

Ukraine cost savings

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The White House has announced that the Pentagon will rush about \$300 million in weapons to Ukraine after finding some cost savings in its contracts. This is even though the military remains deeply overdrawn and needs at least \$10 billion to replenish all the weapons it has pulled from its stocks to help Kyiv in its desperate fight against Russia.

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The Biden administration announced another package of military aid to Ukraine worth up to \$300 million on Tuesday after months of warning there was no money left, with officials saying the new ...

Ukrainian soldiers from The 56th Separate Motorized Infantry Mariupol Brigade prepare to fire a multiple launch rocket system based on a pickup truck towards Russian positions at the front line, near Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, March 5, 2024. Efrem Lukatsky/AP hide caption

WASHINGTON -- The Pentagon will rush about \$300 million in weapons to Ukraine after finding some cost savings in its contracts, even though the military remains deeply overdrawn and needs at least \$10 billion to replenish all the weapons it has pulled from its stocks to help Kyiv in its desperate fight against Russia, the White House announced Tuesday.

It's the Pentagon's first announced security package for Ukraine since December, when it acknowledged it was out of replenishment funds. It wasn't until recent days that officials publicly acknowledged they weren't just out of money to buy replacement weapons, they are \$10 billion overdrawn.

The announcement comes as Ukraine is running dangerously low on munitions and efforts to get fresh funds for weapons have stalled in the House because of Republican opposition. U.S. officials have insisted for months that the United States wouldn't be able to resume weapons deliveries until Congress provided the additional replenishment funds, which are part of the stalled supplemental spending bill.

The replenishment funds have allowed the Pentagon to pull existing munitions, air defense systems and other weapons from its reserve inventories under presidential drawdown authority, or PDA, to send to Ukraine and then sign contracts to order replacements, which are needed to maintain U.S. military readiness.

The Pentagon also has had a separate Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, or USAI, which has allowed it to

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fund longer-term contracts with industry to produce new weapons for Ukraine.

Senior defense officials who briefed reporters said the Pentagon was able to get cost savings in some of those longer-term contracts of roughly \$300 million and, given the battlefield situation, decided to use those savings to send more weapons. The officials said the cost savings basically offset the new package and keep the replenishment spending underwater at \$10 billion.

One of the officials said the package represented a "one time shot" -- unless Congress passes the supplemental spending bill, which includes roughly \$60 billion in military aid for Ukraine, or more cost savings are found. It is expected to include anti-aircraft missiles, artillery rounds and armor systems, the official said.

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