

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

**“Security Assistance to Ukraine: The State Department’s  
Role”**

DATE

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FEATURING

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**Todd D. Robinson**

*Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs,  
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Eliot A. Cohen

My name is Eliot Cohen. I'm the Arleigh Burke Chair in Strategy here at CSIS. And it's a very great pleasure to welcome a substantial portion of the leadership of the Department of State, an institution for which I developed some fondness when I spent several years there a while back.

I'm going to be brief in our introductions. The session is about Department of State support to Ukraine. I'll ask each of our participants to speak for a few minutes. I'll ask a few questions, and then we'll open it up for audience questions.

There is a mic over there. I'd just ask you to line up. When I do begin taking questions, I'll ask you to give your name, institutional affiliation, and that you ask a question rather than make a statement.

Let me just add also this is an on-the-record event and is also being livestreamed.

So the introductions are going to be briefer than my – than our guests deserve. But in the interest of getting to substance, I'll impose that on them.

We're going to start over there with Dr. Dafna Rand, who's the director of the Office of Foreign Assistance, someone with a lot of experience in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And I believe this is your fourth time at the Department of State.

Somebody who's been at the Department of State all the way through is sitting to my right, Ambassador Todd Robinson, who is the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, a career minister with a distinguished record of service, including as our ambassador to Guatemala.

To my left, Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Jessica Lewis, also with a long career in public service, particularly on Capitol Hill.

And last but not least is Kathryn Insley, who's the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation, someone who's, again, spent a lot of time in government, including on the National Security Council staff.

So the theme, again, is the Department of State and the war in Ukraine. I'm going to ask our speakers to give, say, three- to five-minute statements, no more. We'll start on my right, go all the way through to my left. I'll ask a few questions. And then we'll open it up. Dr. Rand, if you would.

Dafna H. Rand

Thank you. Thank you so much, Eliot. Thank you to CSIS for hosting us. We're so pleased to be here and to be joined by this audience, and to talk about such a timely topic.

The war is now in its fifth month, and the fighting continues in ways that continue to shock us all. Russia missiles on July 12th struck medical facilities and several residential buildings. Fighting continues in the east and the south in a number of provinces and regions. The U.N. Human Rights Office has said on Tuesday that more than 5,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine since Russia invaded on February 24th, adding, they said in their press statements, that the real toll was likely much higher.

And the U.S. response has been robust, focusing on diplomacy as a first lever or resort. U.S. and Western diplomats continue to come together, most recently at the NATO summit and then last week at the G-20 in Bali, Indonesia, to address the far-reaching consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, particularly growing food insecurity and rising energy prices. At the G-20, for instance, the majority of the countries condemned Russia's aggression towards Ukraine which, among other things, has included the targeting of Ukraine's entire agricultural infrastructure – fields, warehouses, roads, transportation networks, silos, and ports. Again and again, the G-20 leaders heard calls from across the world that were represented in that room for Russia to open the Black Sea for Ukrainian grain shipments.

And today we want to talk about our department, the Department of State, and not only the work we've done in diplomacy, but also the work we've done on assistance. Our administration has significantly supported the Ukrainian government and its people during these five months, through significant assistance. I am the director of the Office of Foreign Assistance. I have been in charge and working with my colleagues here and others in the Department of State, at USAID, at the National Security Council, and across the interagency to mobilize direct assistance response.

Today we're going to talk about security assistance, which is one aspect of our response. So what I'd like to do is tell you a little bit, before we get to the topic at hand, the entirety of our assistance. We have worked with Congress on now two Ukraine supplementals – recognizing deep bipartisan support for the government of Ukraine and outrage at the Russian invasion. Congress moved swiftly in late February and again in mid-March to appropriate funding to support Ukrainian efforts. And I wanted to share with you a flavor of the entirety of what these supplementals have done before we focus in on security sector assistance.

The supplementals have included many components. They have included funding for budgetary support to the government of Ukraine to reduce

current budgetary shortfalls caused by the war. And this support will help rally other bilateral and international donors to join us in our effort. Our assistance has included funding for economic programs that support, for example, the continuity of the government at Ukraine's national, regional, and local levels. Our assistance is supporting societal resilience, including in areas such as the health sector and agricultural production.

We are supporting programs to hold Russia and Russian forces accountable for their actions in Ukraine, and to assist vulnerable allies and partners in the region who are most affected by the crisis. We are also funding humanitarian demining, securing nuclear and radiological facilities, providing personal protective equipment – which you'll hear about in a bit – for Ukrainian forces in the case – in the event of a chemical weapons attack. And we are ensuring that partner nations have the sufficient capacity to enforce sanctions if Russia uses chemical or biological weapons.

You have heard, perhaps, about our immense humanitarian assistance. We are providing lifesaving assistance to address the needs to refugees impacted by the war, including billions of foreign assistance to address the food security needs in the region and beyond. We are addressing the development impacts worldwide of the higher food and input prices in the most vulnerable countries as a direct result of this war, supporting farmers and national food systems.

And finally, our topic today. It's certainly last but not least. We are funding security assistance for Ukraine and our allies and partners, including to replenish critical military equipment provided to Ukraine, and to keep the pipeline of essential equipment and technical support flowing to Ukraine's national police, including lifesaving armored vehicles, personal protective equipment, and medical kits, as well as support for criminal justice and civil security partners in Ukraine, Moldova, and the region.

