

**Jessica Lewis**  
**Assistant Secretary of State**  
**Bureau of Political-Military Affairs**

**Defense Writers Group**  
**Project for Media and National Security**  
**George Washington School of Media and Public Affairs**

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**Moderator:** Good morning, everybody, and welcome everyone to this Defense Writers Group conversation with a guest that we have not had before in my memory, so we're really honored to have Jessica Lewis, the Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

The ground rules as always, this is on the record, but there is no rebroadcast of either audio or video. I'll ask the first question, and then we'll go around the table. Ten of you already emailed in advance to get on the list. When we go through those I'll certainly call on others.

This is an incredibly auspicious and tragic day for the world, the one-year anniversary of Vladimir Putin's illegal aggressive invasion of Ukraine. You've spoken about it often, Madame Secretary, and I'd like to play back to you a very very powerful quote. Not long ago you said, "This war has really created a tectonic shift as the entire world is looking at what defense and security systems is going to need moving forward and as countries reassess their own security needs."

So I'll ask you, ma'am, what does that mean? What specifically do we need to do? What are the lessons from Ukraine that you and your office will be trying to press on the government and the allies moving ahead?

**A/S Lewis:** First of all I'd really like to start by saying thank you to you for hosting me, and thank you to everybody for being here today. It's a pleasure and an honor to be before such an auspicious group. I have read many of your articles and will continue to do so.

And let me also start by saying we really are here on an incredibly important day. The one-year anniversary of Russia's further invasion of Ukraine, and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and its people.

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I also want to start by honoring the people of Ukraine. When I think about today I think about the grandmothers, the young men, the young women, who have taken up arms to defend their country and really showed us all, to say profile in courage is a true understatement, and I think the Ukrainians also have talked about honoring those wounded, those who have been killed in the war.

To turn to the question that you asked specifically, I do think this is a moment of tectonic change for security assistance and security preparation. To talk about what we have done in terms of the war in Ukraine, I think as you know, the United States has provided nearly \$30 billion in security assistance in one form or another to Ukraine since the start of the war. I believe that what we have done, the scope, the scale and the speed of that work is part of what makes this a tectonic change in security assistance.

I think the other piece is that, and I'll come back to the scope, scale and speed in a minute, is that we have brought together 50 allies and partners from around the world who have also contributed. And I think if we could analyze the scope, scale and speed of that effort as well, I think historians will be writing books, maybe some of you will be writing books about what happened in this period.

So to talk a little bit about what we've done on the US side, I think the scale I just talked about. But just to give you some context.

In the past year we have used the Presidential Drawdown Authority which I think many of you know well, which is drawing from DoD stocks to provide directly to Ukraine. We've used it 32 times, about \$20 billion.

Prior to this the cap on that authority was \$100 million per year, and maybe we would use that once or twice a year. So that gives you a sense of the change, the delta there, which is extraordinary.

In addition, when we talk about speed, I look at that from the PM Bureau's perspective. We are processing not only those requests but many other kinds of requests that we have, and I'm happy to talk through them if it's helpful, the different authorities that we have. In 24 hours, 48 hours, and then

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frequently those items are being moved into Ukraine, again, with 24 or 48 hours. Incredible speed.

So I think we have seen that tectonic change literally demonstrated as we look at the US support for Ukraine, but also worldwide, our partners' and allies' support.

I also want to talk a little bit about what we're seeing in terms of the eastern flank, for example. When we talk about tectonic change, we are seeing the eastern flank countries -- and every country's different, just to be clear -- but looking at their own country's needs. We're seeing increases in their own defense budgets. I'm sure many of you follow that. And we've dramatically increased our own assistance to the eastern flank.

As you know, we've provided notifications, for example, under the Foreign Military Financing, our grant funding, for over a billion dollars and growing to eastern flank countries as well as to Ukraine. And what we are seeing there, what I think is very interesting, and I think this is another piece of the tectonic change, is that these countries are transitioning off Russian equipment in a massive way and moving to NATO compatible militaries, which that trend has already been happening, but again, I think if we talk about tectonic change we're seeing that.

I would also, as I look around the world, I think as we look at the question not just of the war in Ukraine itself, which is obviously what we're focused on today, but this question of strategic failure for Russia. I think we are seeing countries coming to us and saying look, we may need to diversify in ways that they haven't before, off of Russian equipment. Mainly because they are seeing the failure of Russia and Soviet doctrine in the war, but also raising questions about the equipment that Russia is providing and Russia's ability to keep providing that equipment.

