



US begins spending \$61bn Ukraine war chest – Politico

Description

WORLD : The Pentagon is preparing to announce a new batch of weapons and ammunition for Kiev worth up to \$6 billion, anonymous officials have told Politico.

Among the items featured in the package are Patriot and NASAMS air defense systems, artillery shells, HIMARS rockets, air-to-air missiles, drones, and counter-drone weapons, the sources said.

Washington has already rushed \$1 billion worth of ammunition to Kiev, drawn down from US military stocks, since President Joe Biden signed a bill providing for \$61 billion in aid to the Ukrainian government.

The pending \$6 billion batch will not come out of the Pentagon's stockpile, however, as it is funded through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), through which the Pentagon issues contracts to the US military industry to build new equipment for Kiev.

This means the goods "likely won't arrive in Ukraine for several years," Politico noted.

The \$61 billion aid package, of which the latest consignment is part, was approved earlier this week after months of languishing in Congress. The Republicans, who held it up in the House of Representatives, signed off on it without securing any significant changes from the Democrats.

Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky had blamed the suspension of American aid for a series of battlefield setbacks that his army has experienced since last year. Most Western media outlets have predicted a turnaround in Ukrainian fortunes now that the new US funding has been approved.

An analysis published by the Economist on Thursday went so far as to suggest that the bill may have prevented a Russian offensive this summer, which Moscow "might have hoped" to use to "force a Ukrainian surrender on humiliating terms."

Meanwhile, the Kremlin has shrugged off the new US aid bill as unable to change the battlefield dynamics, which are firmly in Russia's favor. According to President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, the only thing the new US funding will do is get more Ukrainians killed.

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