

**AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORT TO UKRAINE:  
CHARTING AN EVOLVED APPROACH IN 2024  
(AND BEYOND)**

**Submission to the  
Senate Inquiry into Australian support for Ukraine**

**May 2024**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After the large-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, Australia offered its support to Ukraine. Australia has also provided assistance including military equipment such as Bushmaster vehicles, munitions, UAVs, trucks, and armoured personnel carriers. It has also welcomed displaced Ukrainian people, and Australian citizens have been unstintingly generous to Ukrainian groups and non-government organisations raising funds for Ukrainian humanitarian and other forms of aid.

But over time, attention and interest has waned in Australia. According to the Kiel Institute statistics Australia is now only the 6<sup>th</sup> largest non-NATO contributor as a percentage of GDP.<sup>1</sup> This needs to change, particularly as 2024 shapes up as a very tough year militarily and diplomatically for Ukraine.

The Russians, who mobilised their defence industry in September 2022, now have a significant production advantage over Ukraine and the West. Combined with munitions provided by Iran and North Korea, this *Arsenal of Authoritarians* has an advantage in areas such as drones and artillery. The Russian Army has leveraged its overmatch in firepower to gain the initiative on the battlefield.

2024 will be a year where Ukraine requires as much assistance as nations can provide it. Australia, with its allies and partners, must respond positively and resolutely to this challenge. With Russia likely to launch more offensives in the northern summer, the need for military and other aid is urgent. Even with the recent U.S. Congress' approval of new American aid packages, every piece of assistance from other nations such as Australia is vital.

There are four areas where the provision of Australia aid to Ukraine can be improved. These four elements – the amount of aid, the breadth of aid, diplomatic support, and coordination of aid – should be the key elements of an Australian strategy for supporting Ukraine. These should be coordinated by an Australian strategy for Ukraine that explains the purpose of supporting Ukraine, the kinds of assistance might be provided and how this can be coordinated in a whole of government manner.

The aim of this submission is to provide a blueprint for a more effective and efficient whole of government approach to assisting Ukraine in its hour of need and ensure that all Australians can be proud of the support their nation is providing to the people of Ukraine.

Ukraine, like every other democratic nation including Australia, needs both physical and moral assistance to defend against authoritarian aggression.

Australian support to Ukraine is not just about European security. The Russia-China-Iran-North Korea axis has metastasised into a global threat against the sovereignty and prosperity of all democracies. Supporting Ukraine sends an important message of Australian resolve and commitment as we work with other democracies to confront predatory authoritarian regimes. This threat from predatory authoritarians is global and connected. Australia has an obligation to play a role, aligned with its status and wealth, in confronting this threat beyond our immediate back yard.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in this submission:

- Ukraine, like every other democratic nation including Australia, is unable to fight and win large authoritarians without foreign assistance. Modern war has an insatiable appetite for munitions (precision, air defence and artillery), drones and people.
- Nations at war also require another crucial element of foreign assistance in the form of moral assistance. Both are vital, and Australia should do more in both the physical and moral components of supporting Ukraine.
- The Australian government should publicly and consistently outline the strategic purpose for investing in the defence of Ukraine, and why it is a compelling national interest for Australia to do so. Statements about a focus on our region contained in the 2024 *National Defence Strategy* should not distract Australia from assisting with the defence of Ukraine and the greater security of Europe.
- Australia should adopt a whole of government strategy for assisting Ukraine. A coordinator should be appointed to ensure coordination among government and other Australian entities assisting Ukraine.
- The amount of aid for Ukraine provided by the Australian government should be increased and set a benchmark of at least 0.05% of GDP as the total value of annual aid to Ukraine.
- Australia should also broaden the range of areas where aid can be provided by adding more financial, reconstruction, de-mining, and humanitarian assistance, in addition to existing military support, in future aid packages.
- In addition to providing materiel from Australian sources, Australia should consider providing funding for specific Ukrainian defence manufacturing efforts in a similar way to that of Canada, which has recently announced that it will fund drone construction in Ukraine. Additionally, efforts such as that of the government of Czech Republic to procure ammunition should also be considered for Australian contributions.
- The Australian Government should mandate that equipment being disposed of by Defence be considered for donation to Ukraine. When Defence provides aid from current inventories, the Department of Finance should be mandated to provide full cost compensation to the Department of Defence.
- Australia should commit to returning its Ambassador to Ukraine, currently resident in Warsaw, in 2024. Along with the ambassador, an Australian military attaché should also be posted in Kyiv.
- The government should develop a plan to conduct of strategic outreach and influence operations to develop a better relationship with the Australian-Ukrainian community, explain Australia's approach to the broader Australian community and international partners, and to combat Russian misinformation campaigns.

