

INTERIM REPORT #1

Immediate Improvements Needed in Rapidly Implementing “Non-Lethal” US Military Assistance for Defense of Ukraine

BACKGROUND

A joint invite from the Ukrainian National Security Advisor and Senior member of their Parliament for help in assessing their situation was given to Gen. (ret.) Wesley K. Clark, (former NATO Commander), and Dr. Phillip A. Karber, (former Strategy Advisor to Secretary of Defense Weinberger). With travel costs covered by the non-profit Potomac Foundation (an organization with a long history of supporting East European and former Soviet Republic training for NATO membership), Clark and Karber traveled to Ukraine to undertake a joint militarily oriented, non-public assessment, and do so on a non-partisan basis.

Clark and Karber participated in 35 meeting with senior officials, military commanders and various politicians; with Karber visiting front line formations on the Northern, Eastern and Southern Fronts.

SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION

Ukraine is facing serious military threats on a 300 degree arc from the territories of Belorussia, Russia, occupied Crimea, the Black Sea and Transneister. The 1,000 mile long front is three times the frontier Ukraine's modest Armed Forces are designed to handle. Moreover, decade-long corruption has left their Airforce ill equipped, vulnerable and unready for modern air combat. Russian occupation of Crimea has virtually destroyed Ukraine's coastal defense from the south. Threats from Transneister as well as Belarus' hosting of Russian forces on its territory further divert Ukrainian political attention and disperse badly needed forces to the Southwest and Northwest.

Over the last week, while Clark and Karber were visiting, they were able to witness and confirm that the Ukrainian Army was nearing completion of the largest peacetime mobilization of any country in Western or Central Europe since the end of World War II. As their forces fall into position and are able to tactically prepare defensive positions on the terrain, their ability to both slow down a potential invasion and inflict serious casualties on an aggressor will likewise have an increasing deterrent value as well.

To maximize their defense potential, Ukraine will need to acquire additional off-the-shelf aircraft, air defenses and anti-armor systems from countries with compatible equipment – specifically NATO members who have common equipment such as Mig-29, T-72 Tanks and Man Portable Air Defense and Anti-Tank weapons.

However, the most important assistance currently needed to make the existing Ukrainian force as defensible as possible in the current crisis (between now and the elections of 25 May) is non-lethal equipment from the US. The most critical of this non-lethal equipment is:

- **American Body Armor** capable of stopping sniper rounds – only 1 in 100 troops in the Ukrainian Army are equipped with any type of Body Armor, based on evidence that Russian snipers and agents are being told to focus on shooting officers (similar to the types of long-range assassination evidenced during Maidan by Russian trained snipers). What little Ukrainian body armor available, is only designed for smaller caliber lower velocity projectiles. Given that Russian troops are universally equipped with high-quality body armor, it is both militarily untenable and political ridiculous to deny symmetrical protection to the victim of aggression.
- **Night Vision Devices** are a critical need in the Ukrainian Army. Now that they are in position, their key facilities, bridges and front lines are under continuing threat of infiltration. There is neither the time nor do they have the budget to quickly outfit critical units with the proper Night Vision Devices. Again, this is a technology routinely available to the Russian Army, and if it is provocative, then that provocation needs to be answered with symmetrical response.
- **Communications Equipment**, given the extraordinarily broad front that the Ukrainian Army is operating on, covering wide areas with no reserve and no air support to fill in the gaps, along with the high prospect that their military analog communications are compromised and civilian telecom will likely be taken down in the initial hours of conflict, they need immediate delivery of Satellite Radios. Longer-term, it is unconscionable that the seven Ukrainian Brigades that served with distinction alongside US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan (and their 95th Air Mobile Brigade had already been received on an experimental basis the Harris distributed digital secure communications) should not be continued to be modernized as a routine effort to all Ukrainian Brigades that served with the US.
- **Aviation Fuel** -- Ukraine's weak Air Force needs to be flying as much as possible – to detect intruders, to cover the ground forces in their forward deployment and to provide their pilots with normal levels of training. The US ban on Aviation Fuel as a “Force Multiplier” is blatantly ridiculous at a time that Russian aircraft and UAV are routinely flying the Ukrainian border within minutes of their targets. Again, to respond to aggressive provocation

is not “provocative” – indeed, unanswered it incentives continued provocation.