I think if you had said to me two years ago or three years ago, well A, that we'd be seeing a land war in Europe; but B, that Russia would be going to other countries to have them supply themselves with equipment rather than the flip, I would have been very surprised.

Again, I think that's all part of the tectonic change that's

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happening and we haven't even started to address the question of the Indo-Pacific and what's happening there.

Again, I think we are, as we look at the scope, scale and speed related to what's being provided for the war itself -- and I need to be clear. Why that's working is because the Ukrainians know how to use this and they're very talented and committed to fighting this war. We are also learning lessons from the war that we all need to take into account as we move forward.

**Moderator:** Thank you so much.

The first question from the floor is Tony Bertuca, Inside Defense.

**DWG:** Thank you.

A question about the tectonic shift you're seeing in the transition off of Russian equipment. One, is the US committed to now fill that void with US equipment? And also, as there is a focus at DoD in trying to accelerate the FMS process, we've seen the administration talk about trying to center human rights when it comes to conventional arms transfers. Can you also talk a little bit about what might be the tension between those two things?

**A/S Lewis:** That's a really excellent question and I appreciate it.

To answer your first question, I think the simple answer is yes. We think that this moment in time presents an opportunity for us to look at the question of as countries are becoming interested in the transition off Russian equipment both for the US and for our partners and allies it does make sense for us to offer countries a choice. I think that's how we're thinking about it. We're offering countries a choice.

We think that there are really strong benefits to having a strong security cooperation relationship with the US that goes beyond just a security cooperation relationship and getting the best military equipment in the world, but also goes to deepening ties, having conversations, working on issues like human rights, et cetera.

To turn to your second question, I think as all of you know, we

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recently put out the new Conventional Arms Transfer policy which does have a renewed focus on human rights. I think we have to be able to do both. So we both have to have strong and deep security cooperation relationships, and we need to be able to have conversations with countries and work with countries on human rights.

I think the other thing you see in the new CAT policy is a renewed focus on security sector governance. That is incredibly important because to me, security sector governance is the overlay for all of these issues. So if you look at how countries are working on their security sector, questions of how those security sectors work to influence things like corruption, human rights, compliance with rule of law, and frankly, I think provide an underpinning for democracy when we talk about the relationship between the security sector and democratic institutions. So I think the whole focus, there are additional areas that the CAT policy focuses on, but I think this is incredibly important.

**DWG:** So it sounds like policy is, heaven forbid, nuanced because it's let's surge weapons when they need to be, surge US weapon sales, but center human rights at the same time.

**A/S Lewis:** I think we need to do both.

I would say, just as we have always done, we evaluate our cases on a case by case basis. We take all of these factors into account. That has always been true and that will continue to be true.

**Moderator:** Next from Bloomberg News, Iain Marlow.

**DWG:** Thanks.

Two questions, but on the Indo-Pacific. There's obviously a lot of Republican criticism that the US needs to do more on Taiwan, even at a time when Ukraine is the really pressing priority. I've heard you and the Secretary and others kind of talk about this issue before. I'm just wondering if you can kind of give your thoughts on where you think we are now and where you think arming Taiwan is in terms of US priorities, in terms of stockpiles and what needs to go there. It seems that they're getting what they need when they need it, but there's a lot of criticism that maybe they're not getting it fast enough.

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And a second question, there's also [inaudible] India and its traditional reliance on Russian weapons. They not only have bought a lot in the past but have co-produced and done a lot of stuff like that. They're very integrated. I'm wondering how that process is going in India. It seems there are some delays for shipments that they were going to get. It seems like they've canceled some orders. I'm wondering what you think that [presence] is like and how you see it progressing. I know it's not an instant turn the lights off kind of thing. I'm just wondering if I could get a [inaudible] answer.

**A/S Lewis:** Let me start with Taiwan. We are singularly focused on Taiwan. I think maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is in our national security interest. I think it's in the world's national security and economic interest. And we continue to provide our military assistance to Taiwan under the auspices of the Taiwan Relations Act.

As you know, since 2010 we've notified Congress of over \$37 billion in foreign military sales to Taiwan including a little over \$5 billion in this administration.

This year, over the past year in particular, we've been really focused and this is, to be fair, I think a long term focus of working on what we call asymmetric defense for Taiwan and I think many of you know about the definition of that. Mobile, [inaudible] resilient, cost effective. We will continue to do so.

