

MSC 68th Student Conference on National Affairs
“Grains Trains & Automobiles: Rebuilding War-Torn Ukraine”

Policy Proposal

“Rebuilding War-Torn Ukraine”

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SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: USAID Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Stabilization

SUBJECT: Rebuilding War-Torn Ukraine

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Situation

In 2014, Russian forces occupied the Crimean Peninsula and much of the Donbas region. On February 24, 2022, Russia escalated by invading Ukraine in a “Special Military Operation.” Ukraine sustained catastrophic casualties and infrastructural damage throughout the eastern regions. War-torn Ukraine is in dire need of reconstruction, international aid, and cooperation as they regain their footing.

Complication and Importance

The ravages of war have left Ukraine in a state of destruction, and the humanitarian and security crisis in the region has direct implications on Europe and the world. There are an estimated 20k civilian casualties, and over 100k military deaths.¹ Eight million refugees have flooded Europe, half of whom are young children.² Additionally, over five million internally displaced people (IDPs) have left Eastern Ukraine due to the conflict.³ Costs for reconstruction are estimated at \$350 billion.⁴ Young refugees and IDPs do not have access to education. Many of the elderly and sick were unable to flee the conflict and are in dire need.

We must act quickly upon the cessation of hostilities to ensure the return to peace and stability in the region. As a world leader, the U.S. has a responsibility to set an example for the world. The U.S. and her allies have the opportunity to work together with Ukraine and strengthen their ties.

Research Question

How can the United States best aid the reconstruction of war-torn Ukraine in cooperation with the international community?

¹ “UNHCR - Ukraine Emergency,” UNHRC (UNHRC, 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/ukraine-emergency.html>.

² “UNHCR - Ukraine Emergency,” UNHRC (UNHRC, 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/ukraine-emergency.html>.

³ Ukraine — Internal Displacement Report — General Population Survey Round 12 (16 - 23 January 2023) | Displacement Tracking Matrix. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-internal-displacement-report-general-population-survey-round-12-16-23-january-2023>.

⁴ Brussels World Bank Group, “Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Estimated \$349 Billion,” World Bank (World Bank Group, September 9, 2022), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/09/09/ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-349-billion>.

Hypothesis

We recommend following an independent needs assessment conducted by the UN or the World Bank to identify the most urgent needs. We believe that the needs assessment in conjunction with the recovery plan presented in this proposal is highly likely to help Ukraine recover from the war.

Recommendations

Post war reconstruction requires separate stages. We suggest a three phase plan that includes renewed needs assessments between phases in order to best approach the problems. Phase one spans approximately one year and is split between Emergency Services and Security Support. Phase two includes economic and infrastructure reconstruction between 1 and 5 years post war. Phase three focuses on good governance and cooperation 10+ years post-war.

Emergency Services: Basic Needs and Security (0-12 months)

1. *Help Establish Safety:* Secure the physical security of the Ukrainian people by removing rubble, hazards, ordnances, and landmines. After safety has been established, media should be used to cultivate the confidence of displaced persons in their ability to return.
2. *Support Displaced Persons Returning Home:* The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Internal Affairs should occupy primary roles in reaching out to refugees and IDPs.
3. *Provide Necessary Needs:* Procurement of necessary resources while collaborating with both the nonprofit sector and nongovernmental organizations such as The Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, Doctors Without Borders to donate time and resources such as food, tents, water, blankets, and medicine.
4. *Help Repair the Local Community:* Bring in necessary equipment to support and sustain the population with electrical power to critical infrastructure such as hospitals and government services. Contract local suppliers within Ukraine to bolster recovering industries and empower local economies. American personnel assisting with the rebuild must work in a supervisory role with little direct action. We propose an engaging and supportive role that emphasizes citizen and refugee involvement with the rebuilding process.
5. *Support Stability:* American and international forces should take an advisory role in supporting local security forces to emphasize self-dependence when the reconstruction period ends.

Intermediate Efforts: Economic and Restorative Efforts (1-5 Years)

1. *Rebuilding Infrastructure*: Infrastructure priorities should include homes, hospitals, roads, bridges, ports, schools, industries, and other basic needs for the general public. Necessary equipment and manpower needs to be sourced. We recommend local communities take charge of reconstruction through training and equipment. Contracting refugees and local businesses with recovery gives locals a sense of purpose and pride in reconstructing their country.
2. *Agricultural Market Security*: Ukraine's capacity to supply grain and sunflower oil has been greatly reduced. Ukraine is a major player in the market, and pre-war would supply 40% of the World Food Program's wheat⁵. Returning this market to its former status would positively affect Ukraine and the world. As indicated by the independent needs assessment, USAID should, through engagement with the international aid community and Ukrainian national and local governments:
 - a. Provide needed agricultural equipment and supplies, such as fertilizers.
 - b. Recover and reconstruct grain storage and transportation infrastructure.
 - c. Provide loans or lump sum transfers to Ukraine for farming subsidies.
3. *Justice and Reconciliation*: Ukraine's existing judiciary structures should try Russian collaborators. USAID should recommend training to judges and other judiciary professionals on due process in the post-war justice process and anti-corruption judiciary ethics.

Long-Term Efforts: Good Governance and Cooperation (10 Year Plan)

1. *EU/NATO accession*: While Ukraine is already 70% of the way towards adopting the needed resolutions for EU accession, corruption in the government, specifically in the justice system, remains a major obstacle preventing Ukraine from receiving crucial investment needed for EU accession..
 - a. The U.S. and partners can ensure Ukraine pursues good and open governance with the promise of conditional aid.

⁵ "Forty Percent of the World Food Program's Wheat Supplies Come from Ukraine." Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/forty-percent-world-food-programs-wheat-supplies-come-ukraine#:~:text=As%20the%20UN%20Food%20and%20Agriculture%20Organization%20notes%2C,get%20about%20one-quarter%20of%20their%20wheat%20from%20Ukraine.>

2. *Pursue Good Governance*

- a. Implement open contracting to ensure transparency and accountability in order to promote honest governance practices.⁶
 - b. Provide protection for whistleblowers.
 - c. Implement an exchange program for civil servants between Ukraine and its allies.⁷
3. *Energy Independence*: Excessive dependence on Russia for energy creates a dangerous relationship. Cooperate with domestic energy providers and use international funds to establish an independent power and energy grid that works with the EU.⁸

⁶ Becker, Torbjörn, Barry Eichengreen, Yuriy Gorodnichenko, Sergei Guriev, Simon Johnson, Tymofiy Mylovanov, Kenneth Rogoff, and Beatrice Weder di Mauro. "Cepr.org." CEPR. CEPR Press, 2022.
https://cepr.org/system/files/publication-files/147614-a_blueprint_for_the_reconstruction_of_ukraine.pdf.

⁷ Adapted from a current EU program <https://eci-csep.eu>

⁸ Becker, Torbjörn, Barry Eichengreen, Yuriy Gorodnichenko, Sergei Guriev, Simon Johnson, Tymofiy Mylovanov, Kenneth Rogoff, and Beatrice Weder di Mauro. "Cepr.org." CEPR. CEPR Press, 2022.
https://cepr.org/system/files/publication-files/147614-a_blueprint_for_the_reconstruction_of_ukraine.pdf.