

United States Senate
REPUBLICAN LEADER

April 13, 2023

Mr. Neil Bradley
Executive Vice President, Chief Policy Officer
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062

Dear Mr. Bradley:

A secure and stable Europe is vital for America's national security and economic future. So I am glad this group of business leaders is already thinking ahead about the potential for making future investments in a sovereign and peaceful Ukraine. This could represent a huge win-win for American workers and the Ukrainian people's efforts to rebuild. But we cannot put the cart before the horse. We must keep focus. The war must first be won.

To that end, the U.S. and our allies and partners need to act more decisively and more promptly to empower Ukraine with a level of military aid that can help them defeat the Russian escalation — rather than a halting and unsteady trickle of aid that merely sustains a stalemate.

I have been outspoken in my support for the Biden Administration's basic understanding that it is strongly in America's national interest to aid Ukraine. But I have been equally candid about my serious concerns. In my judgment, there have been occasions when quicker, more proactive, and more decisive decision-making by this Administration could have significantly advanced Ukraine's efforts and, by extension, our own goals and interests. I also worry that it has fallen largely to leading Congressional Republicans to clearly articulate the strong case that aiding Ukraine lies squarely within America's cold, hard, national interests.

Our support is not primarily about philanthropy or moral abstraction; it is a direct investment in our own future. On a basic economic level, the majority of the security assistance colloquially referred to as "aid to Ukraine" is actually America ramping up needed investments in our own defense manufacturing base. This money either goes to replenish and improve our stockpiles or to purchase weapons for Ukraine directly from American defense manufacturers. Either way, this security assistance is a direct investment in good-paying American manufacturing jobs right here at home and greater security for our country.

Of course, the outcome in Ukraine will also shape America's long-term outlook and interests far beyond Europe. Victory will send a powerful deterrent signal to the People's Republic of China

and other aspiring aggressors. Victory will leave NATO and our other partnerships in a more tightly-knit posture than before this conflict, which will pay crucial dividends in longer-term competitions against China, Iran, and others. And, if we play our cards right, victory will have fully awakened not only the United States but all of NATO from our collective “holiday from history” regarding defense spending and our nations’ defense-industrial bases.

These are tremendous and important opportunities — for the United States government, for our allies and partner nations, and for our private sector. The West can end this dark chapter stronger than we began it. But these opportunities will not seize themselves. We must act.

The Biden Administration and our allies must transfer the capabilities that Ukraine needs at the speed of events, not the pace of bureaucracy. We must streamline the broken bureaucracy surrounding both our own U.S. defense procurement and our Foreign Military Sales process. Allies who are trying to increase their burden-sharing and want to “buy American” should not have to wait 18 months to get weapons under contract. And most important of all, Congress needs to continue to provide robust topline increases in defense funding.

At the same time, the private sector need not wait around for Washington. American industry should be its best, innovative, forward-looking self and seize the initiative. Our defense manufacturers and other related companies should act now to expand production lines of our capabilities. Act now to strengthen supply chains. Act now to expand R&D funding.

The future best interests of our national security and the future best interests of American industry align. So let’s lean forward together and row in the same direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitch McConnell", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MITCH McCONNELL

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER