

ARMoured VEHICLES
EASTERN EUROPE

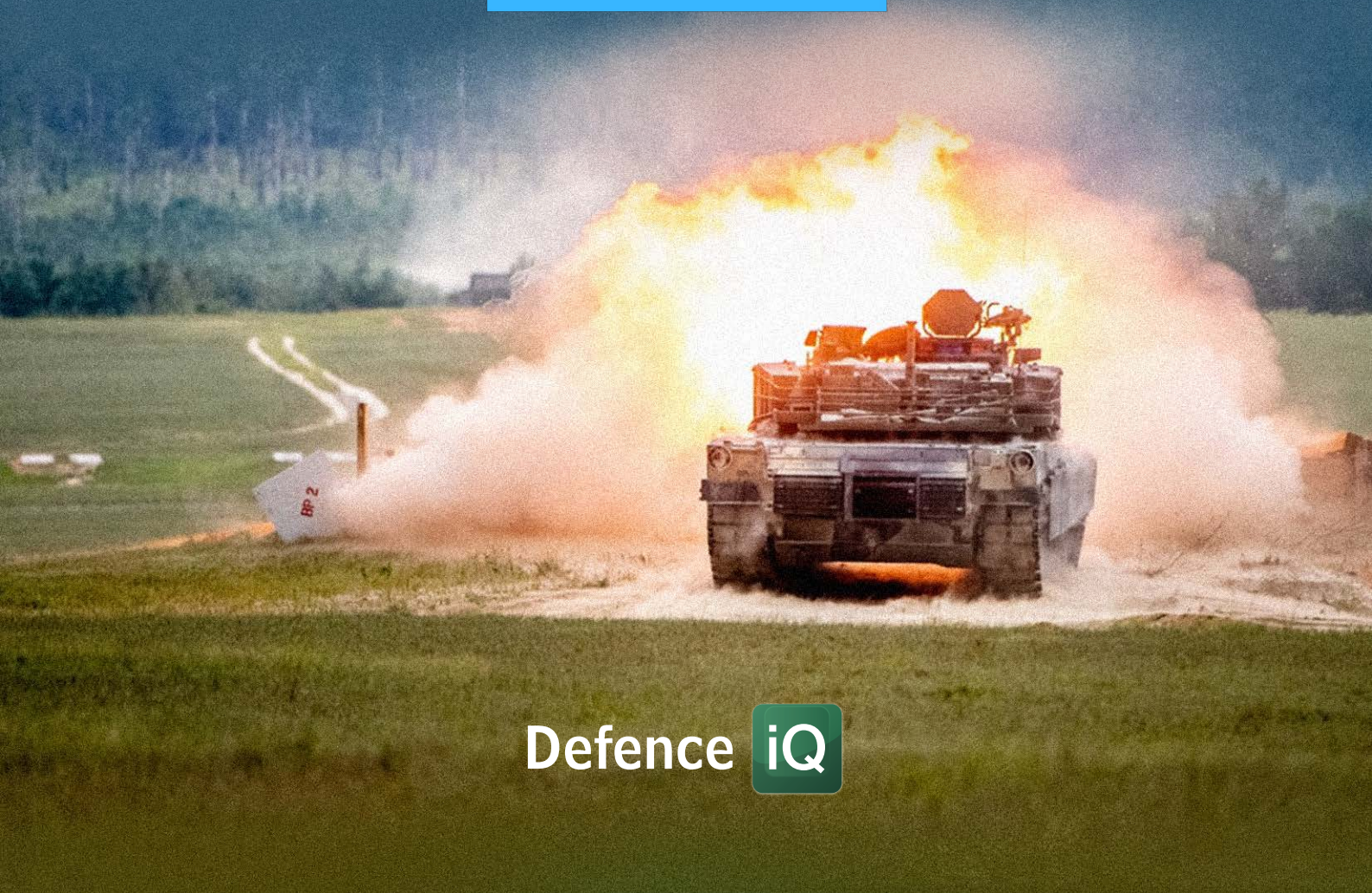


WHY EASTERN EUROPE'S MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IS AND WILL BE VITAL FOR UKRAINE?

