

# Foreign Experience of Lend-lease Implementation and Prospects for Ukraine

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**Abstract:** The modern Russian-Ukrainian relationship has actualized the issue of Lend-Lease, i.e., the supply of military equipment and other weapons for the needs of the Ukrainian army. Today, the historical, military and legal aspects of the implementation of this plan have not been thoroughly investigated, which further actualizes this problem. The purpose of the article is to analyze the foreign experience of Lend-Lease implementation and prospects for Ukraine. In the article historical, structural, retrospective, systematic methods are used. The results highlight the historical aspect of the operation of the Lend-Lease program, especially against the background of the Second World War, analyze the Soviet, British, and Chinese work experience, summarize the prospects of using this tool in Ukraine, identify the difficulties that Lend-Lease may face when working in 2022. The historical and practical parallels in the use of this support program are especially emphasized; the legal nuances of American aid and the prospects for its implementation are traced. The conclusions concluded that American aid can lead to qualitative changes in the Ukrainian army, its transition to NATO weapons standards.

**Keywords:** Lend-Lease, USA, Great Britain, Ukraine, Russian-Ukrainian war, military equipment.

**JEL Classification:** F51, F55, F59, F68.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Russian-Ukrainian war, the active phase of which began in February 2022, was a continuation of the Russian aggression of 2014 (the annexation of Crimea and support of pro-Russian collaborators in eastern Ukraine). The barbaric methods used by the Russian generals became evident after the liberation of Ukrainian territories began. The discovered executed civilians, mass graves of those executed in Bucha, Izyum, and other towns and cities demonstrated the

lawlessness of the Kremlin regime, which it actively imposed among its military. The demonstration of misanthropy, mass artillery, rocket and air strikes, and threats to use nuclear weapons forced democratic leaders to reconsider their attitude toward Ukraine and its armed forces. Ukraine's army, generalship, and volunteer structures have demonstrated their effectiveness, so the Lend-Lease Act for Ukraine, which consolidated American politics in May 2022, was a response to the lawlessness and baseless aggressiveness of the Kremlin's autocratic regime. The functioning of the Lend-Lease in the XXI century has not yet been appreciated by experts, since the deployment of such a large-scale conflict within Europe was not expected, so this topic is relevant. The article aims to analyze the foreign experience of the implementation of the Lend-Lease and to assess the prospects of its use for Ukraine. The realization of this goal will

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provide a reference to the problem of the historical context of the first use of the Lend-Lease program, will formulate the prospects for modern Ukraine.

The methodological basis of this article is the work of American and European historians, political scientists, and economists. Active study of the Lend-Lease problem began in the middle of the twentieth century. The first solid theoretical studies were formed by American specialists in military history. However, Soviet researchers covered the problem of this aid in an extremely one-sided way. Later on, this problem of Lend-Lease was actively developed by European scientists. In particular, Beach (1946) characterized the peculiarities of the implementation of Lend-Lease during World War II. Campbell & Stettinius (1944) asked the debatable question whether Lend-Lease was a weapon to win the war. The authors try to analyze this question from different points of view, to characterize all the disadvantages and advantages of introducing the system. Clough et al. (1968) studied the peculiarities of the implementation of this aid system through an economic point of view. Henderson (1946), through a philosophical lens, characterized the negative manifestations of World War II, paying particular attention to the characteristics of U.S. military aid during these times. In 1946, the author posed the debatable question, "What comes after Lend-Lease: victory or economics" (Henderson, 1946, ch. 29). Consequently, the author, using different philosophical approaches, tries to characterize the impact of Lend-Lease on the economic life of the USSR. At the same time, modern European specialists have also paid special attention to the study of the problem of the implementation of the Lend-Lease system. For example, Stone (2014) characterized the theoretical background of Lend-Lease. Pyle (2018) explored the negative effects of the military aid program system.

For this article, the work of authors who have studied the peculiarities of the development of the Russian-Ukrainian war are also important. The use of these works will facilitate the task of forecasting the further implementation of the Lend-Lease system in Ukraine. Bina & Dragomir (2020) investigated the spread of information confrontation between Russia and Ukraine as one of the key elements of modern hybrid warfare.

Cybulsky (2022) characterized the main preconditions, causes of confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. At the same time, Ghilès (2022) analyzed the significance of this global war for the whole world. Kharchenko (2019) explored the peculiarities of the future life of Ukrainian war veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war through a psychological prism. At the same time, Manolea (2021) characterized the key features of modern hybrid wars. Wiewiorka (2022) in "Russia in Ukraine" explored the peculiarities of the deployment of a full-scale Russian offensive and its impact on the social, economic, and political life of Ukraine. However, Materniak (2020) investigated the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the further arrangement of political forces in the world.