## **AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE: CHARTING AN EVOLVED APPROACH IN 2024 (AND BEYOND)**

**Mick Ryan**

### **Introduction**

Ukraine, like every other democratic nation, is unable to fight and win against a large authoritarian predator without foreign assistance. Modern war has an insatiable appetite for munitions (precision, air defence and artillery), drones and people. But nations at war also require another crucial element of foreign assistance: moral assistance. Both forms of assistance are vital, and Australia can do more in both the physical and moral components of supporting Ukraine.

I have had the opportunity to visit Ukraine on multiple occasions since the beginning of the war. I have had the privilege of meeting with President Zelensky as well as many military and government ministers, officials as well as academics, journalists, and humanitarian workers. They are all grateful for the support Ukraine has received from the international community, including Australia. But they also know, and express, the need for that support to continue until Russia is defeated.

Based on my frequent trips to Ukraine, and deep research on the war as well as broader trends in modern warfare, the inquiry should be aware of the following trends in this war that might inform the trajectory of future Australian assistance:

- **War Strategy: The Need to Shift Focus from 'Defending Ukraine' to 'Defeating Russia'.** A key message from my most recent visit is that the strategy of Ukraine, and its western supporters, must change. Russia has proved to be more resilient and adaptive than anticipated in the early days of the war. In the third year of the war, Russia has momentum and has the strategic initiative. Overall, it is difficult to envision a Ukrainian pathway to victory without a change in direction with NATO and US policy in this war from helping Ukraine defend itself to helping Ukraine defeat Russia in Ukraine. This must be accompanied by increased resourcing from countries (including Australia) but also demands a clearer Ukrainian 'theory of victory'.
- **Ukrainian Strategic Communications: Failing to Cut Through.** It is clear to the Ukrainians, as well as external observers, that Ukraine is failing to gain the kind of strategic communications cut through that it was able to achieve in the first year after the large-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. The recent speech by the head of the Russian Orthodox Church also appears to have provided clarified purpose for Russia's attempt to subjugate Ukraine. Ukraine needs an evolved approach to strategic communications that explains the importance of defending Ukraine, why Western support is vital, and that Russian narratives about an inevitable Russian victory are wrong. It also needs support from its foreign supporters in this effort.
- **People Problems: Demography, Mobilisation and Frontline Shortfalls.** The average age of soldiers on the frontline is now about 40 years. This has, for Ukraine, become an 'old man's war'. Part of this is because of the demographic challenge resulting from low post-Cold War birth rates.

Russians has a significant asymmetric advantage in personnel numbers and mobilisation, and that it may provide the wherewithal for a major series of attacks in the second half of 2024. Given current levels of external assistance and shortfalls in artillery ammunition in Ukraine, it will be very difficult this year for Ukraine to preserve its army and hold all the territory it currently does.

- ***Indigenous Production: Capacity and Funding Misalignment.*** In the past two years, Ukraine has undertaken a crash program to re-establish an indigenous defence industry. These efforts have included building new factories, designing, and building new equipment (including new self-propelled artillery), the design and construction of a wide variety of drones, development of electronic warfare systems, and the production of a variety of munitions for Soviet era and western artillery and armoured vehicles. Despite this, it will be insufficient for all of Ukraine's materiel needs. While Ukraine is undertaking herculean efforts to help itself, foreign aid is still required. Countries like Australia can learn lessons from the rapid development of Ukraine's arms industry as well provide funding to increase production.
- ***New Ways of War: Drones, Electronic Warfare, and the Need for New Warfighting Ideas.*** The mass use of drones, EW, digitised command systems, and the integration of civil and military sensors across the battlespace has resulted in a situation where neither side can currently plan or execute large scale attacks, or other operations, without detection. And even if they can undertake attacks, they are unable to breakthrough defences. Like the doctrinal innovation in the First World War that overcame the paralysis of the first two years of trench warfare, Ukraine and its supporters will need to develop new approaches that allow the survivable concentration of military forces that can breakthrough tactical defences and conduct operational exploitation (destroying enemy logistics, headquarters, and reserve forces). There are many lessons for Australia in this that might inform the implementation of the recent *National Defence Strategy*, but also in the kinds of modern military capabilities Ukraine and Australia require.

