

Ukraine Military Aid Suspension at the Heart of Impeachment



GLEB GARANICH / REUTERS

Elias Yousif, Security Assistance Monitor, January 2020

What's At Issue

In the summer of 2019, the Trump administration suspended nearly \$400M in security aid to Ukraine, a fateful decision that sparked the third impeachment in American history.

Whether the President's motivations behind the suspension violated his oath of office is at the center of the ongoing impeachment trial, and has catalyzed new interest into exactly what aid was withheld in the context of Kyiv's broader assistance package.

Overview of U.S. Support to Ukraine

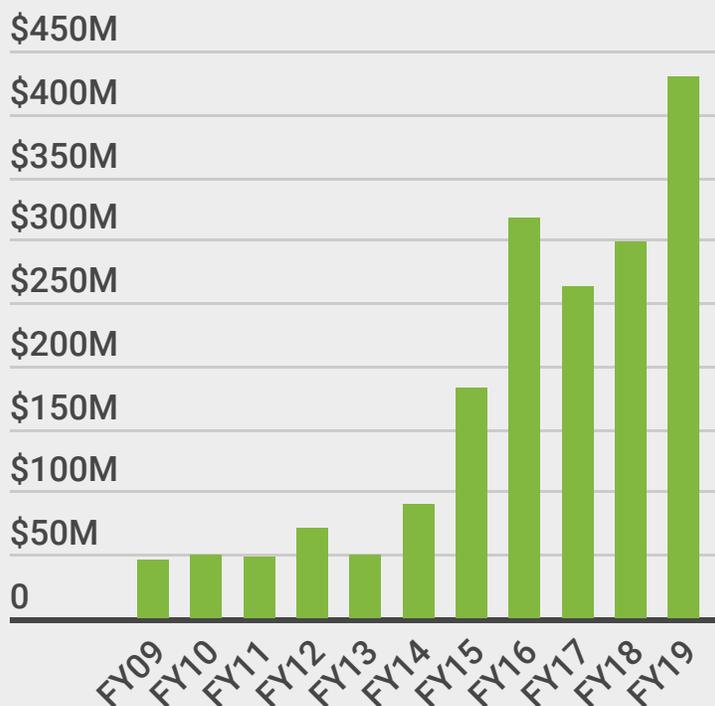
The U.S security aid relationship with Ukraine is relatively new, beginning in 2014 after a Russian military intervention in the country's east and annexation of Crimea.

(1) Since then, U.S. military aid to Ukraine has grown annually by an average of 42%. Between FY2008 and FY2013, annual security aid to Ukraine averaged 57.9M. Between FY2014 to FY2019, that figure had jumped to \$263.5M.

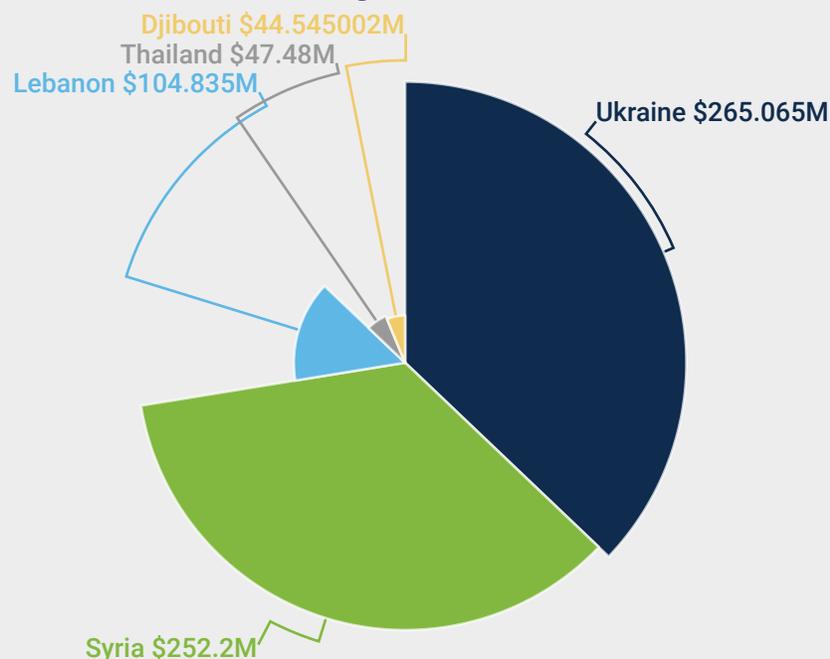
But it wasn't until Trump assumed office that the U.S. began providing lethal equipment, a notable policy shift from the Obama Administration. It was the culmination of a bipartisan consensus surrounding support to Kyiv in the face of Russian pressure, which is why the President's subsequent suspension came as such a surprise and drew such a sharp rebuke from lawmakers and other stakeholders.

The aid was eventually released in September 2019, and the latest NDAA appropriates \$300M in security aid to Ukraine, which the President signed in December 2019.

U.S. Security Aid to Ukraine, FY09-FY19



Top 5 FY19 Country Recipients of DoD Aid Excluding Iraq & Afghanistan



The Aid that Was Suspended

During the summer and early fall of 2019, the Trump Administration notified the Office of Management and Budget that it would be placing on hold on two primary security assistance accounts for Ukraine: the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative - a Department of Defense account - and a combination of FY18 and FY19 Foreign Military Financing - a State Department account. Taken together, these two funds amounted to \$391M. ⁽³⁾

- Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative
- Foreign Military Financing
- International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
- Section 333 Building Partner Capacity
- Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs
- International Military Education and Training



360 Javelin Missiles



Javelin Launchers

Sold to Ukraine by the Trump Administration between FY18 and FY19

Ukraine and U.S. Javelin Missiles

In 2018, the Trump Administration reversed an Obama era decision to refrain from providing lethal equipment to Ukraine and approved the sale of FGM-148 Javelins, a shoulder fired, man portable anti-tank weapon.

With the impeachment trial now scrutinizing the suspension of security aid to Kyiv, President Trump has pointed to those sales to underscore the depth of his commitment to the country, and refute accusations he leveraged their security package for his personal gain. His defense team has also suggested that discussions of Javelins in the impeachment inquiry are irrelevant, since those were sales and not strictly part of Ukraine's security aid package. Both these claims merit caveats.

Firstly, though the Javelins offer an important demonstration of U.S. support and commitment to the Ukrainian government, provisions in the sale agreement require their storage in the country's east, and away from the frontlines, meaning their immediate impact on the battlefield are minimal.

Secondly, though the Javelins were purchased by Ukraine through the Foreign Military Sale process, it is possible, and even likely, that Ukraine used part of their Foreign Military Finance package, a State Department grant to buy U.S. weapons, to buy the missiles. The grant was, in fact, part of the 2019 suspension.