By the numbers, I just want to give you – end on some of the numbers. By the numbers, in terms of our military assistance, over \$7.3 billion of U.S. foreign assistance has gone to the – to the military since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal assault against Ukraine on February 24th. And more than \$7.9 billion of such military assistance has gone to the Ukrainians since the beginning of the Biden-Harris administration – since January 2021. And since – and since 2014, the last time Russia invaded Ukraine, more than \$10 billion has been appropriated and obligated and given to the Ukrainians for military assistance.

As part of these efforts, my office has helped to justify, coordinate, and lead interagency discussions on the appropriation and implementation of \$24.7 billion in emergency supplemental funding for Ukraine since March 2022. That is a significant amount. And we have hoped and we are continuing to

work to ensure that every dollar of this assistance matches and complements the diplomatic and policy imperatives created by the war. You will hear more now from my colleagues on their specific efforts, but I want to emphasize that we are approaching this moment with a unifying mission, to provide security assistance to Ukraine and regional countries.

And with that, I'll turn it over to my colleague, Assistant Secretary Todd Robinson.

Todd D.  
Robinson

Thanks. Thanks so much. Thank you, Dr. Cohen, for putting this together, and CSIS. And before I start out, I should just say, nothing my office can do would happen without working really closely with Dafna and her team.

INL has actually been working in Ukraine since the Maidan revolution. Some of you will remember that after – during that revolution and after that revolution, corruption was a huge issue. And so INL, using training and other resources, was asked to step in and help them work on the corruption issue. Today, after Haiti, Ukraine is the number-one thing that I'm working on. The number two thing, actually. Fentanyl is still big in the United States. Just to say, it's one of the things that keeps me up at night.

We continue to work on the reform effort, the judicial reform effort, the corruption effort. But since the balloon went up at the beginning of this year, we have been instrumental in providing protective gear, medical gear, armored vehicles, medical field tents to all of the civilian security apparatus in Ukraine. So that's national police, local police, border guards, specialized police unit – including SWAT units. Any civilian security apparatus in Ukraine is being supported by the United States government, and largely by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

Since December, we have committed about \$185 million to Ukraine. This is significant to us because about 85 percent of INL's budget is earmarked. So we have to spend it on certain things. Whatever discretionary money, resources we have in the Bureau right now, today, is either going to Ukraine or Haiti. So this is – this is big for us. We've never done anything like this before. We are sending – as I mentioned – we're sending hundreds of vehicles, thousands of bullet-proof vests, plane loads of tactical equipment, medical gear, field supplies. We are beginning – we may have already sent unmanned aerial systems to help the civilian security apparatus protect itself as it's protecting these small towns and some large towns around the country.

The assistance extends beyond equipment. We have – we are working with our interagency partners, FBI for instance, to work with the national police on explosive ordnance disposal and techniques allowing them to clear

streets and residential buildings in liberated areas. Just recently their EOD units seized more than 10,000 munitions between February and April.

We support nongovernmental organizations like Pomishka UA, which is helping to prevent human trafficking and prevent Ukrainians fleeing from Putin's aggression from falling into bad situations as they go to neighboring countries. We're also working with our neighboring countries – Poland, Moldova. I visited both of those areas, both of those countries recently. And we will continue to work with them, as well as the Baltics. I was also just in Latvia.

As many of you know, on May 25th the secretary announced the launch of the joint U.S.-U.K.-EU Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group. This joint initiative directly supports the efforts of the War Crimes Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor General to document, preserve and analyze evidence of war crimes and other atrocities committed in Ukraine with a view towards criminal prosecution of those involved.

This group just met June 16th in Kyiv and reaffirmed the high priority all parties place in ensuring the effectiveness of Ukraine's accountability apparatus.

I have one more thing, but I don't remember what it was. What was the last thing?

Dr. Cohen I'm sure it'll come back to you

Amb. Robinson I think it'll come back to me. (Laughter.)

I'm going to thank you. And it'll come back to me.

Dr. Cohen I'm sure it will.

Secretary Lewis.

Jessica Lewis Thank you so much. And first of all, obviously I want to thank you, thank CSIS, and thank the incredible team that I think represents the extraordinary leadership here at the State Department as we all work together on Ukraine.

So I'm Jessica Lewis. I'm the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs. We are the bureau from the State Department side that holds the authorities and oversees our arms transfer and security cooperation and security assistance around the world. I'm very pleased to be able to talk to you today more specifically about what we've done when it comes to Ukraine.

Dafna already went through the numbers. So I just want to highlight one number in particular, which is that since February 24th we have committed over \$7.3 billion in military assistance to Ukraine. That is truly an extraordinary number. That has come through the presidential drawdown authority, which allows us to take from DOD stocks in terms of moving equipment, defense articles, to Ukraine.

We have also used something that we call third-party transfers, which allows us to take U.S.-origin equipment and have it transferred to Ukraine. And then obviously we've worked closely with our DOD counterparts on making sure that all of the assistance is coordinated. And we also have a really – I think it has been an extraordinary effort. We've seen over 40 countries around the world provide contributions to Ukraine. And we have worked with them in all of the different paths for that to move forward.

