

Address by Andriy Yermak to the participants of the USA – Ukraine Defense Industrial Base Conference

Dear Secretary Raimondo, Secretary Austin, Special Representative Pritzker, Speaker Stefanchuk, Minister Umerov, Minister Kamyshin!

Dear colleagues and friends!

Let me thank you for a start. Firstly, for the assistance that allowed Ukraine to withstand the aggressor, to stop the horde. Secondly, for the aid that helped us push it back. And – Ukrainians sincerely believe in this – it will help to drive the Russians out of our land. We have already liberated 50% of the territories they seized during the full-scale invasion. And we will not stop until we will completely de-occupy all our territories in the internationally recognized borders.

We thank you for the "Saint" Javelins that set ablaze Russian tank columns on the approaches to Kyiv. For the "Patriots" that created a reliable shield over Ukrainian cities against Russian missiles.

They are able to hit anything, including Kinzhals, that the Kremlin dubbed a hypersonic wonder weapon. An effective demonstration of this capability took place in June, when a delegation of African state leaders was in Kyiv. That day, they downed all six of those missiles. And since then, the toll has risen to 25.

I know there are representatives of Raytheon among us. Say thanks to your employees from Ukraine. Thank all of them. Because now our children are safer.

But I also thank each of the manufacturers, who help us defend our freedom. BAE Systems, Boeing, General Dynamics, Honeywell, Lockheed Martin, Rheinmetall, SAAB. And all those whom I did not call. Sorry for that. We do remember your names. And Ukrainian people praise you. You literally save thousands of lives.

Thanks for the ammunition. Thanks for the triple-seven howitzers. Our soldiers tenderly call them "three axes". For the HIMARS systems. Ukrainians fell in love with them from the first shots at the strategically important Antonivka Bridge in Kherson. And they love them even more with each ATACMS salvo.

In our social media, people are arguing whether these names are legit for children. Sure, Oshkosh or Bradley are considered acceptable. However, the legendary M2 was not as fortunate. "Ma Deuce" is a name that suits a grandmother rather than a grandson. Still, they do an excellent job. As always. Sure, meat assaults participants cannot confirm it.

Unfortunately, I can't mention every weapon and piece of equipment that help us in the war against Russian tyranny. But I assure you: Ukrainian defense forces are making good use of them.

At the same time, I need to point out that having such an aggressive neighbor like Russia, Ukraine cannot and will not entirely depend on foreign providers of military aid. We must take care of our own defense capability. Moreover, we have our own weapons to be proud of.

The Ukrainian defense industry today is sustained by young people. They are not afraid of the new. Quite often, they make prototypes right in their garages. And then they successfully scale up production.

Recently, I met with students who develop cutting-edge weapons for the defense of our state. Their innovations successfully pass harsh tests by real combat. Our country provides for new possibilities that have not been calculated yet. Collaboration will make us all stronger. Autocracies have already united. They are integrating their military industries. It's time for the free world to do the same. Time to join our talents and efforts.

This conference was agreed upon by President Biden and President Zelenskyy. And I believe, it will be a starting point of joint production of weapons as they conceived.

Ukraine needs the localization of modern weapons production to fight successfully. Europe needs to strengthen its capabilities to deter the aggressor. The United States needs greater industrial power to remain the beacon of global democracy.

We came here with a very specific goal – to establish cooperation. First of all, I'm talking about ammunition, air defense systems, and long-range missiles. Back home, they say that the good should have strong fists. However, to stop the new axis of evil, fists alone are not enough.

Recently, President Zelenskyy and I traveled to Zaporizhzhia region. We met with the servicemen there. The situation on the eastern front is challenging. The aggressor is attempting to amass its forces. However, our soldiers are sure they can break their plans. Do you know why? I'll tell you what one of the soldiers told me: Nothing builds confidence like live ammo. So, let's provide them together. For the sake of Ukraine and the entire free world.

Thank you for your attention.