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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Evolution of US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership in the Security Sphere: Trial by War and Political Disturbances

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Abstract— Relations between Ukraine and the United States have become particularly intense and important since the start of Russia's large-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, which made the United States its main strategic security partner. However, this cooperation began much earlier. Therefore, this article briefly examines the initial evolution of bilateral interaction from 1992 to 2025, with a special emphasis on the transformation through institutionalized defense cooperation through and partly as a result of building a strategic alliance between the two countries on the path to traditional political support. The purpose of the study is twofold: first, to highlight characteristic periods/phases in Ukrainian-American relations, and secondly (simultaneously) to identify factors that become key elements/issues that attract the attention of different levels in the contextual political/security/defense interaction. The study includes historical and political analysis using the comparative legal method, content analysis of international treaties, US legislation and analytical materials of leading think tanks. Thus, in the evolution of cooperation, three main periods can be distinguished: (1) symbolic political support of the 1990s, also characteristic of relations with other countries, where the main task was the development of democracy; (2) 2014-2021, when relations significantly deepened in the context of military aggression and the corresponding partnership in the defense sector; (3) the period after 2022, when unprecedented US military assistance to Ukraine acquires the features of a strategic alliance based on the Bilateral Security Agreement between the two countries, which allows for the development of comprehensive defense cooperation. By the third period, Ukraine becomes an active participant in regional stability. This radically changes its role in the international environment and allows us to look at it from a different perspective, not only as a donor-recipient. This clearly demonstrates the evolution of Ukrainian-American relations.

Index Terms— Public administration, Ukrainian-American relations, Strategic partnership, Security guarantees, Military aid, International security, Information security

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Introduction

International status, security, and state development are all decisive vectors of Ukraine's foreign policy, which are currently significantly influenced by the interaction between Ukraine and the United States of America. It is safe to say that bilateral cooperation began when the United States recognized Ukraine's independence in 1991. Subsequently, a significant transformation took place – political support grew into economic assistance, the scale of which allows not only to maintain the country's economy at the proper level, but also to form strategies for further partnership in the field of defense. Consequently, the new parameters of interaction between Kyiv and Washington have led to an escalation of financial and military support, which reinforces the relevance of the chosen topic.

In particular, the scientific works of Tefft (2020), Pomaza-Ponomarenko et al. (2024), and Harris et al. (2023) repeatedly point out that support for Ukraine has already become one of the elements of the overall strategy of the United States of America regarding global stability and the containment of opposition states. The conclusions of scholars analyzing recent events show that Ukrainian-American relations have indeed gone beyond the scope of traditional assistance and transformed into a multidimensional partnership with several components—economic, technological, political, and others.

However, despite a sufficient number of contemporary studies, there is a lack of comprehensive periodization of Ukrainian-American relations, taking into account recent changes in the political arena and the evolution of the nature of US support, from recognition of the declaration of sovereignty to specific commitments in the field of defense and security, which institutionalizes the partnership.

Therefore, the authors of this study aim to analyze the development of the strategic dynamics of Ukrainian-American relations in the context of changes in the field of international security and to outline the periods of their evolution with justification of such periodization: 1992-2014; 2014-2021; 2022-present. The results of this work can be used in further development of strategies to deepen bilateral cooperation between countries in these areas, which determines the practical significance of this article.

In the context of the modern transformation of international security, the information component of the Ukrainian-American strategic partnership is of key importance, acting as an integral element of the national security of Ukraine. Given the systemic hybrid influence of the Russian Federation, which damages cyberattacks, disinformation operations, and attempts at manipulative interference in democratic processes, it significantly changes the nature of modern conflicts. In these conditions, cooperation between Ukraine and the United States goes beyond traditional military support, covering the development of institutional resilience to information threats, modernization of the cyber defense system, increasing the ability of state bodies to regulate information operations, and ensuring the reliable functioning of critical digital infrastructure. Such interaction forms a comprehensive approach to strengthening national security, within which information security acquires the status of a structural element that ensures the level of resilience of the state to external challenges, in particular military, political, and economic.