2024 is a pivotal year in this war. The Russians, who mobilised their defence industry in September 2022, now have a clear production advantage and have re-established their national economy as a war economy. Combined with munitions provided by Iran and North Korea, this advantage in areas such as drones and artillery results in the Russian Army having the initiative on the battlefield until Western defence production can catch up.

Ukraine will remain largely on the defensive in 2024 as it absorbs the Russian onslaught, and reconstitutes its military, in the hope it can conduct large scale offensive operations in 2025. It faces some very hard choices in the coming months. The Ukrainian military high command, with current personnel and munitions shortfalls, will have to decide between not ceding ground and not losing critical parts of their army.

While Russia is undertaking an array of assaults in eastern and southern Ukraine, it is also likely to launch a larger scale offensive in the northern Summer. Therefore, the need for military and other aid is urgent. While the recent passing of the Ukraine aid bill in the U.S. Congress provides a vital materiel and moral boost, all nations supporting Ukraine will need to increase their assistance if Russian onslaughts this year are to be defeated, and if Ukraine is to prevail against Russia in this war.

As such, Australia should step up the current level of its assistance to Ukraine. In doing so, it should possess a strategy that explains the purpose of supporting Ukraine, what kinds of assistance might be provided and how this can be coordinated in a whole of government manner.

We can and should do more. And to coordinate this in an effective way, the Australian government needs a strategy for its support to Ukraine to replace the current ad hoc approach.

## **A Strategy for Australia's Support to Ukraine**

The Australian government should consider the development of a Ukraine Support Strategy. This strategy would bring together the various elements of support recommended in this submission. Further, it should provide the compelling strategic purpose, and national interest, in supporting the defence of Ukraine.

The strategy should be an unclassified document and shared in the public domain to ensure an appropriate level of transparency and accountability is provided across the Australian support to Ukraine. Most importantly, this strategy might enable a Team Australia approach for supporting Ukraine's fight against Russia.

A critical element of the strategy and its execution will be the conduct of strategic outreach and influence operations. These should aim to develop a better relationship with the Australian-Ukrainian community, explain Australia's approach to the broader Australian community as well as its international partners. This outreach should also aim to overcome the current view held by many that Australia has minimal interest in the Ukraine War and that it has been parsimonious and inconsistent in how it has provided assistance.

Crucially, there are four areas where the planning and provision of Australia aid to Ukraine can be improved which must be addressed in the strategy. These four elements – amount of aid, breadth of aid, diplomatic support, and coordination of aid - should be the core elements of Australia's strategy for supporting Ukraine.

## **Increasing the Quantity of Assistance**

While Australia has provided a useful amount of assistance to Ukraine since the Russian large-scale invasion in February 2022, the amount of aid provided by Australia should be increased. Assistance has been sporadically provided over the course of the war with no obvious plan or strategic rationale. Overall, the cost to Australian taxpayers of assistance to Ukraine during the nearly 800 days since 24 February 2022 is around 5 cents per Australian citizen per day. Put another way, this is less than 0.3 percent of the budget for the future submarine fleet and about 0.035% of Australia's annual GDP.

The regularly updated index of Ukraine Support undertaken by the German Kiel Institute (last update was 25 April 2024) provides data on all donors of aid to Ukraine. Australia ranks 35th on the index of 41 donors as a proportion of GDP donated, and 30th of 41 donors in total aid commitments.<sup>2</sup>

By way of comparison, Australia's security and trading partner Japan has contributed assistance that is nearly times Australia's aid (A\$7.93 billion v A\$1.07 billion); Japan's GDP is approximately 2.5 times that of Australia. This demonstrates that Japan appreciates European security matters in Asia, and that Russia is also a threat in the Pacific. Australia is still developing such an understanding. Statements in the recent Australian *National Defence Strategy* about Australia focussing almost exclusively on its region demonstrate both strategic immaturity and parsimony which reflects poorly on Australia.<sup>3</sup>

The quantity of assistance for Ukraine provided by the Australian government in financial terms should be increased. Further, the government should set a benchmark of 0.05% of GDP as the minimum total economic value of annual aid to Ukraine. While this would still be much less than that provided by countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom, it is appropriate that Australia do so as the 13th largest economy in the world.