I also want to mention, because our bureau works very hard on this issue, is the situation with unexploded ordnance in Ukraine. We are working very closely with international organizations, with a number of NGOs on the ground. We have been providing demining assistance prior to this to Ukraine. But given the overwhelming needs, we are going to be dramatically increasing our demining assistance over the coming years. I think we both see in terms of the toll that that's taken on everything from agriculture, people's homes, and then obviously, as the war continues in the east, continuing to see that problem there.

The other piece that I wanted to talk a little bit about is as we move forward, we believe that we are seeing tectonic changes when it comes to security assistance and security needs in Europe. And so we are looking at obviously continuing our support to Ukraine, but we're also working hard right now to look at the security needs particularly of the eastern flank as their security needs have changed as well due to the war and so that is going to continue to be a large piece of our work moving forward.

I have a lot more to share but I also want to make sure that we have time for your questions, and so I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Kathryn from ISN.

Kathryn Insley

Thank you, Assistant Secretary Lewis.

Thank you, Dr. Cohen. Thank you, CSIS, for convening this discussion today.

As Dr. Cohen said, I'm the acting deputy assistant secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation programs. We focus on very specific and unique measures to disrupt and deny state and nonstate acquisition of materials, financing, and expertise that support WMD and missile programs, acquisition, and use. We also have programs to mitigate evasion of WMD-

relevant sanctions, to strengthen strategic trade and border security, to assist with foreign consequence management, or FCM, and other activities to prevent and respond to destabilizing activities by nefarious actors.

Before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, we provided comprehensive assistance to Ukrainian partners building on long-standing partnerships and expertise. For example, our Cooperative Threat Reduction program, CTR, has worked in close partnership with Ukraine for nearly 30 years to secure their WMD materials, equipment, and expertise from diversion. Other ISN programs have long-standing partnerships aimed at strengthening Ukraine's strategic trade control systems, upgrading their CBRN facilities, working with the science and technology center in Ukraine to establish nuclear regulatory best practices, and establishing a dedicated sanctions-implementation agency, to name a few.

Soon after Russia's full-scale invasion we shifted immediately to providing operational support to our Ukrainian partners on the ground. Since February 24th, ISN programs have provided over \$70 million in critical equipment and training across the CBRNE spectrum to the government of Ukraine and additional support to regional partners afflicted by the conflict. Specifically, we quickly delivered CBRN personal protective equipment, PPE, and medical countermeasures to security forces and first responders in the event of the Russian Federation's use of WMD against Ukraine. Thanks to the support from Dafna's office, the State Office of Foreign Assistance, we've just completed another delivery of nearly a thousand similar kits to our Ukrainian Ministry of Defense partners. We also provided body armor, night vision goggles, medical supplies, surveillance gear, and other tactical equipment to security forces specifically responsible for protecting the CBRN facilities. Additionally, we provided training, translated reference guides, and provided videos on recognizing chemical and biological weapons attack signs and symptoms, and we're helping Ukraine develop a more robust indigenous CBRN-response capability. Unfortunately, they need this now more than ever.

In addition to this equipment in training, we have provided substantial assistance to implement U.S. and international sanctions. As this audience well knows, the U.S. and nearly 40 countries, including all countries of the G-7 and the EU, have come together to swiftly deliver severe economic costs on Russia, targeting a range of economic sectors, particularly its defense and energy sectors, its financial institutions, and elites close to Putin. And when it became evident that the Lukashenko regime was complicit in the Kremlin's war, we came together to further impose economic costs on Belarus. Given the unprecedented scope of these multilateral sanctions, ISN and State Department is working close partnership with the Department of Treasury and Commerce, as well as the international partners such as Canada, the U.K., and the EU, to share information with our foreign partners that would help



them implement these new measures expediently and effectively. We're also providing those countries with training and tools to help identify sanctioned entities within their jurisdictions and their supply chains, and activities including investments, maritime shipping, and financial transactions that would expose them to sanctioned Russian and Belarusian entities.

We're also supporting our partners in Ukraine and the region to push back against Russian attacks that seek to undermine international nonproliferation norms. To respond to Russia's use of targeted assassinations, ISN works with partners and allies in Eastern Europe to enable them to identify and safely respond to any further use of WMD materials in targeted assassinations. To counter Russia's disinformation campaign, we're training journalists in the region to identify and investigate Russia's malign activities, whether corruption, ties to sanctioned individuals, or seeking undue influence in advanced conventional weapon deals. We're also working with the Ukrainian diaspora to develop a network of experts to identify Russian disinformation networks and support institutions that share curriculum and best practices.

ISN has a long history of engaging scientists with WMD-applicable expertise. And unfortunately, this conflict has displaced countless Ukrainian scientists and technical experts. We're working with these experts to provide near-term research opportunities and other professional development opportunities to enable them to continue using their skills and expertise in ways that limit opportunities for diversion to states that do not share our commitment to nonproliferation values and norms.

That's a very high-level overview of the kinds of assistance that ISN is providing. Like other elements of the U.S. government, we've expanded the scope and expedited the pace of assistance since the onset of this unjustified and illegal war in February 2022. We'll continue to monitor developments. And we'll do everything we can in ISN, working with our partners in the department, in the interagency, and in the international community to address national security needs in Ukraine and in the region. Thank you.