The study is based on a realistic approach to the study of international relations, supplemented by the definition of the concept of strategic partnership. From this point of view, cooperation can be interpreted simultaneously as a tool for balancing assistance and deterrence. Accordingly, the study answers the following questions: 1) how has the logic of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and the United States changed since 1991; 2) what factors were key to the transition from classic political support, reflected in the form of recognition of Ukraine at the beginning of Ukrainian-American relations, to direct security guarantees; 3) to what extent the 2024 Bilateral Security Agreement influenced the partnership.

Literature Review

In their scientific works, Bocquillon et al. (2024) and Pomaza-Ponomarenko et al. (2024) emphasize the depth and complexity of the consequences of the war in Ukraine and their direct impact on the lives of citizens, the economic development of the state, and the distribution of power in the world. Magash (2025), revealing the historical background, economic consequences, and socio-political aspects, also emphasizes that the Ukrainian-Russian conflict has significantly affected international relations in the context of both geopolitics and regional stability.

In addition, a significant part of the work is devoted to the analysis of mechanisms for establishing diplomatic contacts between states, particularly after Ukraine gained independence. Thus, scholars Tefft (2020) and Ordukhanyan (2023) express a certain strategic vision of Washington regarding the integration of Ukraine into Western political and economic systems through continued support for reforms in the field of democracy and the development of the rule of law in general.

The claim regarding Ukraine's vulnerability due to the absence of legally binding mechanisms in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum was noted in the work of Budjeryn and Bunn (2020), which made a significant contribution to the study of security guarantees. Such findings underscore the need to reconsider approaches to international disarmament and the guarantees of state sovereignty.

Equally important are the aspects of economic and humanitarian assistance provided by the United States to Ukraine, as highlighted by the NRC (2008) and Žielys and Rudinskaitė (2014), which focus on USAID's activities in developing such important institutions as civil society and the media. Another angle of analysis of this topic is demonstrated by Aslund and McFaul (2006), Karatnycky (2005), and Gustafsson (2012), who characterize the level of US influence on mobilization in Ukraine in the context of the 2004 Orange Revolution.

Pynnöniemi and Parppei (2024) approach the issue from yet another angle, analyzing the Russian view of the war and identifying two approaches: military-political and eschatological. From this perspective, the scholars demonstrate the depth of ideological confrontation and its impact on America's strategic decisions regarding support for Ukraine. In terms of the macroeconomic consequences of the war, the decline in GDP and the rise in inflation are examined by Tong (2024), which emphasizes the need for long-term support for Ukraine by international partners.

The academic works of CEPA (2025) and Pelchar (2022) focus on the change in US strategies since 2014 and the evolutionary process of approaches to defense support for Ukraine, while Lymar and Tykhonenko (2022) highlight the transition from non-lethal US aid to Ukraine to the supply of modern weapon systems. Thus, the internal logic of the policy of supplying weapons to support Ukraine in the conflict is analyzed.

Researchers have paid considerable attention to the period that began in 2022. Harris et al. (2023) analyze how US foreign policy priorities have changed and how domestic political polarization affects stability in the process of supporting Ukraine. In turn, aid to Ukraine as part of a broader strategy to strengthen American international leadership through the development of partnerships.

An important aspect of this topic is the statistical data presented by the U.S. Department of State, which makes it possible to see the amount of aid in quantitative terms and assess the distribution of funding among different sectors of support. Trends in joint defense capability development can be explored in the works of Glanville and Pattison (2024) and Douglas et al. (2025), which provide a detailed description of military assistance to Ukraine after 2022, making a significant contribution to the study of this topic.

A separate area of research is the institutionalization of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and the United States of America. In this context, the 2024 Bilateral Security Agreement (House, 2024) is noteworthy, as it should be viewed as an "interim" step towards Ukraine's closer integration into the Euro-Atlantic security system.

At the same time, despite a sufficient number of academic works, some aspects of the Ukrainian-American partnership remain insufficiently studied. This concerns the necessary and entirely logical future analysis of the stability of US assistance in the long term, given the domestic political changes in America (Harris et al., 2023), as well as the development of new formats for joint arms production (Krupenya & Logvin, 2025).

