



DETROIT, March 17, 2022 — *The Ukrainian-American Crisis Response Committee of Michigan (UACrisisResponse.org) issued the following statement through its Chairman, Mykola Murskyj, in response to Ukraine's needs for further air defenses:*

The Russian Federation's unprovoked and undeclared war on Ukraine involves the indiscriminate bombing of civilians and cities. In particular, the Russian Air Force has been using aerial raids on apartment complexes, hospitals, schools, humanitarian corridors, and critical infrastructure. Large Ukrainian cities like Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Mykolaiv, Sumy, and many others have been bombed on a scale never seen in Europe since WWII, amounting to billions of dollars in damage. The United States must decisively help Ukraine stop even more egregious war crimes and work to prevent further destruction of its cities and people.

Last week, the Biden administration's actions derailed a planned transfer of Mikoyan MiG-29 fighter aircraft from the Polish Air Force to the Ukrainian Air Force. Department of Defense spokesperson John F. Kirby reasoned that the prospect of fighter jets departing from a U.S./NATO base in Germany and flying into contested airspace raised serious concerns for the entire NATO alliance.

European-owned MiG-29 fighter planes do not need to be delivered to Ukraine by NATO pilots, or even flown to Ukraine directly from a NATO airfield. Once the transfer is approved, Ukraine is more than capable of sending its own personnel to both replace the official markings on the aircraft and fly them into Ukrainian air space from any approved airbase.

The Kremlin has successfully dictated NATO policy throughout this conflict by using threats and intimidation. The cancellation of the MiG-29 transfer to Ukraine is another clear example of such Russian control over NATO. Following the decision to cancel the transfer, the Russian Federation proceeded to bomb a maternity hospital in Mariupol. This highlights a constant pattern in Russia's behavior when sensing weakness in the U.S. and our allies – emboldened attacks on Ukraine and international peace.

The transfer of MiG-29 fighter aircraft, S-300 anti-aircraft systems, and other air defense equipment presents an excellent opportunity to provide Ukraine with the protection it needs to defend its airspace from Russian aerial raids and ultimately save thousands of lives, without risking direct confrontation between the U.S. and the Kremlin. The Ukrainian Air Force has mastered flying the MiG-29 and does not need training from the U.S. or our allies.

Furthermore, the MiG-29 is capable of conducting ground attacks and will be crucial in providing the Ukrainian forces with much-needed air support during efforts to repel Russian advances on Kyiv and across the country.

The Ukrainian-American community of Metro Detroit is grateful for everything that the U.S. has done to support our ancestral homeland. The unprecedented size of the humanitarian and military aid packages speaks to the understanding that the U.S. has about democracy being at risk.

That said, risk avoidance is not the same as risk management. The U.S. and NATO's actions are a clear example of risk avoidance in the face of atrocities against the Ukrainian people and our shared democratic values. The Ukrainian authorities have desperately requested these planes, and it is now in our hands to find a way to make that happen. If we want Ukraine to successfully defend itself and prevent thousands of unnecessary deaths, this transfer needs to happen immediately.

#

We urge the community to donate funds for humanitarian aid through the [Razom Emergency Fund](#), [United Ukrainian American Relief Committee](#) and [Ukrainian Congress Committee of America](#), which are 501(c)(3) charities. The Ukrainian-American Crisis Response Committee of Michigan is also currently seeking [tactical first aid and supplies to help in the territorial defense of Ukraine](#).

Mykola Murskyj earned his Master in Public Policy degree from Harvard University in 2017, writing his dissertation on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He was a U.S. Presidential Management Fellow with the Department of Homeland Security HQ in Washington, D.C., as well as at the U.S. Department of Justice Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs. Since January of this year, he has been a lecturer in the Program in Ethics, Politics, and Economics at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine. Murskyj also holds master's degrees in physics from MIT and from the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jordan Fylonenko, Ukrainian-American Crisis Response Committee of Michigan,
Communications Lead
fylonenko@gmail.com