American Weapons in Ukraine Funneled to Arms Traffickers, Criminals

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The Pentagon inspector general found the arms Washington sent to Kiev did not undergo the required inspections. A report from the inspector general found weapons the US sent to Ukraine in the hands of criminals and on the black market.

The Arms Control Act requires the White House to establish an inspection system for weapons the US sells or gifts to third countries. The law mandates the monitoring continues to the end-use of the weapon. In Ukraine, the embassy in Kiev has been assigned responsibility for monitoring the weapons transfers.

The Department of Defense inspector general report on American weapons transfers to Ukraine from February to September of last year found that legally required monitoring was not taking place.

> "The DoD is unable to conduct [End Use Monitoring] in Ukraine because completing [End Use Monitoring] in accordance with DoD policy requires in-person access to the defense equipment provided," it said. "Intelligence methods provide some accountability for observable platforms, such as missiles and helicopters, but smaller items, such as night vision devices, have limited accountability."

> "The DoD OIG found deficiencies in the DoD's transfer of military equipment to the Government of Ukraine requiring [End Use Monitoring], including Javelin missiles, Javelin Command Launch Units, and night vision devices; and in Ukraine's security and accountability of US.-provided military equipment requiring [End Use Monitoring]," the report added.

In a section of the report that is heavily redacted, the inspector general listed some cases of

American weapons not making it to their intended recipient. The cases that remained unredacted in the report include: a Moscow-influenced criminal organization that procured grande launchers and machine guns, a pro-Kev militia that tried to sell dozens of rifles on the black market, and a group of arms traffickers who were selling weapons and ammunition stolen from the front lines.

In response to questions about the report, a State Department spokesperson admitted that American weapons were being used for illicit purposes in Ukraine. Despite these issues, the spokesperson emphasized that Washington felt the weapons transfers were too important.

> "The US government remains keenly aware of the risk of possible illicit diversion and is proactively taking steps to mitigate this risk in close cooperation with the government of Ukraine." The spokesperson continued, "We are realistic that we are sending weapons to help Ukraine defend itself in an active conflict, and there is a risk these weapons could be captured if territory changes hands – which happens in any war."

Earlier this month, the White House came out against a provision in the Pentagon funding bill that would create a special inspector general for the Ukraine aid. The inspector general for the Afghan War, **John Sopko**, has warned that without sufficient oversight of the weapons and money sent to Kiev, Ukraine will face many of the same problems as the Afghan government.

The demand to create an office to oversee the more than $100 billion in aid Congress has authorized sending to Ukraine has been attacked as Russian propaganda. **Rep. Adam Smith** (D-WA), the head of the House Armed Services Committee, said in December that calls for more oversight of the billions of dollars the US is spending on Ukraine are "part of Russian propaganda."

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