Taking the above into account, it can be assumed that the evolution of relations between America and Ukraine has been subject to two main impulses. The first is the existence of threats not only to Ukraine but also to the world order. This gave impetus to real support for Ukraine from the US. The second is the internal dynamics of American political relations, which have significantly influenced the stability, relevance, and depth of security commitments to Ukraine.

Research Methods

The methodological basis of the study consists of interdisciplinary approaches combining elements of political analysis, content analysis of international documents, and historical-comparative methods. The main focus was on the systematic study of official sources – bilateral agreements, US legislation (in particular, the National Defense Authorization Act and the Ukraine Freedom Support Act), reports of US government agencies (The White House, US Department of State).

As part of the content analysis, analytical data from leading research centers (CEPA, Pew Research Center) were processed, and academic publications highlighting the specifics of US support for Ukraine from 1991 to the present were analyzed. To justify the periodization, a method of historical reconstruction was used, taking into account changes in US foreign policy priorities.

Using a comparative legal method, we were able to understand how and in what forms the interaction between Ukraine and the US changed during different periods: from technical assistance programs to strategic security agreements.

At the same time, quantitative analysis methods were also used, namely to process statistical data on the volume of foreign aid by year, its distribution by relevant sectors, and, in general, its development and dynamics.

At the final stage of the study, scientific positions on the transformation of US foreign policy toward Ukraine were summarized in order to identify the internal logic of its evolution and outline conceptual changes in Washington's approaches to supporting Ukraine during the war.

Results

The study of the evolution of Ukrainian-American relations should begin with the pre-war period. Thus, the start of Ukrainian-American relations dates back to the day of the official recognition of Ukraine's independence by the United States of America on December 25, 1991, when the then-current US President George H. W. Bush, in his address to the nation, announced the recognition of Ukraine's independence, as well as that of other former Soviet republics that became independent states after the collapse of the USSR (Bush, 1991). The official date of the establishment of diplomatic relations can be considered January 3, 1992, as the letters between the President of Ukraine and the President of the United States of America have the status of international documents confirming the official establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states (Council, (1991-1992)). This correlates with international practice and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (UN, 1961), which stipulates that diplomatic relations between states are established by mutual consent, which may be formalized by: an exchange of notes, the signing of an agreement, or an official exchange of letters at the highest political level.

Since the first years of Ukraine's independence, Americans considered its security an important element in their vision for post-Soviet space security. A very specific cooperation developed between the two countries that combined support for democratic reforms and programs of risk deterrence, supposed to emanate from this region. The Americans believed Ukraine could play a future role against Russian ambitions as one of the leaders of democratic change in this region, but building institutions, gradually integrating Ukraine into Western political and economic systems through institution building, was their strategy, within which rules institutional changes such as democratization of society and state (Tefft, 2020).

During the 1990s, the open-door policy came to be associated with a stance that symbolized U.S. support for Ukrainian sovereignty that would not aggravate relations with Russia. The United States viewed Ukraine as an independent player on the international stage and, more importantly, as a key buffer zone in the security of Central and Eastern Europe. Washington's strategic interests were focused on three main areas: the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine in accordance with the 1994 Budapest Memorandum (UN, 1994), promoting energy independence, and helping to combat and reduce corruption threats in the management of state resources, including oil revenues. In exchange for agreeing to hand over its nuclear weapons to Russia for disposal in 1994 (Kimball et al., 2020), Ukraine was provided with economic assistance from both the United States and Russia, along with security guarantees. The scientific doctrine emphasizes that, through political commitments that implied non-binding security guarantees for Ukraine, Ukraine sought recognition and acceptance in the international community, and therefore chose to associate itself with nuclear non-proliferation. However, Russia's violation of the memorandum in 2014 clearly revealed not only the vulnerability of such "guarantees," which have no enforcement mechanism, but also other real limitations on the ability of the United States to ensure Ukraine's security if it fulfills its formal commitments to diplomatic support for Ukraine. This should be seen as a prerequisite for the development of much stronger legal guarantees in future disarmament agreements, as well as better national security mechanisms.

