



Biden Admin. Cops to Billions More in Ukraine Spending Than Previously Reported

After dragging its feet for 14 months, the Biden administration has finally confessed to spending “billions more on Ukraine than has ever been reported,” yet questions about potential future spending remain, according to a Tuesday [letter](#) from a group of lawmakers to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shalanda Young.

While publicly seeking a constant stream of funding for Ukraine, the administration has been less than forthcoming about how much it is actually spending on the conflict. Congress initiated an inquiry into the matter in January 2023 via a [letter](#) from 37 congressmen and senators led by Senator J.D. Vance (R-Ohio). At that time, Congress, despite lacking constitutional authority to dispense foreign aid, had authorized \$114 billion “to support a range of activities in Ukraine and ‘in countries impacted by the situation in Ukraine.’”

It took OMB almost eight months to respond to the letter, which requested a complete accounting of federal expenditures on Ukraine. Its response, Vance and 16 other senators and congressmen recalled in their Tuesday letter, consisted of “an untitled and opaque single-page spreadsheet which we found was clearly ‘unresponsive to our inquiry,’” an assessment with which the House Budget Committee concurred. They continued:

The deficiencies in OMB’s response were numerous. It did not account for hundreds of millions of dollars in base appropriations for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. It omitted the administration’s “\$6.2 billion in ‘freed-up’ authority” to send weapons to Ukraine, which meant that “certain numbers in OMB’s spreadsheet, as well as dollar figures the administration provided for at least some previous Ukraine-related drawdowns, are outdated.” It did not allow us to determine “what obligations, apportionments, and outlays the administration has undertaken for other countries in response to the Ukraine conflict.”

Thus Vance, et al., sent another [letter](#) reiterating their original request. OMB’s highly dubious spreadsheet suggested the government had spent \$111 billion, but “it would appear likely that the data you have yet to provide would raise this figure by an indeterminate magnitude,” they surmised.

With OMB’s latest reply, they wrote Tuesday,



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Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 10, 2024

Every one of these assertions has been validated. In the evening of March 8, 2024 — nearly six months after we again requested a full accounting of Ukraine spending, more than a year after our original request, and one business day before the OMB director was scheduled to testify before the Senate Budget Committee — OMB transmitted another tranche of information. This included several reports that OMB’s September 2023 letter had mentioned (but did not provide) and another spreadsheet revealing billions more in Ukraine spending.

The upshot of the new documents: “We now have confirmation from OMB that the total Ukraine spending figure is significantly higher than the administration has ever admitted.” The government disbursed “at least another \$684 million in appropriated Ukraine spending,” sent “an additional \$900 million in [Defense Department] assistance,” and has “more than \$4 billion in authority remaining to transfer weapons stocks from US stocks to Ukraine.” In short, rather than the \$111 billion the administration claimed to have spent on Ukraine, it has, in fact, shelled out over \$125 billion and may yet pour another \$4 billion into the war.

The lawmakers expressed particular concern over the Pentagon’s expenditures. They cited March [news reports](#) stating that the administration has overspent on weapons transfers to Ukraine by \$10 billion, leaving the Defense Department short of cash to replenish its stocks even as the administration claims the authority to transfer another \$4 billion in arms to Kyiv. Questioned about these reports at a Senate Budget Committee hearing, Young refused to comment, then proceeded to talk about the need for more Ukraine appropriations.

Vance and company also pointed to a February [CNN](#) story alleging that the Army “has been left to foot the bill for hundreds of millions of dollars in support for Ukraine’s war effort,” forcing Army officials to consider “divert[ing] money from less critical projects, such as badly needed barracks construction or enlistment incentives amid record-low recruiting.” The lawmakers observed that “it is troubling that some would seem to consider ‘badly needed barracks construction’ for US troops a less critical priority than facilitating more foreign aid for Ukraine.” Indeed, if the Army’s barracks are anything like the Marine Corps’, which the [Daily Caller](#) recently reported are often “uninhabitable,” barracks construction ought to be one of the service’s top priorities.

Of course, even with the supposedly complete accounting of Ukraine spending OMB provided last month, questions remain. After all, OMB copped to \$14 billion more in March than it did in September. Is the administration keeping any other expenditures from Congress?

To determine that, among other things, the lawmakers requested answers to 14 questions from Young by the end of the month. Some seek to obtain firm answers about news reports, such as whether the Army is really being forced to divert money from its own priorities to bankroll Ukraine (and, if so, how much the administration is prepared to divert) or whether the Pentagon is actually facing a \$10 billion “stock replenishment deficit.” Others address specific outlays, such as how much the Defense and State Departments still plan to bestow on Ukraine, how much currently appropriated money the administration believes it can spend on the conflict, and how many more supplemental appropriations bills the administration expects to request.

Answers to such questions are long overdue. But given the administration’s intransigence thus far, getting them may be like yanking molars.



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