I think one of the things that we see when it comes to Taiwan, and I think sometimes people get a little confused about this, is that what we really have right now is a challenge for our defense industrial base across the board. It's not Taiwan specific.

So our industrial base, per my earlier comments that we're seeing this tectonic change, this increase in demand combined with real supply chain and human resource challenges brought on by COVID and other issues, our defense industrial base right now is very focused and we are encouraging them to be focused on how to produce more of the key weapons that are needed in all of these places across the world to make sure that we can get, for example, Taiwan, but not just Taiwan. Eastern flank countries. What they need in time.

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So I think that is the challenge we're seeing with Taiwan. We're working very hard on that. I'm sure you all have met with my colleagues from the Defense Department who are really leading the charge in this space. Kath Hicks, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, has been very focused on moving up some of the timeframes and increasing production for some of these key capabilities.

Your second question was India. I think we have deepened and strengthened our relationship with India, the largest democracy in the world, incredibly important country in the region, and we are continuing to do so. Again, I think the way we see it is we offer India a choice when it comes to deepening and strengthening their security relationship with us. I feel very good about where that is going. Obviously they have a long history of course, as you pointed out, but I think we are making very good progress on that front.

**Moderator:** Next is Michael Gordon, Wall Street Journal.

**DWG:** I'd like to just follow up on those comments you made.

It's not just Russia that's having trouble coming up with munitions and arms, it's obviously the West as well. And with the consumption rates, it's not just Russia that's gone to other countries. The US has gone to South Korea looking for artillery.

Two questions. What specifically can PM do or what are you doing to, in light of the lessons of Ukraine, to deal with these problems you mentioned with the defense industrial base? Is there anything you are doing versus just out of your lane and it's up to DoD?

And second, is there an \$18 billion backlog in weapons to Taiwan as Congressman Gallagher says? Or is that not an accurate way to describe the situation?

**A/S Lewis:** Both really good questions.

First of all, we are working with DoD on this. DoD has the lead on this because of the authorities that they have in terms of being able to move the defense industrial base. However, we are regularly engaged with industry and having ongoing conversations

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with them about these key weapon systems. If you look across the world, you know we know what they are, from Javelins to ammunition to HIMARS to Harpoons. All of these systems, to try to look at ways that industry can lean forward in terms of increasing production. But I do think in terms of the lead, in terms of the authorities that are available to use for this, that falls in DoD's lane.

I think on the question of the backlog, I really appreciate Congressman Gallagher. He is raising really important questions about how we continue to support Taiwan. How I would characterize it is that we have provided really significant foreign military sales to Taiwan, and there are challenges on the production side.

So I think one of the things, the Foreign Military Sales process can be complicated. I'm happy to talk through it with you. But when we notify Congress, that is actually the start of a process not the end of a process. So when we notify Congress -- and this is true anywhere in the world -- Congress has to sign off, effectively, before that sale can then move forward. So it is at that point that then the money goes on the table and the production starts.

I think that is the piece that we need to make sure that we're explaining clearly. And many of the weapons that we're talking about are large and complicated and as you know take time to produce.

So I think that's how I would characterize that, and that I think comes back to the question that you were raising earlier, then how can the defense industrial base move more quickly to product some of those key items.

**DWG:** Is the effort to support Ukraine having a deleterious effect on the effort to supply Taiwan with weapons?

**A/S Lewis:** No. And I think there's confusion about this. Again, understandably. Just to be clear, at this point the main authority that we have used to move weapons to Ukraine has been the Presidential Drawdown Authority which draws from DoD stocks to then provide weapons to Ukraine. There's more to it than that, but that's been the main authority that we've used.

On the Taiwan side, we are using the Foreign Military Sales



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process where Taiwan is paying for weapons. Then as I said, those weapons go on contract and they get produced. So these are right now two different authorities that we're using to provide weapons in this case.

Obviously we in my view, as I said, need to do more to make sure that whatever the weapons are that are needed, that we have more available, and I think that is a challenge for us as an administration, and I think that's a challenge for industry and our defense industrial base.

**Moderator:** Jeff Seldin, Voice of America.

**DWG:** Thank you very much for doing this.

A couple of questions, you've been talking a lot about the tectonic shift. I'm wondering if beyond Eastern Europe could you mentioned if there are specific areas in which the US has been able to take advantage of Russia's misstep with the invasion and all these countries looking to find other sources for weaponry? And are there some regions, perhaps, where that's proven more difficult? Perhaps if they're not looking to the US are they looking to China who is offering a better deal? We hear about that a lot.