Meanwhile, huge economic aid flowed to Ukraine from the United States through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 1990, USAID has been supporting programs of democracy and governance in Ukraine, legal system development, civil society, and support to democratic institutions (NRC, 2008). These were components added later in support of electoral processes, civic society building, and the growth of independent media. Specifically, during the 1990s, activities related to elections received almost $1.5 million of assistance from USAID in Ukraine (Žielys & Rudinskaitė, 2014).

In the latter half of the 1990s and moving into the early 2000s, a concept of 'limited strategic partnership' emerged. Ukraine was considered too important to be ignored, but also not ripe enough in terms of integration for any sort of formal alliance relations (Sanders, 2001). The approach made provision for limited military and political support with no legal commitments on security guarantees. The development of democratic institutions in Ukraine was placed high on the agenda as a prerequisite for its eventual integration into Western security structures.

Since 1992, Ukraine has been one of the priority recipients of foreign aid from the United States in the European and Eurasian region. The total amount of US aid to Ukraine for the period ending in 2009 amounted to several billion US dollars, as confirmed by official data from the US State Department. In 2008 alone, the amount of assistance provided amounted to US$79.74 million, and in 2009, US$89.42 million (US, 2009). The structure of the aid reflected a multi-pronged approach covering security (43% in 2009), democratic governance (31%), economic development (20%), investment in health care (5%), and humanitarian assistance (1%).

The main area of funding that should be highlighted is support for reforming the security sector and bringing it closer to EU and NATO standards. Other equally important areas included developing an independent judicial system, combating corruption, supporting democratic processes, and developing independent media. This paved the way for Ukraine's integration into the global economy by complying with the requirements of the World Trade Organization.

The 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine became a catalyst that made it possible to establish a political dialogue in which the United States openly supported Ukraine's aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. Thus, the manifestation of civil discontent within the country was the result of many years of support for democratic processes. The United States made significant investments in creating an environment conducive to the development of civil society. In particular, this involved support for non-governmental organizations, "observation" of the electoral process, and the activities of independent media (Gustafsson, 2012). Other researchers have come to similar conclusions in their studies, repeatedly emphasizing the activities of USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy, which undoubtedly characterize the long-term nature of America's efforts to build a democratic culture in general (Aslund & McFaul, 2006). There is also a widespread scientific view that America's human rights and democratization investments have created all the preconditions for the revitalization of civil society institutions (Karatnycky, 2005). Ukrainian scholars also draw attention to America's diplomatic support during the economic crisis in Ukraine (Sushko, 2004). Thus, American support became most noticeable during the consolidation of the democratic movement in Ukraine (Harasymiw, 2007). We can conclude that American assistance was threefold in nature: financial, organizational, and diplomatic.

Official written statement to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the situation in Ukraine against the backdrop of Euromaidan 2013–2014 (Melia, 2014) provides a comprehensive overview of US support for democratic processes in Ukraine since its independence, highlighting that total US assistance to Ukraine since 1991 has exceeded US$5 billion.

It can be assumed that Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2014, prompted the US to understand the need for a systematic review of its policy and support for national reforms in the post-Soviet space. Consequently, the new stage of support was based on the idea of a long-term strategic partnership aimed not only at strengthening Ukraine's defense capabilities, but also at other areas. This refers to the

creation of certain preconditions for inclusion in the Euro-Atlantic security system (CEPA, 2025). It would be logical to assume that the changes in the United States' position on Ukraine were caused by the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the aggression in the east, which made the need to strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities extremely urgent. In response to the challenges posed by Russian aggression, the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) was launched in 2016 as a special program of the US Department of Defense aimed at long-term support for Ukraine's defense capabilities. The creation of this program was regulated by the U.S. National Defense Authorization Act (Congress, 2015). Section 1250 of this Act defined the powers of the U.S. Department of Defense to provide assistance to Ukraine. In addition, an analysis of strategic partnership cooperation shows that back in 2014, the US passed another law on supporting Ukraine's freedom, which enshrined American military support. This was an important moment in the development of bilateral relations (Pelchar, 2022).

