

Americans suspend military aid to Ukraine. Day 1105 of the war

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On 3 March, US media, citing White House or Pentagon officials, reported that the US was suspending military aid to Kyiv. The Wall Street Journal was the first to report on the Donald Trump administration freezing of deliveries to Ukraine of arms and military equipment (AME) from the resources of both the US Armed Forces and the US defence industry, which were approved by Joe Biden's team. The Fox News station stressed that the move is temporary. The unblocking of the support will be possible after the US President states that "the Ukrainians are demonstrating a commitment to peace negotiations in good faith". **An official decision to withhold military aid has not yet been announced**, but Prime Minister Donald Tusk confirmed that reports coming in from the logistics hub in Jasionka confirm the US media's message.

Kyiv will already feel the lack of new deliveries of AME, mainly ammunition and spare parts for air defence and artillery systems, in the coming weeks, when stocks begin to run out. It will not be possible to make up for the shortage by a possible increase in supplies from European countries – they do not have sufficient replacements. Moreover, Washington could, in theory, impose restrictions on allies in the supply of US arms to Ukraine.

The most serious problem would be if the US withheld intelligence, reconnaissance and guidance, and integration of the ground component of Ukrainian air defence, the effects of which would be seen immediately. However, there are currently no reports of this happening. From the beginning of the full-scale aggression, the information provided by the Americans helped the Ukrainian army to organise an effective defence and inflict painful losses on the Russians. Ukraine often knew earlier and more about Russia's actions than Russia was able to find out about them.

The importance of this support is demonstrated by the failure of Ukrainian attacks on enemy military facilities in Crimea, after the Americans stopped coordinating them (the reason for this was – unconfirmed officially by either side – the downing of a US Global Hawk reconnaissance drone operating off the peninsula in June 2024). **The US is also the only country capable of comprehensively providing Kyiv with this kind of assistance.**

In the event of a complete cessation of American support for arms supply and production within a few months, Ukraine's capabilities will be reduced by about half in real terms, and in many important respects by even more. According to earlier Ukrainian information, the US supplies up to 40% of the equipment used at the front (the figure for the West overall is 70%), and in the case of missiles for air defence systems and artillery ammunition, its

contribution is significantly higher, exceeding half of the total consumption.

In addition, the US is the main supplier of components for drones manufactured in Ukraine and supports their production financially and in terms of technical expertise. It is from there that 3D industrial printers are sourced, enabling Ukraine to quickly produce replacements for hard-to-find components for types of heavy weaponry no longer manufactured in the West.

The situation on the frontline

Ukrainian forces have carried out a number of diversionary actions in Toretsk and have broken through to it from the north and west. There is street fighting in its northern part, and the free infiltration of groups of Ukrainian soldiers shows that the Russians do not have the ability to control the entire ruined area. The northern and north-western outskirts of the city are still under Ukrainian control. Although Russia is advancing in most directions in the Donbas and Kharkiv oblasts, the pace of their advance has slowed down and their territorial gains have not changed the overall situation on any section of the front.

There has been increased activity by Russian forces in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, where they have pushed defenders out of some positions south-west of Orikhiv. Ukrainian military intelligence (HUR) suggests that the enemy is preparing to resume larger-scale offensive operations in the area.

The logistics of the Ukrainian grouping in Kursk Oblast came under Russian fire control, and the fighting moved to the border areas of the Sumy Oblast (at least one village is thought to have been taken over by the Russians). The road from Yunakivka in the Sumy Oblast to Sudzha, shelled by the aggressor with artillery shells, is currently the only one through which the Ukrainians can deliver supplies. The continuation of the current situation or its further deterioration may force their command to make an accelerated withdrawal from Kursk Oblast. The alternative option is for Kyiv to divert more forces there to contain enemy pressure. However, this risks further weakening the defence line on Ukrainian territory.

Russian air attacks

On 1 March, a Russian Iskander-M ballistic missile struck Ukrainian soldiers at the Novomoskivsk firing range in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. According to unofficial sources, the formation area of the 157th Mechanised Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces was attacked and, as a result of Russia's use of a cluster warhead, the losses in killed and wounded amounted to 150 people, including 30 instructors. On 3 March, the attack was confirmed by General Mykhailo Drapatyi, commander of the Land Forces and Strategic-Operational Grouping of Forces "Khortytsia", who also demanded severe punishment for those responsible. An investigation was also launched and the army's Commander-in-Chief, General Oleksandr Syrskyi, suspended the commander of the training ground (subunits training centre) and the brigade commander from their duties until the investigation is completed.