Dr. Cohen

Great. Well, thank you very much. That was a terrific overview of the many different activities of the Department of State, including some which don't get covered all that – all that much. You know, I think we sometimes, particularly on the military side, tend to think of this as being a Defense Department enterprise when, of course, it's not just the Defense Department.

What I'd like to do is ask a few questions and then we'll move over to the audience. Again, I would ask you to line up by the mic if you have questions.

Let me begin with one which I hope won't seem churlish. But on the one hand you've described an enormous amount of activity, and it is

extraordinarily impressive, but then again so are the needs. And the question that I would like to ask is: You've given, as I said, a terrific overview of the inputs, these are the things we're doing. In terms of the outputs, is it enough? And if it's not enough, how big is the shortfall? So, in other words, I'd like you to, if you would, speak more to results, the needs on the Ukrainian side, and how far are we from getting them the things that we think they need and they deserve to have.

Ms. Lewis

I'm happy to start with that, and I imagine everybody has an answer to that question.

I think when I look at the military assistance that we have provided to Ukraine using State Department authorities – and obviously, as you noted, DOD carrying out the implementation – I think – and I need to be clear it's not just us. This has been a worldwide effort. I do think we have done an extraordinary job getting them what they need as the war has evolved, and I think that's very important when you talk about sort of outputs. The war has changed over time. Ukraine's needs have changed over time.

So, at the beginning, we were really looking at Stingers. We were looking at Javelins. We were looking at air defense. And you saw the world step up. Now that we are in a different phase of the war, there are different needs. We are looking at MLRS. We are looking at artillery.

Now, Ukraine's needs are significant. We are always working to do more. We are always working to deliver things as quickly as possible. I think one of the challenges that we face on that is, obviously, we need to make sure that we have what they need, that we can get it to them, and that we can get it to them in a timely manner. And so, I think that is going to be ongoing work for those of us working on this problem at the State Department, as well as at DOD, and then I think working with the EU and many other countries around the world.

Dr. Cohen

So could I just follow up in that?

Ms. Lewis

Sure.

Dr. Cohen

So, what are the most important limiting factors? You mentioned a number and I could add others. There's the resources we have available, presumably. There is the logistical challenge of actually delivering stuff and getting it to the frontlines. There's the technical training aspect so that we can make sure that they can use it. There's simply the availability of particularly some of the more advanced – the more advanced weapons. There's our own bureaucracy and there's the Ukrainian bureaucracy. So, which of those would you say are the most important limiting factors? And I'd be curious to hear from others as well, because there are always limiting factors. That's the nature of life.

Ms. Lewis

Let me start with the last one. Then I'll turn it over to others.

I think, on the good-news front, I feel like our bureaucracy has actually moved with extraordinary speed. There are, for example, what we call presidential drawdown authority, which is this core authority that allows us to draw down from DOD stocks. That can often take, you know, a couple of weeks to longer to move. We are moving those in 24 hours.

We've been able to move things in the third-party transfers, meaning taking U.S.-origin equipment, providing it to – moving it from one country to Ukraine. We're often – again, we're moving those under emergency authorities. We're able to move those very quickly. So, I think that is the good-news story.

I think the other pieces that you're putting out there are going to continue to be challenges. We are very much looking at our own supply-chain issues, just like everywhere in the world. We are looking at – I think, on the logistics side, DOD has done an extraordinary job coordinating with our European counterparts in terms of being able to get – move things quickly to Ukraine. So I think that's worked very well. And I think as the needs change, we're going to need to be able to step up and continue to provide that.

I think the one piece that I didn't mention, which I do think is really important, and then I'll turn this over to others, is we've also seen countries donate not only U.S. equipment, but also Soviet and Russian equipment, which gets a little bit to the training piece that you're talking about. These are defense articles that the Ukrainians already know how to use. We obviously are now as well providing them with U.S. equipment where they do need training. But I think we've been able to try to move some of that more quickly. But we will be continuing to work on that project.

Dr. Cohen

Would others like to speak to that?

Amb. Robinson

Yeah. I would just say, as I mentioned earlier, INL has never moved \$200 million or committed \$200 million to any one thing in a six-month time span ever in its history. So are we doing enough? We're doing extraordinary things that we've never done before in the bureau.

But that also leads me to the point that I forgot, which was we are committed – we were committed to Ukraine before the balloon went up. We're committed to Ukraine after the balloon goes down and Ukraine is whole and free again. The Ukrainians have committed to us that they want to continue the reform effort, and we're going to be there for them with our interagency partners working on judicial reform, anticorruption, helping them rebuild the institutions that are being attacked today.

So, I think we have – we, the State Department, and our partners in the interagency, including DOD, have really done an extraordinary job.

Ms. Insley I would just add, Todd, that in addition to being an input, the foreign assistance is an output, but really we're all focused on the impact and the outcomes. So Todd talked a little bit about what our vision is and what we want; you know, a stable government of Ukraine.

Dr. Cohen Actually, could you – I mean, since I think you're in some ways the senior official here, could you spell that out a little bit further? What is the goal? I mean, it's obviously a Ukraine whole, free, independent, secure. Does that have any territorial implications? Is that, you know, the ceasefire lines of February 24– not really ceasefire, because the firing was going on all the time – the lines of February 24th, something more than that? I mean, what exactly is the goal here?