**A/S Lewis:** I actually think around the world, I think it's probably more accurate to talk about countries rather than regions. I think we are seeing countries around the world express an interest in diversification of their, from whom they are buying their weapons.

I think for example we just recently notified some FMS for Ecuador. I think that's a good example. We are looking, there are countries and I won't get into details here, but there are countries that we see in Africa that are interested in receiving FMS and US weapons that we're in discussions with. So I think we're actually seeing this across the board.

The other thing we're hearing about from countries is that they are having challenges, for example, at getting spare parts for their helicopters or for their planes. So some of this really isn't sort of a moral question, it's more a practical question which is is Russia going to be able to continue to support the weapons that they've provided them? So we're seeing this. And I've actually had countries as well in the Indo-Pacific region

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come to me and say hey, we're starting to look at this question of diversification.

**DWG:** With any of these countries, you mentioned Ecuador, do any of them have Soviet or Russian equipment systems that they've expressed a willingness to give up and give to Ukraine who needs weapons now? SOUTHCOM said a month or so ago that they were trying to work with some Latin American countries which have significant stocks. There's really been no movement on that despite apparently the offer of replacing those systems with US systems.

**A/S Lewis:** Absolutely, and I think we want to be careful. Some countries want to provide things in ways that are very public. Some countries want to work with us more privately on those issues. But we are definitely seeing countries around the world and some of it you have seen and you've reported on. But we also are always in conversations with countries as they are looking to either provide additional weapons or munitions to Ukraine or some countries may be saying these weapons aren't working and therefore they don't make sense for us. They may not also make sense for Ukraine. So we're more interested in looking at how to move forward in a new way.

**DWG:** For the countries where the weapons are working, has there been any movement, any progress, even if you can't say which ones in terms of getting those weapons and systems to Ukraine? Is that something that's actively happening? Or is it still just in the discussion phase?

**A/S Lewis:** I think that is something that is actively happening and again, wanting to be respectful of those relationships and conversations, but again I think I want to be clear that some countries are interested in moving equipment to Ukraine and some countries are simply saying hey, this equipment, we can't get supplies, we can't get parts, we're not going to be able to use this. So we're looking at how to move forward in a different way.

**Moderator:** Rachel Oswald of CQ Roll Call.

**DWG:** I wanted to ask you a question that has been actually put to me by some Taiwanese defense experts, retired military officers. Taiwan has generally focused on defense via deterrence toward China, putting a lot of resources into

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acquiring prestigious platforms, and the US more recently has been focusing on asymmetrical means. What I heard when I was in Taiwan last year was that okay, if we do this and we put all of our eggs in this asymmetrical basket and we stop focusing on deterrence, particularly when there's cross-strait incursions, will the United States provide deterrence? If we decide to put our resources in asymmetric. I said I don't know. So I want to put that question to you.

**A/S Lewis:** First of all, I believe that an asymmetric defense is deterrence. And I think we've seen asymmetric -- if there's a lesson learned from Ukraine I think it's that asymmetric works and I think the world is watching that and the world is seeing that. So I would start with that.

I think that as Taiwan -- and let me also start by saying that fundamentally we want peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits. That's what we want, that's what the world wants, and frankly, within the region.

I think in terms of US policy, our policy remains the same. I think our policy is going to continue to remain the same towards Taiwan which as you know was the One China policy, and we're going to continue to maintain that policy.

But I do think that the investment in asymmetric -- and I would also say not just the investment in asymmetric weapons, but we're seeing Taiwan make changes in its own human resources, I guess I would say, with the changes they've made with the all-out mobilization, extending the amount of time that those people are in training and in service. So I think Taiwan itself is investing and looking at this differently than maybe it was a few years ago.

**DWG:** I understand your point about Ukraine, arming Ukraine, not arming Taiwan because of different authorities. But what about the other countries that are also relying on foreign military sales? Gulf countries, European countries. Is there really like a bottleneck there? And if there is, some people in Congress debated last year, it didn't make it into the final bill, but requiring the defense industry to prioritize commercial orders from Taiwan above other countries.

What's your view on all of that?

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**A/S Lewis:** Look, as a former congressional staffer I'm not going to comment on what Congress should do or not do. I know that well.

Look, I think we have to be able to do all of the above. I think it's in our national security interest. I think it's in our foreign policy interest. I think our defense industrial base really is, as you know, needs to be part of that challenge.

If it's helpful I'll share some of the things, and I'm sure you've talked to industry yourself, but share some of the challenges that they face just to give you some illustrative examples.