There should also be more certainty for the recipients of this assistance. As such, the government should commit to quarterly assistance packages to Ukraine, with each package consisting of a mix of different forms of assistance.

### **Broadening the Types of Assistance Provided to Ukraine**

Australia should broaden the range of areas where aid can be provided. Including the most recent announcement of A\$100 million in assistance by the defence minister,<sup>4</sup> nearly 90 percent of Australia's aid to Ukraine since February 2022 has been military assistance, which has included equipment and vehicles, munitions as well as personnel equipment and the training provided by Australian soldiers as part of Operation Kudu. This military assistance is valuable, appreciated by the Ukrainians and is even more important at a time of uncertainty about future U.S. military assistance packages.

This military assistance could be expanded to include more training for staff officers and senior leaders, assistance to the Ukrainians in development of more sophisticated warfighting concepts to solve several battlefield mobility and offensive problems, more M113 armoured personnel carriers (vital for casualty evacuation) and Bushmasters, more artillery munitions ordered from by government from the new munitions factory in Maryborough in Queensland, more drones for Ukrainian border surveillance as well as military missions, and an array of other requirements such as medical kits and Australian made loitering munitions.

Further, when the Department of Defence identifies the need to replace older equipment, the disposal of this equipment should first be considered for transfer to Ukraine. As such, Government should mandate this as a compulsory, auditable and transparent step in the disposal of any defence equipment in Australia. Key equipment such as the army's armoured personnel carriers, Tiger attack helicopters and M1 main battle tanks will shortly be replaced and should be considered for gifting to Ukraine.



Where the Department of Defence provides military assistance from current inventories, particularly munitions and in-service items such as the Bushmaster vehicle, the Department of Finance should be mandated to provide full cost compensation to the Department of Defence for their replacement.

The Ukrainian defence industry has expanded significantly over the past two years. In my recent discussion with the Minister for Strategic Industries in Ukraine,<sup>5</sup> Minister Kamyshyn indicated that Ukrainian defence capacity currently outstrips funding. To that end, Australia should consider providing funding for specific Ukrainian defence manufacturing efforts in a similar way to that of Canada, which has recently announced that it will fund drone construction in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, efforts such as that of the government of Czech Republic to procure ammunition should also be considered for Australian contributions. These are small amounts in the 5–20-million-dollar range, which can enable rapid delivery of capability to the Ukrainian armed forces.

If Australia can provide enormous sums into the US and UK shipbuilding industries (about A\$3 billion each)<sup>7</sup> in the past 12 months, our nation can afford a few million dollars for Ukraine's factories that produce life-saving munitions and drones.

Australia should also continue to participate in important NATO events related to Ukraine. These include the annual NATO summits as well as the regular meetings convened by the U.S. Secretary of Defense in Germany to discuss the priorities for military assistance to Ukraine, and the capacity of donor nations to help.

Despite the compelling requirement for weaponry, training and munitions, there are other areas where Australian assistance could be provided and valued by the Ukrainians.

One area beyond military assistance is reconstruction assistance. The most recent assessment by the World Bank describes how the costs for Ukrainian reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine have grown to US \$411 billion. A "Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment"<sup>8</sup> has been developed which has measured the impacts of the Russian invasion in 20 different civil sectors. The highest priority requirements in the following sectors: transportation (22%), housing (17%), energy (11%), and social protection and livelihoods (10%). Over \$100 billion is urgently required to remediate physical damage to buildings and infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> Russian damage to energy distribution networks, and to significant infrastructure such as the Kakhovka Dam,<sup>10</sup> continue to increase and take a toll on Ukraine's GDP and its population.

Australia is yet to provide a contribution to the World Bank's Ukraine Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund. Reconstruction is a compelling need now; the Ukrainians can't wait until the end of the war to begin. Civil infrastructure such as hospitals, roads, bridges, power and energy networks and schools must be rebuilt and repaired. Regional countries such as Indonesia, Japan and Korea have already provided financial donations to the fund.<sup>11</sup> A financial contribution by Australia would help Ukraine now and would be appropriate.