Ms. Insley Our secretary has been very clear and our president has been very clear that the goal here is – you know, that those specifics are left to the government of Ukraine. And that has been our policy since the beginning. But what Todd is talking about, which is a secure, strong government of Ukraine, its continuity, its resilience, its security, and its ability to function and govern, and that's what we're really focused on here through our assistance.

And so, to get to the point that the inputs and outputs really need to build to the outcomes, one of our outcomes here has been our diplomatic outcomes. And so, what's so exciting about this story at the State Department is we have been able to marry taxpayer resources, dollars, to our diplomatic strategy. So for all of the work that we've done here, we've been using it to mobilize our partners, whether it is getting other partners in Europe or around the world to help on our work on borders or our work on security sector.

And I'll give you one example from the non-security sector where our immense foreign assistance resources have been used really strategically to achieve diplomatic outcomes. And that's the food security part, where we all know that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has deleteriously affected food insecurity, exacerbated it around the world, and in the region, of course.

So the ability of our Congress to step up and to appropriate nearly \$5 billion – some humanitarian assistance and some economic assistance – for global food insecurity needs and security needs, really helped the secretary of state, the Administrator Power of USAID, the president go to the international fora over the past few months and say: Hey, this is a major problem. The U.S. is stepping up financially and we need your help both with assistance to supplement it, but also diplomatically. So, at the U.N. Security Council, where

the U.S. was the lead president in May, this became a focus of Secretary Blinken's and our – and our ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield. And then again at the G-7, and then again at the G-20.

So we've used these investments in foreign assistance to enable the multilateral diplomacy at every moment. And that has been a big win, because that is really both the output but also driving towards the outcome, and we believe deeply in this administration, especially at the State Department, the power of mobilizing these multilateral coalitions, especially here in Europe to respond to the Russian aggression, and in Ukraine.

Dr. Cohen                      So – Yeah.

Amb. Robinson              Let me just add, Dafna's absolutely right. The Ukrainians are actually speaking about this. I mean, their objective are Euro-aspirations, right? They want to be part of – part of Europe. And all of the things that we're all working on, you know, including the reform effort, are inputs to that outcome, getting them to be part of Europe.

Dr. Cohen                      So – did you want to come in on this, or?

Ms. Insley                      I would only amplify Assistant Secretary Lewis' comments on the changing nature of the requirements. So from ISN perspective – whether we're looking at Chernobyl or Zaporizhzhia or attacks on chemical plants, if we're looking at land border needs or maritime border needs, the key is to have flexible, adaptable, and rapid responses. And I think what I've seen here in the past five months is that the U.S. government has been able to resource those requirements. Of course, working closely with Congress as well because for ISN programs and others, we require congressional approval and support. And we have been able to respond very quickly to those requirements as the situation on the ground changes.

Dr. Cohen                      I should have mentioned Congress' willingness to do things as a potential limiting factor.

So the former bureaucrat in me would like to ask another question. And again, if members of the audience want to ask questions, that's where the mic is. You know, you mentioned that it's an evolving war, which is absolutely true. If, you know, you've ever gone skeet shooting, you know that when the clay pigeon goes up you don't shoot at the clay pigeon, you shoot a little bit in front of it. And in this case, I would seem to me that there really is a need to try to anticipate – not just react quickly, which is very, very important and which I would agree we've done very well – but to anticipate what the needs are going to be a month from now, two months from now, six months from now, a year from now. And I'm just wondering – and this is a very bureaucratic question – is there a bureaucratic mechanism to do that?

Dr. Rand                    Sure. Well, I think that's why F was created 15 years ago. We just celebrated our 15th anniversary. F serves as the secretary's advisor on foreign assistance and works with USAID and State to bring all of these bureaus together, with many, many others who are not represented here. So we have – even before the war began, so in late December, we were writing scenarios out of F with our colleagues here and others on what kind of assistance needs would be – requirements, would be implicated against various scenarios. Remember, we didn't know exactly what would happen. You know, we saw the intelligence, obviously.

So we were planning and coordinating all of the assistance bureaus and thinking through what would happen. And especially the variable that we wanted to run against our scenarios is what would the government of Ukraine look like, right? So we were sort of pleased that we have a government in Ukraine that has been able to resist, and defend itself. And so that has enabled some of the foreign assistance that we are giving. And we continue to project into the future about the requirements across all of our lines of effort.

Dr. Cohen                    But I'm curious, is there a particular mechanism through which you do that, or?

Dr. Rand                    We have working groups. We have a strong collaboration with a bureau that's not represented here, but has been fundamental to this effort, which is the EUR Bureau – so the regional bureau, and with EUR/ACE and the UR leadership of EUR and USAID has gathered all the bureaus together.

Ms. Lewis                    And I just would add from our side of the house, you know, I'm relatively new to the State Department. I've been here, I guess, about nine months or 10 months. But it has been really striking to me that as we have dealt with the war in Ukraine, we have been working – we are in a hand-in-glove process with DOD on a daily basis.

So I won't get into all the details here, because some of it's classified, but we have mechanisms that allow us to coordinate at the level where we're looking at saying, for example, you know, this country has a specific type of capability that we know Ukraine either needs now or is going to need. And we're able to work with our Defense colleagues to make sure that we bring the full diplomatic tools at our – you know, at our side, that we have in coordinating with exactly who DOD is talking to. So we're working at, like, that level of granularity, all the way up to the sort of traditional process that you think about in terms of DPCs, where all of the decision making is happening.

