

## **An Open Letter to the Leaders of Democratic Governments of the World**

The purpose of this letter is to urge, in the strongest possible sense, immediate action to provide the Ukrainian Armed Forces with a viable mid- and high-altitude air defense capability. They need immediate reconstitution of their capability to defend themselves against air attacks from the Russian Air Force.

We have seen Russia's wanton destruction of the largest cities in Ukraine by a combination of their Air Force, long range precision missiles fired from Russia and Belarus, and artillery fires. We cannot stand idly by and wish them well as Russia prosecutes an unrestricted campaign of destruction on the Ukrainian government, its infrastructure, and its people. Russia's actions have created vast human death and suffering and started a human wave of refugees moving to central Europe. We have witnessed the Russian way of war in Grozny, Homs, and Aleppo. We cannot allow this craven destruction to continue.

NATO's recent announcement that the Alliance would not provide a "no fly zone" to Ukraine was devastating to the Ukrainian government and people's morale and gave Putin yet another edge against the defenders. We—together with Ukraine's defenders—ought not let Russia have the freedom to dominate uncontested airspace while delivering devastation of Ukraine's cities.

The international community has a moral duty and humanitarian obligation to limit the infliction of such suffering on noncombatants and public infrastructure. We can and should provide replacement materiel to reconstitute their previous capacity to effectively defend Ukraine's sovereign airspace. Some nations have air defense systems similar those which were previously destroyed in the opening days of the Russian campaign. Those nations could transfer existing stocks of Soviet-era and Russian-produced weapon systems to include radars. Other nations can purchase them on the international market and expedite their delivery to Ukraine.

General Breedlove, the former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, recently provided the best rationale for taking this action. In those published articles and during televised appearances he stated:

"Western nations seek to equip and resupply the Ukrainian forces who fight alone. Ukrainians are holding their own on the ground; it's air assistance they need most. America is finally providing Stinger surface-to-air missiles; NATO has been for some time, but they're made for low-altitude air defense. Get them systems giving them medium- and high-altitude defense capabilities. Ukraine's air defenses are stretched thin."

Our intention is to compel urgent action from national capitals across a broad spectrum. The undersigned officers respectfully request our elected leaders take decisive action to help the Ukrainians defend their sovereignty against Russian air assaults.

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