BOTTOM LINE

Independent of American high-level policy -- implementation of US non-lethal military aid is seriously flawed and needs immediate correction:

1). A confusing “Force Multiplier” criteria applying a ban on support equipment that is not lethal (neither a weapon nor ammunition) needs to be dropped immediately. This “Force Multiplier” criterion is as illogical and inconsistent as its ban is harmful to getting some of the most valuable technology and support equipment that the Ukrainian military needs most.

The “Force Multiplier” criteria needs to be replaced with a clear and unambiguous distinction: if Lethal Weapons and Ammunition stay banned, everything “non-Lethal” should be allowed – with priority on Body Armor, Night Vision, Communications and Aviation Fuel.

2). Delivery of US non-lethal military aid is harmed by a bureaucracy that is not operating with a sense of urgency or implementing leadership. It must be replaced with an attitude that puts a priority on helping Ukraine ahead of a narrow preoccupation with administrative procedure and institutional budgets.

The Administration needs to immediately appoint a high-level official with military experience and a “get it done” attitude – armed with Presidential Authority to cut across the bureaucracy and insure prioritization and timely delivery of all non-lethal military assistance it is possible for the US to provide to Ukraine.

3). The current Ukrainian leadership has limited professional military and national security knowledge – they have an interim coalition government whose leaders have virtually no professional experience, and the rapid turnover in military leaders has created a major problem in their senior staff as well. They know they have this problem, and that was one of the reasons that they requested the assistance of Clark and Karber.

As the crisis deepens, Ukraine needs seasoned professional American military and national security advice to assist them in making prudent and wise decisions – if this cannot be provided by active military and civilian professionals – plans should be made to bring in retired senior people to help. If the Russians can publicly announce that the fugitive Ukrainian previous President is an Official Advisor to Putin, it can hardly be provocative to provide low-ley non-uniformed advice and professional situation awareness training.

NOTE: This interim report is focused on fixing Non-Lethal Aid. We will offer subsequent thoughts on the need to get ready for a Lethal Aid contingency.

APPENDIX: Photos from the Front

(taken during Dr. Karber's visiting troops with his comments added 15 April)

Ukraine military helicopters deadlined due to limited availability of aviation fuel and lack of spare parts.



Only 1 in 100 Ukrainian soldiers have armored vests. Despite concern that Russian snipers are targeting the officers, many of them are giving their personal armored vests to female soldiers. Dr. Karber at the front line 300 yards from Russian positions with female trooper wearing one of the rare armored vests.



Ukrainian troops guarding bridge on the Northern Front. Near here Russian infiltrators were found to be scouting positions and bridges at night. Lack of Night Vision Devices is a major vulnerability for troops guarding forward positions.



As of last week, US promised Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) had not reached the Ukrainian troops at the Front. A territorial Army not designed for deployment far from their home bases, they depend on local farmers supplying food in pony carts and civilian convoys from the cities dropping off boxes of groceries to the troops in the field.



As of last week, US promised Sleeping Bags had not arrived in Ukraine. Troops in the rain and mud at the front build fires to keep themselves warm and dry their wet blankets. But the fires give away their positions to Russian snipers and infiltrators.



As of last week, US promised Diesel Fuel and not arrived at the front. Limited Ukrainian stocks of Diesel Fuel limit the amount of field training and maneuverability of the armored and mechanized forces — such as this tank guarding the Eastern approaches to Kiev.



Ukrainian forces served in support of US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, including elements of seven Brigades — 24th, 30th, 72nd, and 93rd Mechanized Brigades and the 20th, 25th and 95th Airmobile Brigades. Last year the US supplied the 95th Brigade with US command and digital communication equipment and the Ukrainians were hoping to outfit the other units that had served with the US. However, under current “Force Multiplier” criteria, this type non-lethal aid would now be prohibited – in essence punishing the victim.



Ukrainian troops holding the causeway to Crimea are dug in, but in these exposed positions they are very vulnerable to Russian snipers and artillery fire without Armored Vests.



The Ukrainian Air Force is massively outnumbered and forward troops are highly vulnerability to air strikes due to limited supply of Air Defense missiles.



The Ukrainian Army is nearing completion of the largest peacetime mobilization and crisis deployment of any country in Western or Central Europe since the end of World War II. Commanders at the Front believe they can now hold for up to two weeks against a determined Russian attack. However, due to slow delivery and US “Force Multiplier” restrictions on Non-lethal Aid their defenses are not as strong as they could be and poor implementation of American assistance is thus serving as a “Force Divisor” on Ukrainian defense potential.