I think the other piece that's important to talk about here, and this is bigger than just the U.S. government, is the Secretary of Defense has coordinated a contact group, I was able to participate in that, which provides all the countries who are working to provide defense items to Ukraine come together, meet, discuss, hear from the Ukrainians, hear from us, look at where the war is going, and literally discuss capabilities and who can provide what. In my time, I have never seen an effort like that happen before. I think it speaks to the seriousness of the challenge that we're facing and why, and that the world is focused on it. So I think both at the sort of working level, in my office to DOD, all the way to the contact group, we have been able to put those mechanisms in place.

Dr. Cohen I see. Very good.

OK. Let's move to some questions from the audience. Again, I'd ask you to identify yourself, your institutional affiliation, and make sure it's a question.

Axel de Vernou Thank you all for speaking with us. My name is Axel de Vernou. I'm a research intern at the Hudson Institute.

My question is: How – and I think you started to allude to this in your answer – about how we want to do what Ukraine wants, and how our goals are to align with their objectives. But my question is how you would respond to those in the foreign policy community right now. And one that comes to mind is Barry Posen's recent article in Foreign Affairs about this war of attrition that we're facing in Ukraine now, and how it's a long war. How you would respond to this point that by continuing to add support we might be drawing out a war that could be ended more in the near term if we have negotiations, for example? Thank you.

Dr. Cohen OK. Who would like to take that?

Amb. Robinson I think it's a great question. I think it is important to recognize that the president and the secretary have determined that this is in our best interest to help Ukraine, and to stay with Ukraine, and to let others know that we're going to stay with Ukraine till the end. And it's our job to make sure that we fulfill that obligation made by the president and the secretary.

Ms. Lewis And I would just add that obviously the war could end today if Russia stopped its unprovoked, illegal, and brutal attack on Ukraine. And so I think it is always important to go back, in my view, to those basics as we look at this question moving forward. So I'll just leave it there.

Dr. Cohen I have my own views, but you can read them in The Atlantic. (Laughter.) Next, please.

Q Thank you. (Inaudible) – from State Department and the ISN.

I'm curious to hear about State's efforts to identify other vulnerable countries. Obviously, the invasion of Ukraine has highlighted other countries in the Eastern European neighborhood or in Asia that could be at risk for similar actions. So, is there any effort to provide additional foreign assistance to countries like Belarus, or Taiwan, or any security measures that State has taken to mitigate future events just like this?

Dr. Cohen Right. There has been a lot of talk about what are the implications of all this for Taiwan, so a very timely question.

Amb. Robinson Well, I would just say the short answer is, yes. I don't know if we're going to be providing much to Belarus anytime soon, but we're certainly – you know, I've already traveled to Moldova. I've been to a Moldova support group meeting in Berlin. We are – we are consulting very closely with Poland and the Baltics. They know we're going to be there for them, and I think that it's important for Russia to know that we're going to be there for them. And so, yes, there is a lot of thought about mostly helping countries directly in the – in the potential eye of the storm, but we are looking further afield as well.

Dr. Cohen Anybody else?

Mr. Lewis And I would just add on that, obviously, very focused on the eastern flank. I think one of the things that everyone is thinking about when it comes to Taiwan and I think a lesson learned from this war is that asymmetric works. So for a long time when it comes to Taiwan we've been looking at this question and that, you know, what does an asymmetric defense and preparing yourself look like. And I think the Ukrainians – and I would add that it is not just a matter of, you know, whether you have a Stinger or a Javelin; it's – what we've seen from the Ukrainians is they had a population that was trained, willing, and able to fight. And so I think these are the kinds of things that – and I'm sure there are many people in this room writing articles about this question. I think we need to be careful not to over-compare, but I think it is important to always look for lessons learned.

Ms. Insley And I would just add that in the two supplementals Congress was very clear in the legislation itself about the needs not only in Ukraine, but in the region among many of the neighbors that have been mentioned and others that have not been mentioned. And the best example of that is the reception and receiving of the refugees, right? We've all seen pictures of the refugees, who are a tremendous, create tremendous economic need for the receiving countries in Poland, in Moldova, and elsewhere across the region. So to the sense that the State Department's always looking at migration and other factors that change where we need to support neighbors, both these two supplementals have given us the means to do that.



Dr. Cohen           OK.  
Next, please. And if you could, speak close to the microphone.

Divi Genison        Sure. Can you – can you hear me OK?

Dr. Cohen           Yeah.

Ms. Denison        Hi. My name is Divi Genison and I'm a student at Stanford University. Right now interning at a cyber threat/intelligence-sharing firm.

                          And something that I'm wondering is, for a lot of your departments I had not personally known the type of information and actions that are taken to provide assistance to Ukraine. How does interdepartment communication sharing and uniting, like, mission, per se, happen when you guys are taking action to support Ukraine?

Ms. Insley          We have a lot of fact sheets at the State Department. (Laughter.) We have a lot of fact sheets when our principals travel. So if this is a question – this is a great question, actually. I would recommend some of those fact sheets on our website. We have a great public affairs section on our website. And that's one clear way – you know, particularly around the time of when the secretary or the president travel, often there is a good summary for the public of what we're doing in that country or that part of the world.