At the same time, Australia could provide better support to Australia businesses that might wish to contribute to Ukrainian reconstruction. This could include the conduct of trade fairs in Kyiv or Lviv, and

as discussed below, a more active diplomatic presence in Ukraine to facilitate access by Australian businesses. Finally, the Australian government should send representatives to the annual international conferences for Ukrainian reconstruction, with the 2024 event to be held in Berlin in June 2024.

Humanitarian demining and removal of unexploded ordinance is a subject that Australia has broad experience in. Australian companies have expertise in mine detection and demining operations, and this would be a useful area of support for Ukraine. Australia could also contribute more to Ukraine's humanitarian needs such as demining the large parts of Ukraine contaminated with Russian mines and unexploded ordnance.

Australia might also provide direct financial assistance to keep the Ukrainian government funded as part of broader EU financial support efforts. The 2024 Ukrainian budget, published at the end of 2023, allocates approximately US\$40 billion for defence spending and US\$40 billion for other government expenditures including government salaries, infrastructure, health and social needs.<sup>12</sup> The Ukrainian government is likely to have a significant shortfall, around US\$37 billion, in its 2024 budget, requiring economic assistance from the EU and other donors to remedy. Australia should contribute to this budget shortfall, whether through direct assistance or through international agencies.

Finally, there are a range of social and educational initiatives that could be implemented. Australia could commit to take additional Ukrainian refugees over the next three years, as well as providing more scholarships for Ukrainian students to study fulltime in Australia.

## **Diplomatic and Moral Support**

Australia has been a good diplomatic supporter of Ukraine in international fora, including the United Nations. That said, more diplomatic support from Australia is required. Most importantly, Australia is yet to re-establish its embassy in Kyiv. If Australian diplomats can remain in Port Moresby during riots, and in Tel Aviv during Hamas rocket attacks, why can't they serve in Kyiv with its superb air, drone and missile defence system?

This is an issue that has been raised with me on each of my visits to Ukraine, and is a topic also raised with me on visits to Washington DC, London, and Warsaw. Nearly 70 nations have returned their ambassadors to Ukraine and reopened their embassies. The Australian position is inconsistent with its support of Ukraine and out of step with all its allies. Australia should commit to immediately returning its Ambassador to Ukraine on a permanent basis and reopening its embassy there.

Along with the ambassador and staff, a military attaché should also be posted in Kyiv. Australia has had military attaches in similar appointments in what were considered warzones in the past decade. This has included Kabul and Baghdad. The military attaché would play an important role in prioritising military assistance requests, facilitating ongoing logistic support for equipment provided by Australia, ensuring Australian Army trainers are providing the most relevant training to Ukrainians in the United Kingdom, and facilitating a steady flow of lessons on modern warfare to the Australian Defence Force leadership from Ukraine or its ongoing Australian military modernisation efforts.

At the same time, more Australian ministers need to visit Ukraine and gain a personal appreciation for the situation and the needs of the government. Nothing beats walking the ground, talking to local officials and citizens to gain an appreciation of the many needs of the Ukrainian government and society. While the current Prime Minister has visited Ukraine, and the defence minister has undertaken a quick visit to western Ukraine in April 2024, more Australian ministers should visit, and they should visit more parts of the country.

The Australian government should also initiate a program of visiting Ukrainian speakers to provide firsthand stories of the Russian invasion and its impacts on Ukrainian society. Previous visitors have had a significant impact on the audiences they spoke to.

The Australian government should also direct all government departments who run public facing information campaigns, including on social media, to provide regular statements of support for Ukraine. This could include the Department of Defence regularly highlighting the training of Ukrainian soldiers or use of Bushmasters, or other government departments expressing moral support the education of Ukrainian children despite Russian threats or support for Ukrainian power workers. More creativity is required on the part of our Canberra-based media staff across government.

Additionally, senior Australian military personnel should be encouraged to speak publicly about the lessons from Ukraine, and how these are informing the implementation of the 2024 National Defence Strategy and its accompanying Integrated Investment Plan.