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While the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine by Russia is ongoing, the Armed Forces of Ukraine desperately need accelerated rearmament and replacement of losses in military equipment, especially artillery, tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. Before February 24, 2022, Ukraine was equipped mainly with Soviet-type vehicles and ammunition of Soviet calibres. Ukraine had problems producing its machinery and munition even before the full-scale invasion of 2022. After the massive bombardment by Russian forces, things got even worse.

The main challenge is the shortage of ammunition. The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine has two options out of this state of affairs: to purchase ammunition for Soviet-era equipment from Eastern European countries or to fully rearm with NATO-type equipment, which also requires ammunition purchases. Some speakers argued that Ukraine should abandon the acquiring post-Soviet weapons and equipment and concentrate exclusively on purchasing NATO-standard weapons. But such ideas are inconsiderate and misguided. If Ukraine does so, it will find itself in a situation where it is highly dependent on a limited number of partners. A country at war with Russia cannot rely on supplies from a few.

After all, if one rearms with NATO equipment and is blocked from procuring additional ammunition for it (for whichever reason), it will be no less frustrating. And such a refusal, for instance, in the event of a threat of a nuclear strike by Russia, is quite probable, although very undesirable. Ukraine's top military and political leadership is well aware of this; and will try to differentiate arms supplies. In other words, even with significant supplying of Western equipment, post-Soviet equipment will still be in demand.

Eastern European countries still have sufficient capacity to produce post-Soviet military equipment. Their troops have little need for it, as they are

actively re-equipping with equipment of NATO standard, primarily with American equipment. Moreover, the U.S. does not limit itself in supplying the latest equipment to Eastern European countries, as it does with Ukraine. Under such circumstances, Ukraine can become the primary customer of such enterprises.

Most Eastern European countries joined NATO about 20 years ago but have still not abandoned Soviet weapons and equipment. No surprise, since Russia in current warfare sometimes uses tanks that are more than 50 years old. Military equipment is prohibitively expensive; one cannot

give it up in a few years just because a country has joined an alliance with different standards. The same goes for Ukraine; the army will not fully transition into NATO-standard equipment in less than ten years.

Lately, it has also become clear that the U.S. is not planning to deliver its Abrams tanks to Ukraine. Yes, they furnished more than 200 old M113 armoured personnel carriers, but this is insufficient. The fact is that the Americans are willing to allocate funds for Ukraine to purchase post-Soviet tanks from Eastern European countries, such as Polish T-72s and their upgraded versions.



When transferring NATO-standard equipment to Ukraine, military experts often focus first on the need to train the Ukrainian military. This is correct but is not the most significant challenge with Western equipment. The thing is that effective use and maintenance of equipment such as tanks or armoured fighting vehicles requires proper infrastructure for their technical support and maintenance. Most equipment, even during wartime, is taken out of service not by enemy action but by technical malfunctions, especially if we talk about second-hand equipment. Ukraine is currently facing problems with the maintenance of post-Soviet equipment. Things are even more challenging with the Western equipment. Not just due to lack of infrastructure but also insufficient practical experience of technicians. It's one thing to service equipment for decades, but quite another to take a crash course in a month. Post-Soviet equipment is much easier for Ukrainians to handle than most people think.

Ukraine inherited quite a few enterprises of the military-industrial complex, some privatized, but now many are destroyed, partially damaged or seized. Of course, it is not yet feasible to restore Ukraine's military-industrial complex and set up weapons and equipment production there, given that a new missile strike from Russia is possible at any moment. Therefore, Ukraine has a certain number of specialists who are out of work that can produce post-Soviet equipment in Eastern European countries.

There are also ideas of establishing joint ventures between Ukraine and

Eastern European countries. Such rumours were primarily about the possibility of implementing Ukrainian-Polish production of military equipment and ammunition. Such ideas take place, given the availability in Ukraine of relevant specialists and sufficient resources (including international assistance) to implement such projects. Essentially, Ukraine may even consider temporarily transferring the remaining military-industrial complex enterprises to the territory of Eastern European countries that are friendly to Ukraine to save them from Russian bombardment. Generally, joint ventures for the production of military equipment are the best option for industries incapable of establishing production cycles alone. This strategy applies to any Eastern European country. Eastern Europe would benefit from making joint ventures with Ukraine.