The change in the format of US support for Ukraine is indicative: while initially limited to non-lethal means, since 2017, deliveries of modern defensive weapons have begun (Zelinska & Galaziuk, 2024). This approach demonstrates the flexibility of US foreign policy, which has gradually adapted to changes in the international environment and developments on the battlefield (Lymar & Tykhonenko, 2022). According to data from the official website of the United States Government (Eichensehr, 2022), which publishes open information on the volume and direction of US foreign aid to various countries around the world, statistical data can be obtained showing an analysis of US aid to Ukraine in 2016–2020 and the distribution of funding by sector (in millions of dollars).

Table I
Statistics on US assistance to Ukraine (2016-2020)

Year	Safety and peace	Democracy	Healthcare	Humanitarian aid	Economic development	Program support	Education and social services	Environmental protection
2016	337.8	38.69	35.75	49.47	32.65	17.05	2.78	0.28
2017	312.0	77.41	31.77	27.48	25.63	28.93	3.15	1.79
2018	333.6	84.86	18.81	37.78	49.81	14.93	4.62	2.78
2019	321.1	134.2	28.38	41.25	42.4	16.23	4.74	0.92
2020	335.7	155.1	44.29	60.2	60.4	24.96	2.78	0.76

Source: Created by the author based on the U.S. Department of State (2025)

As can be seen, during the period 2016–2020, the main areas of US assistance to Ukraine were the following sectors:

- peace and security remained the main focus of funding, accounting for the largest share of assistance each year, averaging over 57% of total financial support;
- Assistance to democracy ranked second in terms of funding, accounting for an average of around 16% of assistance.
- humanitarian assistance ranked third in terms of volume, accounting for approximately 7% of total assistance (mainly directed towards supporting internally displaced persons and populations affected by the conflict in the east of the country);
- Economic development and health care received around 6–7% of aid annually.
- Other areas, such as education and social services, program support, and environmental protection, had smaller shares (less than 5% annually) and supported targeted projects in the relevant sectors.

The war in Ukraine was a turning point. It led to changes in American foreign policy, the selection of other priorities and approaches. Classic general cooperation without clearly defined areas changed into the process of forming a purposeful strategic partnership between Ukraine and America, primarily in the field of security and defense. Before the start of the full-scale war, Ukrainian-American relations were indeed relatively limited in nature, as they did not provide real security guarantees, which subsequently had a negative impact on Ukraine's situation after February 24, 2022. It is noteworthy that in the early years of the conflict (2014-2022), assistance took the form of sanctions against Russia and the supply of non-lethal weapons (food rations, night vision devices). There is a view that the Obama administration deliberately avoided direct military supplies for fear of escalating the conflict with Russia (Wilantara et al., 2025; Woźniak, 2016).

However, in 2022, the type of support the US was providing changed dramatically. The US formed an international coalition supporting Ukraine and started to deliver thousands of portable Stinger anti-aircraft missile systems, Javelin anti-tank missiles, dozens of howitzers and HIMARS systems, and even modern Abrams tanks and Patriot air defense systems (Harris et al., 2023). The RU-UA war made the United States reconsider its global role towards Ukraine in the context of a world order (Brands, 2024).

Therefore, after 2022, aid reached a qualitatively new level. In 2023, more than one billion dollars was paid by the Pentagon for drones and ammunition for HIMMARS and other weapons. In 2024, this support grew to two and a half billion US dollars. Joint production of equipment has also been launched (Krupenya & Logvin, 2025). The evolution took place in the interaction between the countries as military aid became more extensive and broader in scope, which can be viewed as a consistent institutionalization partnership manifestation (Ivasechko & Lopushansky, 2023).

Anjani and Paksi (2023) found it very interesting from the standpoint of international relations theory that, within a framework of realism, US involvement in the Russian-Ukrainian war is simply an expression or manifestation by which it wishes to articulate its desire for hegemony

through support for allies.

The significant increase in the amount of aid allocated by the US is evidence of the unprecedented scale of support. Since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, the US has provided Ukraine with over $3.7 billion in security assistance between February and April 2022. Total military support from 2014 to spring 2022 amounted to over $6.4 billion (Eichensehr, 2022).