When COVID hit, the defense industrial base like many other parts of, and we saw this across the board, they had for example a lot of people retire. People who were right on the cusp. And over the time, that time period, they need to make sure they have not only a workforce but a workforce that is trained properly in how to do the necessary work.

We are also having challenges, and this is outside of my area of expertise, but making sure we have enough engineers in this country. Incredibly important. And by the way, Ukrainian engineers have played a role in our defense industrial base and now are playing a role, and in my view a critical role, inside of Ukraine in terms of enabling them to fight and sustain and maintain weapon systems from around the world. That's a different story.

Then they are having, and I think the supply chain issues have gotten much, much better. Again, it varies company to company, and depending on what you're producing, but they have really significant supply chain issues.

And all of that was before the war in Ukraine and before this moment in time. Then you put that on top.

We also have a system with our defense industrial base which, I was just talking about, that companies start producing when weapons are put on contract and when money is paid. We don't keep warehouses of hundreds and thousands of weapons that are then pulled out. That is not how the industry works.

So I think these are the types of questions that we are having

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to ask as we are in this moment. So I think it is that combination that lands us here where we have to really think about are there ways to incentivize industry? Are there ways to take lessons learned from Ukraine and look at what we may need to do in the future.

I think that's what industry is also facing.

**Moderator:** John Ismay, New York Times.

**DWG:** Are you looking to license foreign co-production for weapons like guided MLRS rockets or HIMARS vehicles? Right now it doesn't seem that the defense industry in the United States is able to make enough of the weapons that the US wants to send without breaking ground on new facilities. I know there are some [inaudible] when the 105mm production. But things like GMLRS rockets, Lockheed's just now breaking ground. Is it not also a chance to say strengthen ties with a country like France if you wanted to license with MDBA or Germany with Rheinmetall? Companies in other countries that make similar munitions. Is that the way forward? Is it licensed foreign co-production?

**A/S Lewis:** I think that's a really good question. I need to be careful because I think, as you know, questions about co-production and what we call offsets are negotiated by US companies with other countries or companies, not by the US government.

So I think if companies think that that is a way that makes sense for them to move forward, that would be something that would be worth considering. Again, I have to be careful about what is in the government's lane here specifically. And certainly worth having conversations about.

**DWG:** You mentioned that countries are expressing interest in divesting their Russian equipment. Are we talking about India and Peru? Those are two countries that had massive Russian arsenals. Are those two of the countries? Can you give any examples of some of these nations that are divesting and looking to switch to NATO compatible?

**A/S Lewis:** How about you come back to me in a couple of months and I'll give you more specific answers to that question.

**DWG:** Okay.

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**Moderator:** Jim Garamone, DoD News.

**DWG:** Thanks for doing this.

Earlier this month, shifting just a little bit, Secretary Austin was in the Philippines and negotiated four new bases that the US [inaudible]. I was just wondering has that changed the strategy in the area? And what's the next step? There are now nine bases that the US can use in the Philippines. Are you looking for similar sort of things in other areas of Southeast Asia?

**A/S Lewis:** Yes. I'm aware of that. I think, as you may know, one of the things that PM Does is we actually have a security agreements negotiator who negotiates agreements. In this case that was building on an agreement that had already been negotiated.

And look, I think to take it out of the Philippines, specifically, I think as we look at the Indo-Pacific region and I know, I'm sure you're talking that the administration put out that we have an Indo-Pacific strategy, that we are looking to deepen and strengthen ties across the region.

Again, I need to be careful in the State Department lane not to get ahead of DoD in their decision-making about posture and basing and all of those things. But I do think it's accurate to say that one of the lessons learned from Ukraine is the reason we've been able to be so successful is we have brought many countries together. I think as we look at the Indo-Pacific region, I think that is equally as important in a very different way.

So I think the Philippines is a good example. We in addition to the basing, we've obviously provided security assistance there. We continue to do so. We are looking at other countries that we may want to do, the security assistance aside, that we may want to deepen our ties with.

I think the question of access, basing, overflight, all of those are core to how we're going to move forward in the region.

**DWG:** If I could shift again, back to Ukraine. While the equipment is good, the military capabilities are great. The real difference from February to today is that Ukrainians had

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different training, had different motivations, have developed an NCO Corps. I'm just curious, are you seeing more interest from other countries in perhaps doing some of the same things?