### **Coordination of Australian Assistance**

A crucial element of an Australian strategy is coordination of Australia's aid to Ukraine. Australian assistance has been largely uncoordinated and left to government departments and private entities. This can be improved with the simple coordinating mechanisms in the federal government which are used to ensure whole of government approaches to achieving government defence and foreign policy objectives in an array of other foreign assistance missions.

A key element of this coordination is a single, responsible person. There is no central coordinating mechanism to ensure a robust, whole of government approach is taken to ensuring Ukrainian needs are compiled, prioritised and met where Australia can do so.

The government should appoint such a coordinator and ensure they have to appropriate authorities and resources to effectively coordinate support among federal agencies, collaborate with Ukrainian support groups across Australia and coordinate Australian aid with that of other international government and multinational agency partners.

### **Strategic Purpose – the Key Element**

A final area for an Australian strategy for Ukraine assistance that is desperately needed is for the Australian government to provide a clear statement of purpose and a consistent public narrative for its support to the government and the people of Ukraine.

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have mentioned supporting Ukraine in speeches. In his 2023 Lowy Address, Prime Minister Albanese reiterated Australia support for Ukraine when he stated that “we stand with Ukraine in support of its courageous people.”<sup>13</sup> This is useful but not a convincing vision for why Australia should support Ukraine.

As such, in 2024, the Australian government needs to outline the strategic purpose for investing in the defence of Ukraine, and the defeat of Russia.

While geography is an important determinant in many aspects of Australia’s national security, it is not the sole determinant. Cyber and information operations are global, and almost entirely free of national border constraints. So too it is with the idea that democracies are worth protecting, regardless of their form or geography. Mid-sized nations like Australia also have a vital interest in not allowing establishment of a global norm where powerful authoritarians can invade their smaller neighbours.

Authoritarians believe that they possess a historic opportunity to shift the balance of power the world. The shining light on the hill for democracies – the U.S. - is viewed as weak and weakening. Europe has eschewed large standing military institutions. This perception of weakness in democracy is provocative.<sup>14</sup> Russian success against Ukraine will not only beget more Russian aggression against other European nations (and more global economic instability) but also emboldens and informs those in our region who aspire to suppress or extinguish their democratic neighbours. China is very open about this with Taiwan,<sup>15</sup> as is North Korea with its southern neighbour.<sup>16</sup> While protecting Ukraine now may not guarantee that Russia, China, Iran and North Korea eschew their offensive doctrines, not defending Ukraine will almost certainly see this authoritarian ‘Quad’ continue to push the bounds of global security norms. This is a direct threat to Australia’s security and prosperity.

To be sure, there are many Australian citizens who believe that Ukraine is far away, and that this war is Europe’s problem to fix. That may be partially true. But Australia is a wealthy and consequential nation, and one of the world’s oldest and most stable democracies. The citizens of this nation, if the government engages in an honest discussion with them on national security issues, will understand that not taking a stand against a brutal authoritarian in Europe will provide encouragement for another of a similar vein – President Xi of China – to engage in similar behaviour in our region.

The threat from predatory authoritarians is global and connected. Australia has an obligation to play a role, aligned with its status and wealth, in confronting the global threat beyond its immediate back yard.

## Conclusion

Our nation’s support for Ukraine stands at a fork in the road. The coming year is shaping up as the most difficult yet for the people of Ukraine. The shortages in munitions, the delays in support resulting from U.S. Congressional obstructions and the continuing inability of western governments to

quickly expand their defence industries, means that the Ukrainians will fight this year with one hand tied behind their backs.

It is difficult to conceive of any Ukrainian large scale ground offensives in 2024, although Ukrainian strike operations are maturing and improving to fill some of the gap in operational capacity. 2024 will be a year where Ukraine is on the strategic defensive, and it requires as much assistance as nations can provide it. Australia, with its allies and partners, must respond positively and resolutely to this challenge.

Over the past 27 months, the sacrifices of Ukrainian soldiers and citizens have been buying time for Western democracies to rediscover the significance of democracy and the importance of defending it. This has also provided Australia with time to reconsider its national security and defence production strategies. Ukraine has provided us with the lessons to correct a generation's worth of bad strategic assumptions, and military planning, related to the threat posed by Russia, China, and other authoritarians.