Amb. Robinson     But in terms of – in terms of the building, we talk all the time. We have at least two meetings a week where we're all in the same room, not specifically on this issue but we're in very, very close contact. And of course, you can't do anything without resources, so we're always talking to Dr. Rand.

Dr. Cohen           OK. Thank you.

Dorotishi Borage   Thank you so much. My name is Dorotishi Borage. I'm from King's College London. I'm a rising senior in the War Studies Department, currently at Janes.

                          So my question is that the military assistance from the United States and NATO has been incredible since the invasion, but one of the long-term challenges that were addressed was the military equipments transfer to illicit markets. So my question is: What can the United States and its allies do in the long term to ensure the safest managing of small arms, heavy weapons, and other military hardware transferred to the Ukraine since the invasion?

Dr. Cohen           That sounds like a political-military –

Ms. Lewis

That's a P-M question.

So, first of all, thank you for asking that question. I think it is a really good one. And I'm going to take a step back from Ukraine and talk about the work that we do on this across the board and then come back to your Ukraine question specifically.

One of the pieces of my bureau works specifically on making sure that not just the equipment that we provide, not just the defense items that we provide, but that we make sure that these kinds of weapons are secure around the world. So that can be anything from literally, you know, looking at a storage facility and saying, you know, you're storing a certain type of weapon there; do you know how many there are? Are you making sure they're not going out the backdoor to somebody when they shouldn't be? So they can be something very simple to much more complex kinds of issues. So that is something that is a core part of our work.

You know, when it comes to Ukraine, we are working – obviously, you know, it is a war zone, so just to be clear, there's an actual war happening inside of Ukraine and the weapons are being used on a very, very regular basis. We are continuing to work with our Ukrainian counterparts who have – and we are confident in their assurances that they are managing the weapons appropriately. And the other thing we're doing – and I know INL works on this sometimes as well – is we are working with the countries that border Ukraine to make sure that they are trained as well to understand when, you know, weapons are moving that shouldn't be, across borders, and then – there are just – so there's sort of a whole series of different ways that we can work both with the Ukrainians, with the surrounding countries using the skills and techniques that we already have to do our best to make sure that these weapons are secure.

Dr. Cohen

OK, thank you.

Next person.

Jim Hathaway

Thank you. I appreciate this being here. My name is Jim Hathaway. I represent JTEK Data Solutions. We're an IT and cybersecurity integration firm. We work with a number of partner nations and allies under the Security Assistance and Security Cooperation funding.

What we've noticed since February is that, like, with Ukraine there are several-month delays between when a LOR is submitted to where it's moving through the process and we're able to see it. My assumption is that the numbers of LORs have ballooned, you know, with their needs since the war began. And I'm wondering, has State also surged resources to address those versus like, let's say, who was in the embassy last fall? And then

separately, is there a triage effort where maybe an IT resource or request is deprecated versus bullets and health care? Thank you.

Ms. Lewis Go ahead.

Amb. Robinson No, no, go ahead.

Ms. Lewis I was just – just because I assume these are coming in through our bureau: We have both surged resources and then we have made sure to triage in the sense of getting the priority requests based on exactly what we're talking about earlier, what we're hearing from the Ukrainians they need getting that out the door. I don't have the statistics in front of me, but we are moving things, frankly, with, you know, incredible speed and working hard to make sure that we're keeping those going. Obviously, we are always having to take into account things like human rights, tech security. We have to follow the law – all of the things that are normally in place. But yes, the short answer is we've surged the resources and are continuing to triage.

Amb. Robinson I would echo that and also foot stomp the fact that we're going to take our lead from Ukraine. If they tell us there's a need for something, we're going to run that down.

Dr. Cohen Actually, let me just ask you a follow-up to that question, is, to what extent has State had to reallocate personnel? I mean, it's always a short-staffed kind of place and it's a rather small department. Have you had to reallocate people or are you just basically making everybody work harder – (laughs) – and put in longer hours, which they're willing to do?

Amb. Robinson We've reallocated within the bureau. We are moving people around all the time. If it's a priority, it's a priority and you need people to do it.

Dr. Rand And for us, we've had this spring people working every single weekend on the foreign assistance. It's nonstop, 24 hours, you know, dealing with Congress and collecting the requirements and the requests, as I described, in the working group. So this has been really a sprint that's turning into a marathon. And I would also just applaud our colleagues who are over in the Lviv area on the border with Poland because essentially everyone stayed and they're really working on the assistance activities that we're all describing. So we have colleagues in the field who are also working 24/7, you know, amidst a war zone with uncertainty, not where they were assigned and not for the job that they had signed up for. So that has been just heroic and, you know, if they're listening, to thank them.

Ms. Insley For ISN we likewise have reallocated not only personnel resources but financial resources in the millions of dollars in the same way that the ambassador mentioned within INL. Almost any money that wasn't

earmarked specifically for other countries has been redirected towards Ukraine or the region.

Mason Maduro Good afternoon. Thank you very much for taking time out of your days to speak with us. My name is Mason Maduro from the Sierra Nevada Corporation.