**A/S Lewis:** I think you raise an incredibly important point. The truth is that the United States, I think what we did right in 2014, and that's a collective we. I was not in the administration at the time so I can't take any credit. And frankly, what the Ukrainians did right, was really working with them not just on here's a weapon and how to use it, but really more thoughtful development, as you point out, of their own military, moving them off what I would say is a Soviet structured military, and that has formed the core and the basis for what they're able to do now.

I would also say, and again this is a topic I'm particularly interested in, I think the fact that the Ukrainians also in addition to that training, in addition to the weapons, the fact is that they have been able to use and maintain those weapons effectively. I don't think we can underestimate how important that is.

If you think about what's happened in Ukraine, they have been supplied different weapon systems from around the world. Normally when you build a military you say I don't know, I'm going to buy Strykers or I'm going to buy, you know, pick a system. Or I'm going to buy T-72s or whatever it is you're going to buy and then you build your military on that and everybody gets trained on that and learns how to use it.

IN their case what they have is, and they've been incredibly adept at, is bringing in different systems, using them effectively, and maintaining and sustaining them.

I think one of the heroes of this war on our side is TRANSCOM. People who will write military history will talk about logistics and the difference it makes. I also think sustainment and maintenance makes a difference. And I think the fact that Ukrainians have people there, and I hear this when I go meet with our military and the folks who are watching the war, they tell me over and over again, the Ukrainians not only are using this effectively, but when something breaks they're figuring out how to fix it, like in real time. That's extraordinary too, as you're fighting a war.

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So I think all of these pieces have come together. And then I think the other piece is just the will to fight fundamentally and the absolute heroics that we have seen across the board.

Again, I think there will be history books written about all of it. I personally hope there are history books written about the Ukrainian engineers and the people who contribute in that way as well because I think -- you know one of the other things, the other thing that I think we need to think about as we're seeing this, and I should have added this in the tectonic shift question. As we're seeing this tectonic shift to Western and US military equipment, this sustainment and maintenance piece is mission critical. Because as you get these more sophisticated systems you have to be more sophisticated in your ability to take care of them, maintain them. And that's a long term investment. Both in Ukraine, but I think in the eastern flank and I think in other countries.

That also is part of the deepening and strengthening of our relationship. And we talk about the Foreign Military Sales. Part of what we offer that China and Russia don't offer, I would say many things, but part of what it is is this total package approach where people get the training, the maintenance and the sustainment over many years, sometimes even decades. So I think all of that also goes into this question.

**Moderator:** Footnote to Clausewitz. The will of the people still matters, right?

**A/S Lewis:** Right.

**Moderator:** Steve Trimble, Aviation Week.

**DWG:** Thank you for joining us.

What's going on in the UAE? Have negotiations restarted on F-35 and the MQ-9?

**A/S Lewis:** We have been really clear on the UAE that we continue to support the sale of both the F-35 and the MQ-9. I'm not going to comment on the details of conversations that are happening now, but I will say that continues and we continue to support those sales.

**DWG:** So UAE has not backed off of Huawei and their



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telecommunications infrastructure? It appears there are some credible reports this week that they've finalized the deal for L-15 Trainers from China. So can you finalize a deal for F-35s in that context? What kind of message would that end to other partners that we don't want them doing that?

**A/S Lewis:** Let me address that question by talking more generally about the China question because the issues that you're raising about Huawei and some of these other challenges on the Chinese front we are seeing across and around the world.

I think as we look at the transfer of any weapon to any country, depending on its level of sophistication and what may or may not be happening in the country, we always have to look at those questions and see what makes sense.

We are always very clear with countries about when we have concerns in that space.

I would also say that as countries look at the PRC and the way that the PRC tends to operate, both when it comes to security cooperation and then to infrastructure, that we try to let countries know that sometimes when you make those decisions there are consequences in the future that you may not have thought about as you're stepping into those purchases. So I will leave that there.

**Moderator:** From Asahi Shimbun, [Ria Kiomiya].

**DWG:** [Inaudible]. Some people in the US [inaudible] to Taiwan. [Inaudible]. Also China could [inaudible] defense companies unreliable [inaudible] because of their [inaudible] to Taiwan. How much are you worried about [inaudible]?

**A/S Lewis:** I think actually to answer sort of both questions at once, our commitment to Taiwan remains rock solid. Obviously we provide these weapons under the Taiwan Relations Act and will continue to do so.

I think that we agree that we need to move quickly when it comes to Taiwan. I think as I mentioned earlier, since 2010 we've notified over \$37 billion worth of sales, over \$5 billion since this administration. And we will continue to focus on Taiwan.