The least Australia can do now is to enhance its support in what will be a very difficult and deadly year for the Ukrainian people. To do that, Australia requires a whole of government strategy for its support to Ukraine with a dedicated appointee to lead it. In confronting the challenge of connected, predatory authoritarians in the global security environment, it is in Australia's national interest to increase the amount of aid provided to Ukraine, broaden the kinds of assistance provided, and clearly explain the rationale of our nation's support for Ukraine to the Australian people.

### Author Biography

Mick Ryan spent 35 years in the Australian Army and had the honour of commanding soldiers at troop, squadron, regiment, task force and brigade levels. He has a long-standing interest in military history and strategy, advanced technologies, organizational innovation, and adaptation theory. He was inaugural President of the Defence Entrepreneurs Forum (Australia) and is a member of the Military Writers Guild. He is a keen author on the interface of military strategy, innovation, and advanced technologies, as well as how institutions can develop their intellectual edge.

In February 2022, Mick retired from the Australia Army. In the same month, his book *War Transformed* was published by USNI Books. He is an adjunct fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC, and a non-resident fellow of the Lowy Institute in Sydney. In January 2023 Mick was also appointed as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. He has travelled to Ukraine several times since the beginning of the war, most recently in April 2024, and has assisted Australian soldiers preparing to train Ukrainian recruits in the UK. He is a frequent lecturer at military war colleges in Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, and India on lessons of the Ukraine War and the future of warfare.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

<sup>2</sup> See the Kiel Institute Ukraine Support Tracker for all data used here, updated 25 April 2024. <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/>

<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *National Defence Strategy 2024*, Canberra, April 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Defence, "Australia Continues to Stand with Ukraine", Media Release, 27 April 2024. <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-04-27/australia-continues-stand-ukraine>

<sup>5</sup> I met with Minister Kamyshyn and his staff during my April 2024 visit to Kyiv.

<sup>6</sup> Kateryna Hodunova, "Canada to donate nearly \$12 million to Ukraine's drone production, Czech ammunition initiative", *The Kyiv Independent*, 26 April 2024. <https://kyivindependent.com/canada-to-donate-nearly-12-million-to-ukraines-drone-production-czech-ammunition-initiative/>

<sup>7</sup> Lewis Jackson, "Australia earmarks billions for naval infrastructure as BAE wins AUKUS submarine work", *Reuters*, 22 March 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/australia-earmarks-billions-naval-infrastructure-bae-wins-aukus-submarine-work-2024-03-21/#:~:text=Australia%20has%20already%20agreed%20to,orders%20could%20jeopardize%20the%20deal>

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *Ukraine: Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, 23 March 2023. <https://ukraine.un.org/en/224376-ukraine-rapid-damage-and-needs-assessment>

<sup>9</sup> Mark Green, "Ukraine Reconstruction Costs 'Hopefully' to Rise", *Wilson Center*, 27 June 2023. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraine-reconstruction-costs-hopefully-rise>

<sup>10</sup> The dam was blown up by the Russians in June 2023, resulting in widespread flooding and a humanitarian disaster in southern Ukraine. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/unleashing-chaos-nova-kakhovka-dam-destruction-threatens-global-food-security>

<sup>11</sup> See the current list of donors to this fund is available at the World Bank site here:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ukraine/brief/world-bank-emergency-financing-package-for-ukraine>

<sup>12</sup> Giovanni Coi and Lucia Mackenzie, "Ukraine's funding gap — by the numbers", *Politico*, 25 January 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-funding-budget-defense-european-union/>

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Albanese, Australia in the world - 2023 Lowy Lecture, 19 December 2023. <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-world-2023-lowy-lecture>

<sup>14</sup> Mick Ryan, "Between Taiwan and China, Israel and Gaza and Russia and Ukraine, the world is trending towards greater instability in the coming months", *ABC Australia*, 16 January 2024. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-16/taiwan-israel-gaza-ukraine-russia-2024-not-a-normal-year/103321734>

<sup>15</sup> Yvette Tan, "Taiwan and China will 'surely be reunified' says Xi in New Year's Eve address", *BBC News*, 1 January 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-67855477>

<sup>16</sup> Gabriela Bernal, "Open and shut: North Korea sends a message with its embassy network" *The Lowy Institute*, 29 January 2024. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/open-shut-north-korea-sends-message-its-embassy-network>