Russia continued to launch massive drone attacks on the rear of Ukrainian forces, occasionally using rockets. Kharkiv was targeted four times (26–28 February and 2 March). The Odesa strike on 1 March led to further damage to the Odesa thermal power station; Russian drones also hit three district boiler houses. In Mykolaiv (28 February), Kryvyi Rih (2 March) and Cherkasy (3 March), damage was reported to factories. Damage to civilian infrastructure was reported from Sumy (27 February and 4 March) and Zaporizhzhia (27 February and 1 March). **Compared to the previous week, the number of drones used by the Russians has decreased, but remains relatively high.** Between the evening of 25 February and the morning of 4 March, they used a total of 966 machines of this type. The Ukrainians claimed that they shot down 584, and that 365 were locationally lost without negative consequences. Russia is also thought to have used 12 missiles during this period, none of which were destroyed.

Ukrainian operations against Russia

Ukrainian drones attacked the port and refinery in the town of Tuapse in Krasnodar Krai on 26 February, the Ufaorgsintez petrochemical plant in Ufa on 3 March, and the refinery in Syzran in Samara Oblast a day later. However, these strikes did not cause any serious damage. The latter facility was targeted once again in recent weeks.

Russian operations against Ukraine

According to the State Special Communications Service, the Russian-used **hacking group UAC-0173 has stepped up cyber-attacks on Ukrainian notaries.** Criminals send dangerous emails to gain remote access to computers and then make unauthorised changes to state registers. Ukrainian specialists have identified compromised computers in six oblasts of the country.

Western support for Ukraine

On 1 March, the UK provided Kyiv with a £2.6bn (\$3bn) loan for military purposes, mainly for the purchase of armaments. The funds come from the G7 countries' agreed ERA (Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration for Ukraine) mechanism, worth a total of \$50bn. **A day later, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced an additional £1.6 billion for the acquisition of more than 5,000 LMM (Lightweight Multirole Missiles),** capable of fighting unmanned flying drones and unarmoured land targets. The British manufacturer is expected to deliver them by 2030. According to Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, Ukraine will receive the missiles along with the launchers. London had previously ordered 650 missiles of this type for the army there, with deliveries starting in December 2024. On 2 March, the Lithuanian defence ministry announced its intention to invest €20 million in Ukrainian arms production, while the Czech initiative 'Dárek pro Putina' raised funds to purchase a Black Hawk helicopter for HUR (collection started in November 2023).

On 25 February, **the Ukrainian government extended the deadline for companies critical to Ukraine's defence to submit applications for deferred conscription** until 31 March. The decision was influenced by difficulties in electronic submissions caused by hostile cyberattacks.

Also on 25 February, **the Romanian Border Police announced that more than 13,000 men from Ukraine crossed the state border illegally in 2024**. This number is more than three times higher than in 2023, when more than 3,800 such incidents were recorded.

The Ukrainian authorities are taking steps to increase mobilised reserves. On 27 February, the General Staff reported that **by 5 June, more than 1.5 million conscripts who have a temporary deferral from military service due to health will have to undergo re-examination at medical commissions**.

On 28 February, **the Defence Procurement Agency dismissed media reports that there were no new contracts for the supply of ammunition**. It asserted that contracts worth 57.3 billion hryvnias (more than \$1.3 billion) had been concluded since the beginning of the year.

On 1 March, **General Syrskyi stated that, in response to the Russians' establishment of new divisions, the formation of new brigades had begun, to allow for the rotation of soldiers**. The commander-in-chief's statement contradicts information from earlier in the year that the formation of new units had been halted due to staff shortages and insufficient equipment.

On 3 March, **Defence Minister Umerov conveyed that the implementation of the over \$110 million 'Drone Line' project had begun**. Its aim is to create a network of specialised military units that will receive modern equipment, the necessary resources and specialists, including civilians. This will make it possible to establish a 'zone of death' on sections of the front 10–15 km long and inflict greater losses on enemy forces.

On 3 March, the State Bureau of Investigation indicated that between the end of November 2024 and 1 March this year, **more than 21,000 soldiers who had voluntarily left military units had returned to duty**.

According to South Korean military intelligence, North Korea has sent additional units to Kursk Oblast. Since the beginning of the year, around 3,000 troops are thought to have arrived there.

On 3 March, **HUR reported that the ground component of Russian forces fighting on the Ukrainian front numbered around 620,000 troops**, of which more than 200,000 were assault troops. In addition, 35,000 soldiers of the Russian National Guard provide control over the occupied territories. According to HUR, the Russian army intends to recruit more than 340,000 contract soldiers this year.

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