I'm sorry, what was your second question?

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**DWG:** China [inaudible] US companies [inaudible] arms sales to Taiwan. Are you worried about the Chinese reaction?

**A/S Lewis:** What I would say in terms of PRC reaction is, us selling weapons to Taiwan under the Foreign Military Sales process is something we have been doing and will continue to do. It's something that happened in the administration before this one, the administration before that. So this has been ongoing US policy and will continue to be.

Obviously the PRC may or may not react but we believe this is something we have been doing and will continue to do.

**Moderator:** Joe Gould of Defense News.

**DWG:** Thanks for doing this.

Let me ask another Taiwan question. Obviously there is a dialogue that goes on between the State Department and the Hill and a number of ideas have been floated, among them bumping Taiwan up in the queue ahead of Saudi Arabia; one is modernizing the Defense Production Act in order to turbocharge munitions production; another one is some kind of MacGyver solution on the Harpoon missile [inaudible] what's happened with Ukraine.

Given there are these bottlenecks in defense industrial capacity, like what's your reaction to some of these creative solution to get around those problems?

**A/S Lewis:** I think we should always look at creative solutions. I'm not going to specifically comment on the Harpoons, but we've seen MacGyvering work. If that's a technical term.

**Moderator:** This is the only group where you can talk about Clausewitz and MacGyver at the same time.

**A/S Lewis:** I think we need to look at a host of ways, not just for Taiwan but across the board to move the defense industrial base. The Defense Production Act falls under the auspices of the Defense Department so again I'm going to stay in my lane and not comment specifically on that.

Also I would note that Congress did act last year. It provided an authorization for \$2 billion in FMS to Taiwan, but not a

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concurrent appropriation. So we need to continue the conversation with Congress about all of the different possible ways to move forward.

**DWG:** Does the State Department favor grants versus loans in that case for Taiwan? And is it advisable or is it even possible under the law to move Taiwan ahead of another country that might be in the queue for a particular weapon system?

**A/S Lewis:** I'll have to take the question back on moving countries ahead in queues. I think there are contracts, all kinds of things and I don't want to get ahead of my lawyers on what the rules of the game are on that one.

I think what I would say is that both grants and loans were included in the defense authorization bill. Obviously there wasn't -- let me make sure I'm getting that right. I think the grants were authorized and the loans were appropriated. I need to be sure I'm getting -- my old congressional staffer brain needs to be -- you don't have to quote that part. [Laughter].

I want to make sure I'm getting it exactly right. I think we can move forward with what Congress has authorized and appropriated, so we need to look at those authorities and see what we have available in terms of being able to move forward in the appropriate way.

**Moderator:** Joe was the last of the advanced request for questions. We have a few more minutes.

**DWG:** Ma'am, the relationship between the Department of State and the Department of Defense has ebbed and flowed over the years. Thom and I remember the time when Bob Gates actually got up there and said hey, give the State Department another billion dollars or you're going to have to buy us more ammunition.

How would you characterize the relationship between the two departments right now? You're sort of in that ball park between.

**A/S Lewis:** I think actually and interestingly, one of the positive byproducts of the moment that we're in in time is that we are literally having to work hand in glove with them on a daily basis. I wasn't in the administration before so I can't comment on what that was like before, but I would say --

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**DWG:** I can.

**A/S Lewis:** I will let you do that.

Just to give you a few examples. At the working level in the PM Bureau, my Ukraine team is on the phone with DoD's Ukraine team on a daily basis and there's real reason for that.

Just to give you like a concrete example, the Presidential Drawdown Authority is an authority delegated to the Secretary of State, executed by the Secretary of Defense. So to move any of these we have to have literally at the most concrete level, our teams have to be in contact. What's going to be included? What's the number this time? So all of that has to happen on a daily basis. So that's at the super concrete working level, and obviously that moves up the food chain.

But in addition to that, I have regular conversations with my counterparts constantly. So at my level, one of the benefits of being a functional bureau is that I work with Eli Ratner, I work with Celeste Walender, I actually work across all of the regions. So I have regular, depending on the OpsTempo, sometimes daily contact with people at my level to hash out issues.

So I think while there's always going to be a difference of opinion, who has which authority, when they should be used, I think that is always going to exist. I think in terms of literally day to day work, we're working really well together right now.