According to published data, the US planned to provide more than $113 billion in military, economic, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine by 2024, of which approximately half was earmarked specifically for military needs (Douglas et al., 2025). Although efforts to prepare Ukraine were limited until 2022, the rapid mobilization of resources immediately after the start of the war made it possible to resist Russian aggression. By January 2024, the United States had provided Ukraine with $45.4 billion in military aid. In addition, in April 2024, the US Congress approved an additional $60 billion package, which included ammunition, air defense systems, and long-range weapons (Glanville & Pattison, 2024).

In the context of the previous stages of the conflict, it is worth recalling that between 2014 and 2020, the US provided Ukraine with approximately $1.3 billion in security assistance. The main focus at that time was on training the Ukrainian Armed Forces, providing non-lethal assistance, and conducting joint exercises with NATO forces (Tsyganyuk, 2021).

The results of recent academic research on the true cost of military aid are hard to ignore. According to Ukrainian economists, the actual level of US support is significantly lower than officially declared and is about $18.3 billion, while officially declared spending exceeds $60 billion (Fedyk, 2025). There is also an opinion that the deep political polarization of America creates risks for the long-term sustainability of aid to Ukraine (Harris et al., 2023).

The American public supports military aid to Ukraine. A Pew Research Center poll (Pew, 2024) showed that 51 percent of Americans believe current levels are about right, while only 26 percent believe they are too high. Sixty-two percent associate support for Ukraine with the defense of democracy in the world. Therefore, it is unlikely that any questions can be raised about the assistance to Ukraine by the American public. This issue has become quite legitimate in American society, regardless of the increasing domestic political polarization.

The dynamics of US military aid to Ukraine show a clear evolution from limited support in peacetime to unprecedented large-scale assistance during a full-scale war (Figure 1).

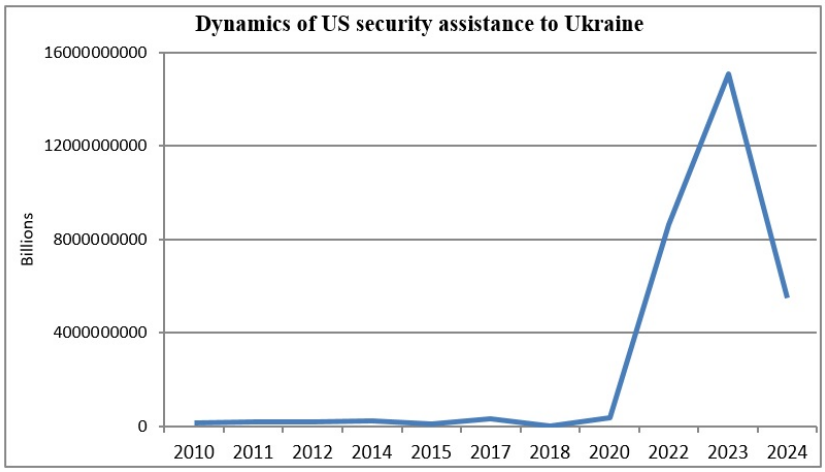


Fig. 1 *Dynamics of US security assistance to Ukraine, 2010-2025)*

Source: Created by the author based on Glanville and Pattison (2024), Tsyganyuk (2021), and Eichensehr (2022).

In 2008–2009, US assistance to Ukraine remained stable at a low level – $79.74 million and $89.42 million per year, respectively. This was in line with the policy of "strategic patience" in the context of Euro-Atlantic enlargement without active military engagement (US, 2009). The structure of assistance during this period focused mainly on security sector reform, and especially on democratic governance and economic development, as shown in Figure 1 above.

As mentioned above, following the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the US revised its policy: from 2014 to 2020, total security assistance amounted to approximately US$1.3 billion, with an emphasis on training Ukrainian military personnel, supplying non-lethal assistance, and conducting joint exercises (Tsyganyuk, 2021).

Between 2016 and 2020, annual funding for the security sector ranged from $312 million to $337 million per year and demonstrates stable, yet limited, support.

The year 2022 was a breakthrough, when, following Russia's full-scale invasion, the US provided Ukraine with over $3.7 billion in security assistance in the first three months alone.

