



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on January 3, 2024

Times: U.K. Arms Stockpile Reduced to “Nothing”

The U.K.’s arms stockpiles have been almost completely emptied by almost two years of deliveries to Ukraine, as per reports by British news outlet *The Times*. The British newspaper further reported that the U.K., along with other Western European nations, is rushing to increase arms production before the 2024 presidential elections in the United States.

Although London has spent more than £4.6 billion (\$5.7 billion) to arm Kyiv since February 2022, NATO’s deputy supreme allied commander for Europe, General Tim Radford, cautioned in July that the U.K. could forfeit its status within the U.S.-led bloc, quoting personnel shortages, among other problems.



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Moreover, *The Times* cited an unnamed Ukrainian military source as saying that Britain had “nothing” left in terms of arms it could donate. Nonetheless, the anonymous official elaborated that London was still playing a key role in convincing other countries to transport weapons to Kyiv.

Citing an anonymous staffer from U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s office, the news outlet stated that Britain and various other Western European countries were “cranking through the gears” to ensure that Ukraine has ample military supplies to depend on in case a new U.S. administration decides to withhold or dramatically reduce defense aid.

Britain and other Western nations are reportedly trying to extend the Russo-Ukrainian conflict into 2025, and possibly beyond, the source admitted, with the plan to exhaust Russia’s resources and coerce Moscow to ultimately relent.

Besides, *The Times* alleged that a rising number of Ukrainians were becoming tired of the conflict, with more and more people open to the notion of obtaining a truce with Russia. Such sentiments have been partly sparked by the political impasses in the United States and the EU, which have resulted in a sizable amount of aid for Kyiv hanging in limbo, *The Times* reported, quoting an anonymous Ukrainian military source.

In a similar report published in early October, British news outlet *The Telegraph* cited an unnamed senior British military official cautioning that the U.K. had “given away just about as much as we can afford.”

Meanwhile, back in August, British MP Andrew Murrison proposed the idea of permitting the British military to recruit candidates with such conditions as autism, Asperger’s, and ADHD. The lawmaker quoted “serious” staffing shortages, adding that London may also want to increase the retirement age for military personnel.

On December 29, the British Defense Ministry declared that London will deploy 200 more missiles to



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Kyiv, following a massive series of Russian strikes on Ukrainian targets.

Previously, Britain developed air defense systems that could fire Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missiles (ASRAAM) from the ground, to meet the needs of the Ukrainian military, and trained Kyiv's troops on how to operate them, the ministry revealed in a statement.

As per figures from the U.K. Defense Ministry, London has already supplied Kyiv with £4.6 billion (\$5.86 billion) worth of military aid, with another £2.3 billion earmarked for Ukraine until the end of the financial year on March 31.

Ukraine said that it came under the largest Russian drone and missile attack since the start of the conflict in February 2022, detecting at least 158 projectiles. Kyiv alleged that 27 drones and 87 cruise missiles were intercepted. The attack allegedly resulted in 30 people dead and 160 wounded.

The Russian Defense Ministry verified that it had conducted 50 "group" strikes and a single "massive" barrage with UAVs and high-precision weapons against defense industry sites, military airfields, arms depots, and troop positions. All of the targets were successfully hit, it confirmed.

Moscow's envoy to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, blamed the civilian casualties on malfunctioning Western-supplied air-defense systems, which, he said, were purposely deployed in residential areas by Ukraine. "It is difficult to imagine greater cynicism. If not for the work of the Ukrainian air defense, there would have been no civilian casualties," Nebenzia declared.

Regarding the missile attack, U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps alleged that Russian President Vladimir Putin "is testing Ukraine's defenses and the West's resolve, hoping that he can clutch victory from the jaws of defeat. But he is wrong."

"Now is the time for the free world to come together and redouble our efforts to get Ukraine what they need to win," he said.

Moscow has repeatedly cautioned that arms deliveries to Ukraine by the United States, the U.K., and their allies will only extend the fighting and raise the risk of a direct military confrontation between Russia and NATO. Furthermore, Moscow has contended that the provision of arms, intelligence-sharing, and training of Ukrainian troops implies that Western nations have already become de facto parties in Russia's conflict with Ukraine.

In a statement on December 26, the British Defense Ministry stated that six experienced Ukrainian fighter jet pilots have completed their F-16 training course in the U.K. The first group of Kiev's airmen began receiving flying and English language lessons from the Royal Air Force (RAF) in August, as part of London's contribution to the international coalition aimed at offering Ukraine fourth generation U.S.-made aircraft.

Those pilots are already in Denmark, where they will continue to learn to operate the F-16s, the ministry added.

During their stint in Britain, Ukrainian forces only took to the skies in a Grob Tutor aircraft, as the RAF had no F-16s in service, the statement divulged. British instructors worked with the pilots on general handling procedures, navigation, and formation flying in line with NATO standards, it pointed out.

Ten more Ukrainian aviators will continue their training in the U.K., together with dozens of technicians from the country, the ministry added.

U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said that he was "proud of the support the Royal Air Force is



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providing to the next generation of Ukraine's combat air pilots and ground crew, who will be the first line of defense in protecting Ukraine's skies." Kyiv's use of the F-16s, "combined with training from the world-leading RAF ... is a significant step forward from Ukraine's current Soviet-era capabilities," he posited.

The statement also quoted Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, who portrayed the training provided by Britain as "a rapid and effective programme to equip Ukrainian pilots with the skills they need in the war against Russia."

Additionally, the Netherlands, which is one of the key members of the coalition backing Ukraine, recently announced that it was gearing up for the first delivery of F-16s fighter jets to Ukraine.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte proclaimed that his country's "initial" shipment would include 18 aircraft.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed in August that the Netherlands and Belgium together pledged to provide 42 jets to his country, although a joint statement by the two EU nations did not include any precise numbers.

Last June, Putin said the F-16s would "burn" once they were delivered to Ukraine, just like the Leopard-2 tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, and other Western-made weapons that had been previously supplied to Kyiv.



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