Republicans refuse to approve the package if the Biden administration does not establish tougher measures to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the US.

They also allege that there is a lack of mechanisms to ensure the transparency of the true use of American money when it arrives in Ukraine.

“What the Biden Administration seems to be asking for is billions of additional dollars with no appropriate oversight, no clear strategy to win, and none of the answers that I think the American people are owed,” said the speaker of the House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, a Republican legislator who, unlike some of his more radical colleagues, is in favour of increasing aid.

The US cannot find information on almost 40,000 pieces of military equipment destined for Ukraine, The New York Times reported, citing a document obtained from the Pentagon. The US has lost \$1 billion of the total \$1.7 billion, according to the document from the Department of Defense that was sent to Congress and the press, with only a redacted version released to the public.

The newspaper did not give details of the 39,139 missing high-risk pieces, whose impact on the battlefield, confidential technology and relatively small size make them sought after by arms smugglers. It is recalled that under the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the fate and use of the weapons supplied should have been closely monitored.

Great concern about the financial and military aid given to Ukraine, at a time when the US Congress is debating whether to send more aid to Kiev, has been raised. Numerous reports suggest that some of the donated weapons have already ended up on the black market around the world.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba flat out denied the allegations and described it as Russian “disinformation.”

“Every attempt by Russia to disinform the world about (the) alleged leak or illicit traffic of U.S. weapons into other parts of the world... turned out to be fake,” said Kuleba. “So don’t believe in fakes, believe in Ukraine.”

However, it is a ridiculous notion to claim weapons destined for Ukraine that end up on the black market as Russian disinformation.

It is recalled that the New York Times reported in May 2023 that “Ukrainian soldiers risk their lives to keep weapons from the black market”; Axios reported in July 2023 that “the US struggled to track military aid to Ukraine,” according to a Pentagon watchdog; and the Cato Institute reported in May 2023 “the tragic but unsurprising costs of loose US weapons,” among many other examples of non-Russian sources reporting the weapons scandal.

Kuleba’s attempts to justify more US aid by claiming some of the criticisms are Russian disinformation will obviously not manipulate Congress into approving a new package. It is likely a package will eventually be agreed upon when the Republicans get the concessions they want from Biden, but Kuleba’s entitled behaviour will only deepen the opposition’s animosity toward Ukraine, and only months away from the next US presidential election.

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Featured image: An airman loads weapons cargo bound for Ukraine onto a C-17 Globemaster III during a security assistance mission at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, Sept. 14, 2022. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Marco A. Gomez).

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