It has also changed in type. Modern weapons for Ukraine, Patriot and NASAMS air defense systems, tanks, including Abrams, and long-range

missiles. A very important step was taken in November 2024, when the Biden administration lifted restrictions on Ukraine's use of long-range American missiles against military targets in Russia: up to reports of North Korean troops fighting on Russia's side, which led to discussions of a possible large-scale counteroffensive (Omer, 2024). One element that would strengthen Ukraine, and which has become one of the key topics during the negotiations, is the transfer of JASSM cruise missiles with a range of up to 300 km to the target into Ukrainian hands (Kuteleva, 2024). The Ukrainians have also officially repeatedly reiterated their interest in much longer-range Tomahawk missiles, but the US is not currently ready to supply them (Reuters, 2024).

With regard to security commitments in the context of US-Ukrainian relations, it should be noted that in US political discourse and strategic planning, the term "security commitments" is increasingly used in relation to Ukraine. These commitments are not classic guarantees, as in the case of NATO members (in particular Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty), but they have institutional, financial, and operational specificity.

On June 14, 2024, coincidentally, on the same day as the G7 summit hosted by Italy in Puglia, President Volodymyr Zelensky met with US President Joseph Biden to sign a bilateral security agreement that reflects Washington's long-term commitment to supporting Ukraine's defense sector. This institutionalizes yet another new format between the two countries, involving airlifts, aspects of which relate not only to the supply of modern weapons systems such as air defense or long-range artillery, but also to cyber defense, allowing for regular joint military exercises with Ukrainian forces trained to NATO standards, thus providing better access to training, development of armed forces without formal membership, the very structure of the alliance, intelligence, and the exchange of advanced technologies. The agreement does not require a vote of the U.S. Senate for ratification, which would make it a treaty under Article 2 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

Trump's return to the White House marked a rapid and decisive transformation of American diplomacy. Apparently, there was also a change in the logic of support for Ukraine, from a leading role in mobilizing international aid to a sudden sharp departure from active participation. Gradually, America's attitude began to be viewed critically: questions about the effective use of American resources by Ukraine; doubts about the legitimacy of the Ukrainian leadership; discussions about the "settlement" of the conflict with the participation of the United States, but without taking into account the Ukrainian position.

This is a story of the evolution in Washington's relationship with Kyiv. Joe Biden has developed his own partnership style by synthesizing multilateral diplomacy with US military and financial largesse, while Donald Trump is demanding a "reformatting", even partial deconstruction of that very partnership. This not only undermines Ukraine's military might but also destroys any trust in America as a reliable strategic partner. An increasingly realistic scenario, especially given reports that talks with Russia to end the war have recently intensified, in part because the US has apparently now frozen its military aid (and intelligence sharing) due to Kyiv's alleged unwillingness to engage constructively in the peace process. That is why people are worried that Ukraine will most probably be pressured into accepting peace on terms less favorable to Ukraine itself (Mills, 2025). Another concern also relates to the numerous blatant falsehoods then-President Trump had stated regarding NATO enlargement, particularly in relation to Ukraine's accession.

An important step is the signing of the Agreement between Ukraine and the US on strategic minerals, which, according to the CSIS think tank (Baskaran & Schwartz, 2025), is in the final stages of approval and has the potential to become one of the key instruments of Ukraine's economic recovery in the context of the war. Particularly telling is the fact that the agreement does not contain any formal security guarantees for Ukraine. Its content demonstrates Washington's policy of strategic caution: support through economic cooperation, but without commitments in the field of collective security.

Thus, the results of the study show the existence of real threats to Ukraine's national security.

Discussion

The paper notes an evolution and renewal in the United States' approach to military aid to Ukraine. A researcher also note a shift in strategy from ad hoc support to one of long-term commitment toward security engagement in Eastern Europe, and largely concur with the findings of this paper. However, as already noted above for the Trump administration, decision-making was characterized by extreme imbalance between supportive rhetoric and actual implementation of commitments. This trend became even more pronounced in 2025 when military aid began to stagnate while key decisions on arms supplies and financing were blocked for political reasons based both on empirical indicators (U.S. Department of State, as well as expert assessments (Meloni, 2025).