Ukraine maintains a brigade structure for its armed forces. By 2022, Ukraine had about 30 land brigades, with 30 more territorial defence brigades created throughout the year. Of course, we will not operate on exact figures, but we do not need them for the actual situation. For example, consider the need for tanks. An ordinary mechanised brigade must have at least one tank battalion. Roughly speaking, a tank battalion is approximately 30 vehicles - tanks.

Using simple math, we can calculate that Ukraine needs at least 1,800 tanks to fill all available brigades. We are not even mentioning tank brigades, which have significantly more tanks than mechanized brigades. Before the war, the Ukrainian Armed Forces had around 600 functioning tanks, a significant

portion lost since the war. Sure, certain military publications, while comparing military capabilities of different countries, took into account the figure of over 2,000 Ukrainian tanks, but this was outdated public information, which included "museum pieces".

The picture is so disastrous that the territorial defence brigades have been formed as infantry brigades, i.e. without heavy equipment and artillery. At the same time, the military leadership plans to transform these light brigades into heavy ones as soon as the appropriate equipment is available in adequate quantities. These facts indicate that Ukraine desperately needs military equipment that cannot be delivered rapidly, even if Ukraine has the necessary funds. European countries cannot give up all their weapons and equipment, which are already very scarce.

This situation means that Ukraine must cooperate with Eastern European countries in producing and repairing military equipment for its needs. But does it have the funds? First, in 2014-2015 Ukraine has already shown how it can dramatically increase defence spending and hold out. And second, Europe and the United States are not sparing to allocate significant funds to support Ukraine; they are sparing to transfer ready-made military equipment to Ukraine. The U.S. not only dedicated significant amounts of money to Ukraine to procure weapons, but it also donated its stocks. Over time, this tendency will only intensify, all the more so because the U.S. legislative branch seems to be determined to support Ukraine and has already shown that it is willing to allocate considerable sums for this purpose. Nowadays, money is easier to get than combat-ready military equipment.

Consequently, the further the war continues, the more the shift from supplying used equipment to producing new equipment for the needs of the Ukrainian army will occur, and the more Ukraine will need repair services for its military equipment. Even if the war halts, Russia will not stop being a threat, and Ukraine will not stop strengthening its army. Therefore, Ukraine should take every opportunity to cooperate closely with its closest neighbours and partners. Ukraine will probably continue to receive weapons from the U.S., but only by combining NATO-standard equipment with cooperation with friendly post-Soviet armies will it succeed in the long term.



ARMoured VEHICLES

EASTERN EUROPE

27-28 SEPTEMBER 2022
WARSAW, POLAND

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS INCLUDE



**General Sir
Adrian Bradshaw,
KCB, OBE, DL**
DSACEUR
(Mar 2014 -
Mar 2017)



**Admiral Emil
Eftimov**
Chief of Defence
**Bulgarian Armed
Forces**



Sandy Long
Acting Deputy
Assistant
Secretary
**U.S. Army for
Defense Exports
& Cooperation**



Jozef Zekucia
Director General,
Modernization
Department
(National
Armaments
Director)
**Ministry of
Defence of the
Slovak Republic**



Miha Matek
Head of
Armament Project
Management
Division
**Slovenian Ministry
of Defence**



**Lieutenant
General
Alexander
Sollfrank**
Commander
**NATO Joint
Support and
Enabling
Command**



**Lieutenant
General Gaetano
ZAUNER**
Deputy Chief
of Staff
Italian Army



**Major General
Mihail Dimitrov
Popov**
Commander
**Bulgarian Land
Forces**



**Major General
Veiko-Vello Palm**
Deputy
Commander
**Estonian Defence
Forces**



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Commander,
Multinational
Division South
East,
**Romanian Armed
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**Major General
Dariusz
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Deputy
Commander
**NATO Joint
Support and
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Norbert Wagner
Commander
**NATO Joint Force
Training Centre**



**Major General
Kevin M. Copsey**
Chief of Staff
**NATO Allied Rapid
Reaction Corps**



Mārtiņš Paškēvičs
Under Secretary
of State for
Logistics
**Latvian Ministry
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José R. Pérez
Pérez**
Director of
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Army Training
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