A good example is on travel. We often have DoD officials with State Department officials on the trips, vice versa. We're going to the air shows together. I think in this moment of time where we are, as I started with, at this moment of tectonic change and we're having to move so quickly, that constant communication is mission critical for us.

**DWG:** You said what's included, what's the number this time. The what's the number this time question is something I've been trying to get at for months. I've got a running spreadsheet of every PDA, every USAI, everything I can find.

**Moderator:** And he actually can do it. I can vouch for that as

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his former editor. [Laughter].

**A/S Lewis:** And you're good at math, presumably.

**DWG:** Well, the computer's good at math.

I've been told that there's rounding. I get that. The rounded parts now add up to I think around \$2 billion that I can't quite account for. I've asked DoD and I've some parts of State. They said well we're in agreement with each other. You know, the number is decided upon. But could we please get a no-kidding breakdown of how the numbers are arrived at?

Because we get in the press releases this is, you know, \$32 billion, it's always from 2014, from the beginning of the Biden administration, from the [inaudible]. It's parsed a couple of different ways. But I can't get the numbers to add up and I was wondering, would you please do us a solid and show how the numbers are arrived at. I get rounding them. Now the rounded parts are I think over a billion, close to two billion that we can't quite get to match. That would really help.

**A/S Lewis:** I'm happy to take that one back. I'm not aware of discrepancies in numbers, but I'm happy to take that one back.

**DWG:** I don't have a dog in the fight as to what the actual number is. I'm sure it's, I'm guessing it's probably pretty close. But I think that would be really helpful because we'd like to be able to have -- when Uncle Sam issues a new release I think we'd like to be able to check it against our spreadsheets or whatever and say yes. These things make sense.

**STAFF:** And you're asking for US military assistance to Ukraine. That's the primary stat you're asking for?

**DWG:** Sure. When there's a new PA or a new USAI or whatever.

**STAFF:** Okay. You're not asking us for humanitarian or for other things that we're not --

**DWG:** No, whatever your numbers are, how are they arrived at.

**A/S Lewis:** Happy to do that.

**Moderator:** The military talks about a target rich environment.

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This is a very content rich environment. So I thank you for your time. We always reserve the last few minutes for our guest speaker for any closing comments. But truly, we appreciate what you do and we especially appreciate you coming and spending an hour and engaging with the national security press corps.

**DWG:** Can I ask one question? Marc Selinger with Janes.

I had a question about the Grand Forks Air Force Base situation with a Chinese company wanting to build a corn milling facility nearby. The City Council recently voted that down, but CFIUS said they didn't have jurisdiction on that. I wonder if you have any concern that the federal government couldn't block this proposal, that it had to rely on a local city government to stop it?

**A/S Lewis:** Good question. I am not tracking that issue because we don't handle that side of the house so to speak. I'm happy to take that back and see if there is someone who is.

**Moderator:** Any final thoughts for us today?

**A/S Lewis:** I really want to sort of end where I started. I'm thinking about where we were a year ago today. One of the things that we have thought a lot about is how the war has evolved. A year ago today we were incredibly focused, obviously the Ukrainians were responding to an ongoing, continued, full-scale invasion of their country. We were very focused on making sure we were getting them the weapons they needed.

I really want to say something about countries, particularly the Baltics. So at the beginning of the war but throughout the war we were using third party transfer authority which allows us to move US origin weapons from one country to another. We were really focused on getting weapons like Stingers and Javelins across that border as quicky as we could at the beginning of the war. We needed to have weapons that were available immediately and close by, and helpful in the fight. Then of course we saw the Ukrainians take them and use them to incredible effect at the beginning of the war.

Then throughout the war our focus has been on getting the Ukrainians what they need as the war has evolved. So as we look at whether it is air defense which has continued, is an ongoing need; but when we look at things like HIMARS, Patriots, SAMs,

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artillery, and as the war has evolved our security assistance has evolved. And in addition I think, as I was referring to earlier, we've seen the Ukrainians' incredible ability not just to fight but to be able to lean as they fight, adapt and change, bring in new weapons.

So really I want to sort of start where I ended which is saying it's a historic moment today. We're here to honor the Ukrainians. We're also at a moment of tectonic change. I think this is the challenge before us, is how are we going to ensure that my grandchildren, great grandchildren have a world where democracy, the rule of law is what governs the world. And I think that's what's at stake with this war. And that is why we are so committed.

**Moderator:** Again, thank you for your time, and thank you for a most thoughtful and thought-provoking session this morning.

**A/S Lewis:** Thank you all. I really appreciate it.

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