One of the things that this conflict so far has been characterized as is involving the heavy use of UAS systems. Some news sources have even cited a 48-hour lifespan for certain UAS systems in use by the Ukrainian forces. What has DOS done to help outfit especially local tactical units with these UAS sources? Does the lifespan I just cited for UAS systems also apply to the civil-security apparatuses of Ukraine? And what type of ISR systems are in most demand by the Ukrainian defense services at the current time?

Amb. Robinson We have already sent a number of UA systems to Ukraine. We will continue to do so as long as the need is there. I obviously can't get into specifics, but all of our – all of INL's resources go to civilian security; so just civilian security.

DOD and PM take care of the military. And there are a host of both government resources, international resources, taking care of the migration issue and the human-rights issue and the food issue. There are very few of us that are focused on police and border security and those kinds of guys. We're focused on that.

Dr. Cohen I'm afraid we've come to the end, so I think you were the last question from the audience. And I apologize to all of those who are lined up there. You can see you've stimulated them.

I'm going to ask one last question. I think we'll go in the reverse order from how we started. And I'd like each of you to just say briefly, in this extraordinarily consequential war, from your vantage point, what is your biggest concern and what is your biggest reason for optimism?

We'll start with you.

Ms. Insley From an ISN perspective, of course, my biggest concern is that Putin doesn't stop with Ukraine and that the war continues to drag on for many more months or years. Just given the horrifying humanitarian consequences, I think that's my biggest fear, and what comes next.

My greatest cause for optimism is the way that I have seen the international community, the United States government and our partners, rally around supporting the Ukrainian people. And the Ukrainian people give me great cause for optimism as well.

Ms. Lewis Do I get – can do I do two for optimism and then one for –

Dr. Cohen Sure.

Ms. Lewis I'm going to tell two quick stories on the optimism side. I think number one for me is I remember at the very beginning of the war I was saying to – talking to – I have a number of military experts who work for me. And I said, you know, is this going to be grandmothers on the streets with guns? And they said yes.

And I think one of the things that was really striking for me and gives me cause for optimism is – that I think about on a daily basis is that the Ukrainian people stood up in ways to defend their homeland that I truly believe are inspirational for all of us. And as we think about these core values – you know, our democracy, the fight against autocracy – they are literally doing that for – on a daily basis. And so I find that personally inspiring.

And the second anecdote, related to that, is we were having a very late night. We have been staying up relatively late – you know, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00 in the morning – to get these presidential drawdown authorities done within 24 hours. And my whole team often is in the office. And I pulled someone aside who'd spent – you know, this was our fifth time doing this or something. And I know he hadn't seen his family. He hadn't been home and I said, hey, are you doing OK? And he turned to me, and he said there's nothing I'd rather be doing this for. I am so proud to be sitting right here.

And this – you know, that truly, for me, was inspirational for me. So I would say both of those really ring true for me. I think in terms of the – what we need to think about is continuing to get the Ukrainians what they need, when they need it, how they need it. That is our job, and that is what I continue to focus on in terms of our greatest challenge. And I mean that in the collective. So not just State Department, not just DOD, but the world.

Dr. Cohen Yeah. Thank you.

Amb. Robinson Biggest concern would be escalation of weaponry used by Putin. His savagery knows no – has no limit. And because it's not just the Ukrainians, but we all have people in the field, that would just be tragic.

And I'm going to abuse and mention two hopes or indications of hope as well. And the first is the courage and determination of the Ukrainians. I had an opportunity to sit down with some of them in the – in the region. And at the end of our meeting, they ripped off their badges, their patches, and gave them to me and said: You can return these when you come back to a whole, free Ukraine.

And our small teams in the field. I went to visit a group of State Department colleagues and local staff working out of an airport close to the border, working closely with the 82nd Airborne to get our equipment onto trucks and into Ukraine. And it was the most inspiring thing I've seen in a long time.

Dr. Rand

So to close this afternoon, there's so many moments of the past five or six months that have been actually truly inspiring. And my colleagues have listed examples that really resonate with me. My cause for optimism has been the way in which this has moved the American people. I've recently, for family weddings and other events, been in Florida and in New Jersey. And to see the signs, we stand with Ukraine, to see church signs that say, you know, donate clothes.

And also to remember just six months before that the same generosity of spirit with which the American people received Afghan refugees. People here in our country care about right and wrong. And that has been in the worst of circumstances, amidst this brutality of this unprovoked war, really inspiring to see how my neighbors and people across the country have been moved by this. And I hope that kind of understanding of right and wrong continues.

My greatest worry is what happened in Syria, essentially, is that the world got inured to another missile that hit another hospital, that this escalatory tactics that really break all international humanitarian law and international norms and standards of warfare just become acceptable and accepted. You know, just this week, as I mentioned, there was a missile that was attacking a hospital.

And I just worry that that will become the norm, and it will stop becoming frontpage news, the way that happened in Syria when the Russian aerial attacks went on for years, frankly. And it was shocking and it was so outrageous that it was just hard as a human to understand that kind of barbarity. And I worry about that. You know, in six months we'll be talking about something else, and people will be dying.

Dr. Cohen

Well, I'm just going to say I find you folks kind of inspirational too. So I want to thank you for taking time out of busy schedules to be here, but I also want to thank you for your service to our country. (Applause.)

Dr. Rand

Thank you.

Dr. Cohen

And thank you for attending. The event is over.