

# [***Joe Biden Is Arming Greece So Greece Can Arm Ukraine And Pro-Russia Republicans Can t Stop Him***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B77-CN21-DXVP-5007-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

January 30, 2024 Tuesday

Copyright 2024 Forbes LLC All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 874 words

**Byline:** David Axe, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** As the Republican Party s blockade of aid to Ukraine drags on, Pres. Joe Biden has found a new way to give Ukraine s forces the weapons they need to defend their country.

**Body**

<figure>

<figcaption>

A Greek air force C-130.

Wikimedia Commons

</figcaption></figure>

As the Republican Party s blockade of aid to Ukraine drags into its fourth month, the U.S. government under Pres. Joe Biden has found a clever new way to give Ukraine s forces the weapons and ammunition they need to defend their country.

It is, in essence, an American version of Germany s circular weapons trade the so-called . The United States is gifting older surplus weapons to Greece with the understanding that Greece donates to Ukraine some of its**own** surplus weapons.

Greek media broke the news last week. According to the newspaper**Kathimerini** and other media, the Biden administration offered the Greek government three 87-foot**Protector**-class patrol boats, two Lockheed Martin C-130H airlifters, 10 Allison T56 turboprop engines for Lockheed P-3 patrol planes plus 60 M-2 Bradley fighting vehicles and a consignment of transport trucks.

All this hardware is U.S. military surplus and is available to Greece, free of charge, under a U.S. legal authority called excess defense articles. Federal law allows an American president to declare military systems surplus to need, assign them a value potentially zero dollars and give them away on the condition that the recipient transport them.

The law caps annual EDA transfers at $500 million. The same law**doesn t**dictate the**value** the president assigns to surplus weapons. In a letter to Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinkendescribedthe ships, planes, engines and vehicles as free concessions.

The EDA gifts to Greece sweeten a larger arms package that includes 40 Lockheed F-35 stealth fighters, which Greece is buying for $8.6 billion. The Biden administration previously approved, in 2022 and 2023, $60 million in financing for arms-purchases by Athens.

In exchange for this largess, the Americans want the Greeks to donate more weapons to the Ukrainians. We continue to be interested in the defense capabilities that Greece could transfer or sell to Ukraine, Blinken wrote.

The Americans even offered a reward once the donation is complete. If these capabilities are of interest to Ukraine, and pending an assessment of their status and value by the U.S. government, we can explore opportunities for possible additional foreign armed forces financing of up to $200 million for Greece.

The Greek military operates, or holds in storage, an array of Soviet- and U.S.-designed weaponry that would be of immediate value to the Ukrainian military in particular, S-300 and Hawk long-range air-defense batteries, Tor and Osa short-range air-defense vehicles and ZU-23-2 air-defense guns. Also: ammunition for all these systems.

Some or all of those weapons could be heading to Ukraine. Political and military leadership has already given the necessary directions so that obsolete systems and equipment that are no longer used by the Greek army are transferred to Ukraine, **Kathimerini** reported.

The Greek ring-transfer was a delicate one, as tensions between Greece and Turkey mean the United States usually offers both countries new weapons at the same time and in roughly the same quantity.

So it s no accident that, simultaneous with the Greek arms deal, the U.S. State Department cleared Turkey to spend $23 billion on 40 new Lockheed F-16 fighters and 79 upgrade kits for older F-16s, plus munitions for the fighters. The deal also was a reward for Turkey finally consenting to Sweden joining NATO.

Germany s**Ringtausch** program has speeded to Ukraine scores of tanks and other heavy weapons. America s**own** ring trade could do the same potentially on an even grander scale. Greece isn t the only country with old weapons that it might give away, if the United States offers something in return.

That Biden and his secretary of state Blinken are backing an EDA-based ring-trade should come as no surprise to close observers of American ***politics***. Last fall, pro-Russia Republicans in the U.S. Congress made it clear they probably never will approve direct military aid to Ukraine.

The Republicans are falling in line with disgraced ex-president Donald Trump s personal hatred of Ukraine and equally personal fondness for authoritarian Russia.

The Republicans allegiance to Trump and therefore to dictators and military aggressors wasn t an issue for Ukraine until they narrowly gained control of the U.S. House of Representatives in the November 2022 elections. When earlier funding for Ukraine ran out in late December, Rep. Mike Johnson the extremist House speaker refused to put additional aid to a vote.

So barring a legislative breakthrough, Biden can t get the additional $61 billion in clean funding he wants for Ukraine. But that doesn t mean he can t honor the wishes of the majority of Americans and help Ukraine to defend itself.

Biden s EDA authority is one of several legal mechanisms at his disposal that can free up older weapons for onward transfer to Ukraine. And while Biden could send excess defense articles directly to Ukraine, he initially is using EDA as leverage in ring trades.

Expect more of this as Republicans and Trump increasingly side with Russia in Russia s brutal war on Ukraine. The Republicans might be eager to betray Ukraine; Biden however**isn t**.

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2024

**End of Document**