Compared to realism in the discipline of international relations, the contemporary American government takes a very narrow approach to national interests, which it is willing to maximize in the short term. This finding directly contradicts other scholarly findings (Anjani & Paksi, 2023). In the case of Ukraine, the implementation of this approach was only partial or incomplete, as not all relevant policy decisions embodied the strategic logic of support.

Instead, it is appropriate to express the view that it is political will and the level of internal legitimacy of aid that determine its stability.

Therefore, it can be stated that the implementation of the United States' policy on supporting Ukraine has been inconsistent and directly proportional to the ruling institutions of power in different periods. Despite the declared support, the actual implementation of security initiatives has been selective, depending on the political situation and internal struggles (Pashkov, 2024). The conclusions are consistent with the positions

of scholars who emphasize the need to institutionalize strategic relations within the framework of not only a political but also an international legal model of interaction (Budjeryn & Bunn, 2020).

The internal situation in America is another important factor that has a directly proportional impact on support for Ukraine. Despite the high level of support among Americans (Pew, 2024), political polarization creates potential risks for ensuring a long-term partnership based on trust.

Equally important is the discussion of the real cost of financial assistance outlined in the study (Fedyk, 2025).

Thus, the strategic dynamics of Ukrainian-American relations are characterized by dynamism. The process of providing assistance to Ukraine directly depends on decision-makers in America. And even given the unconditional necessity and urgency of military support, the situation remains unchanged.

Conclusion

Research into the dynamics of Ukrainian-American relations shows a gradual but clear evolution from symbolic support to a deep strategic partnership. The results of the study confirm the validity of dividing this process into three stages, each with its own logic of development, foreign policy challenges, and dominant forms of interaction.

Between 1992 and 2014, the US supported democratization programs in Ukraine and provided political and economic assistance for reforms inside Ukraine and programs of energy independence, rule of law, and civil society. America had not given any direct military support to Ukraine. The US was following a policy model that can best be described as a 'limited strategic partnership' without any binding security commitments.

Between 2014 and 2021, it was the consequence of Russian aggression that defense cooperation developed. With the annexation of Crimea and the armed conflict, the United States adjusted its strategy toward Ukraine. It introduced new forms of assistance: training programs for the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the United States Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), supported by military aid. However, this support also remained limited: long-term institutional transformation of non-lethal weapons towards Euro-Atlantic integration focused cooperation in Ukraine on a program country normally supplied with elite weapons.

The aggression became a catalyst for hitherto unseen support for Ukraine in the history of relations between the two countries since their independence. The United States mobilized an international coalition to support Ukraine, including a flow of high-tech weapons systems, a program on cooperation in developing the defense industry, cyber defense, and intelligence sharing with Ukraine. Of all events taking place at this stage, one should note most particularly that they have crowned themselves (in June 2024) with signing a bilateral security agreement, which de facto has enshrined Washington's new style security commitments in favor of Kyiv but without granting formal membership in NATO.

Since the current US administration took office, the scale and pace of military assistance to Ukraine have declined sharply from their peak levels in 2022-2023. While Washington has been busy deploying multi-million dollar arms packages, revamped machinery, and diplomatic support for Ukraine, funding has now become much more difficult, largely due to domestic political wrangling in Congress and growing opposition to further American involvement in the conflict. Anjani and Paksi (2023) Delays in approving military aid packages, blocking funding in the House of Representatives amid protracted debate over what types of weapons can be delivered to Kyiv, are all telling signs of shifting priorities.

Strategic engagement clearly reflects not only the deepening of the defense partnership but also Ukraine's gradual integration, through its own institutional development, of information security as a key element of national resilience. The cyber components – disinformation resilience and reliable digital infrastructure – that have been so important on both countries' agendas are accordingly driving new long-term strategic concepts and approaches to partnership development.

Ukrainian-American relations have evolved from a policy of restraint accompanied by indirect influence to a full-scale strategic partnership. An important factor that made this transformation possible was Washington's perception of Ukraine not only as a recipient country but also as an active participant and player in the international security system. Further development of bilateral cooperation will institutionalize at a high level new formats of cooperation in the defense/economic/technological spheres through the effective use of ancillary assistance and the provision of high-level political support.

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