

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We appreciate your administration's work in support of Ukraine and its fight for freedom in response to Russia's continuing invasion. Consistent, bipartisan support for the people of Ukraine by the White House and Congress has been crucial for sustaining the U.S. leadership necessary to ensure Ukraine's continued sovereignty, the security and stability of our allies and interests in Europe, as well as the rules-based international order threatened by Moscow's illegal and brutal aggression.

It is in that spirit of leadership and support that we write to respectfully request that your Administration provide Ukraine with increased air superiority capability, including the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft requested by Kiev, or similar fourth-generation aircraft, as soon as possible. The provision of such aircraft is necessary to help Ukraine protect its airspace, particularly in light of renewed Russian offensives and considering the expected increase in large-scale combat operations.

F-16s or similar fourth generation fighter aircraft would provide Ukraine with a highly mobile platform from which to target Russian air-to-air missiles and drones, to protect Ukrainian ground forces as they engage Russian troops, as well as to engage Russian fighters for contested air superiority. In contrast to the current, ground-based air defense platforms currently used by Ukrainian forces, fighter aircraft's ability to quickly traverse a large battlespace with a significant weapons payload could prove decisive for control of Ukrainian airspace this year.

Considering the substantial time required to train even experienced pilots to operate fourth generation fighter aircraft, we believe that a decision to provide Ukraine with such platforms must be made quickly. We note, however, that Ukrainian pilots have previously trained with the U.S. military in 2011 and after Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2018, and that Ukraine has reportedly "identified a list of up to 50 pilots who are ready now to start training on the F-16 ... [who] speak English and have thousands of combat missions under their belts, and could be trained in as little as three months ..."¹ Given Ukraine's experienced combat pilots and

¹ Lara Seligman, Erin Banco, Connor O'Brien, Paul McLeary, Lee Hudson, "At the Pentagon, Push to Send F-16s to Ukraine Picks up Steam," Politico (Jan. 28, 2023), *Available at*: <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/01/28/pentagon-send-f-16s-ukraine-00080045>.

demonstrated capability to effectively utilize the western defensive and offensive platforms they have received to date, we believe providing Ukraine with fourth generation fighter aircraft represents a sound strategic investment in bolstering Kiev's military capability and bringing this conflict to a just conclusion.

American leadership on this issue is crucial. During the past year, the United States has consistently led the way for Ukraine to receive the military equipment necessary to defend itself against Russian aggression, including advanced air defense systems, armored fighting vehicles, and most recently tanks. We believe that a U.S. willingness to provide F-16 fighters to Ukraine may well encourage our NATO allies and European partners to provide comparable fourth-generation fighter aircraft to Kiev.

For the reasons set forth above, we believe now is the time for America to again lead the way and provide our allies in Ukraine with the tools necessary to defend their nation. We thank you for your consideration in this matter and for your continued support of Ukraine and its people.

Sincerely,



Jared F. Golden
Member of Congress



Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



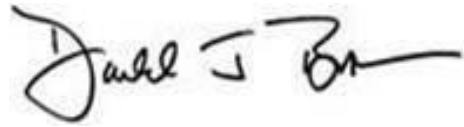
Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
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Jimmy Panetta
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Don Bacon
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Susan Wild
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Marcy Kaptur
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Bradley S. Schneider
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