At present, however, the problem of the implementation of the Lend-Lease system in Ukraine is little explored in modern historiography. Predominantly there are several articles of popular scientific nature, but there are no purely scientific studies with the emphasis on the prognostic elements of the

further implementation of this system of assistance in Ukraine. Consequently, this is the relevance of this article.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

When writing this article, general scientific theoretical and empirical methods of research were used. Based on the analysis it was possible to divide the main subject of the research into smaller elements (features of Lend-Lease implementation through the prism of the historical aspect, modern experience, and prospects of implementation of this program for Ukraine). By means of synthesis, these elements are united and own theoretical considerations concerning the further development of the Lend-Lease system in Ukraine are formed. Among other general scientific methods, the inductive and deductive are distinguished, based on which the problem of Lend-Lease functioning in Ukraine is comprehensively covered. Besides, based on the historical method of research the evolutionary development of this aid program from the Second World War is traced. The peculiarities of the modern application of Lend-Lease in comparison with its application in the middle of the 20th century are characterized using comparison. At the same time, empirical methods (retrospective, chronological, structural methods of research) are used in the work. As a result of using the systematic method, the phenomenon of Lend-Lease is characterized as a complex system consisting of many structural elements. Based on the prognostic method of the research the further application of the Lend-Lease program in Ukraine during the period of the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation was predicted.

## 3. RESULTS

The assistance of other peoples, even in times of strict religious separation, played an important role in the social cohabitation of particular ethnic communities during the Middle Ages and the New Age. During the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, this rule began to extend to political nations as well, primarily in Europe and the United States. The creation of international aid funds initially had a humanitarian target, but with the development of globalization and military technology, international aid began to encompass the military sphere as well (Beach, 1946).

The first sprouts of such interaction were visible during World War I when the United States actively sold arms to European warring nations. Later, during World War II, such assistance only deepened and changed.

The American Lend-Lease program became an effective mechanism of military and economic support during the war, the most large-scale economic action of the twentieth century. It was created and implemented during World War II in order to quickly replenish the reserves of the member countries of the anti-Hitler coalition without urgently involving the United States in direct military operations (Nachmani, 1983). According to statistical calculations, the U.S. Department of Commerce provided more than \$50 billion worth of goods and primarily transportation services to the Allies (referring to 1940s prices) (Malherbe, 1950). Considering that the annual budget of the federal government at the time ranged from \$60-65 billion, the allocation of such strong support affected the financial and economic sectors of the U.S. economy.

The main consumer of Lend-Lease was supposed to be Great Britain. Economic destruction, destruction of civilian infrastructure, and loss of influence in the Asian colonies (through the advance of Japanese forces allied with Hitler's Germany) were draining the currency and gold capacity of official London (Campbell & Stettinius, 1944). Financial constraints prevented Britain from buying American ammunition, without which it would have been impossible to stand up to German forces. U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt was an ardent supporter of the British government and took all possible measures to support official London (Nachmani, 1983). By rallying like-minded American politicians around him, he compared Lend-Lease to a fire hose that had to be given to a neighbor to put out a fire. Initially, it was about subsidies, meaning that the British government was obligated to return the materials, equipment, and machinery provided (Beach, 1946). If they were damaged, used, or destroyed, official London had to reimburse their cost. At the same time, the issue was postponed until after the war was over - as reality showed, the American government forgave almost all debts.

In practice, deliveries under the Lend-Lease program included all possible forms and methods of assistance. These included arms and equipment, military equipment (planes, tanks, ships, automobiles, etc.), strategic materials, communications equipment, raw materials, and construction materials for military installations (Malherbe, 1950). A significant component of supplies was clothing and foodstuffs. All of these goods were transferred by sea directly from U.S. territory (civilian ports) or military bases located on the coasts or islands of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans (Nachmani, 1983). Colossal forces were amassed to fulfill military orders. Officials acknowledged that under the pressure of circumstances they were forced to form separate industries and even entire industries to create concentrates, canned products (soups, beans, porridge, etc.). Franklin Roosevelt later added France, China, the Soviet Union, and other countries that opposed Hitler's Germany and its allies to the list of countries that received aid from the United States. Particularly mystifying was the Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet forces, which also included the then-Ukrainians. The Soviet government was unwilling to acknowledge the real positive effects of receiving aid and kept silent about the true volume of Lend-Lease deliveries (Pyle, 2018). In the 1990s, when liberal Russian historians gained access to archival materials, it became clear that it was impossible to achieve a breakthrough (technical superiority) against the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe without American support. In addition, the public learned some "unpleasant facts", such as the support of the siege survivors of the then Leningrad blockade by bringing in food or the fact that heroic World War II pilots used American planes in combat flights. The democratic experiments were ended quickly, and the cult of World War II took on an unprecedented scale in Russian society - there was no place in contemporary mythologizing for the Lend-Lease program (Pyle, 2018). Given that the archival documents of the era were concentrated in Moscow, they were also not available to researchers from other countries. Instead of historical research, separate mythologies were created. One was that the Soviet government allegedly paid for all U.S. supplies in full (Stone, 2014). In fact, this "legend" was debunked back in

the 1990s, when it turned out that only a meager portion of the supplies had been paid for, while all surviving equipment and materials after the war were not only not returned by the Soviets but were used to establish their own hegemony in postwar Europe.

Military supplies to China were also special. The Lend-Lease program was extended to this country in May 1941 as an addition to the loan payments already made by the American authorities earlier (Pyle, 2018). A peculiarity of the Chinese Lend-Lease was the inability to use the funds received: the largest industrial facilities were destroyed or captured by the Japanese. So, the loan funds fell into corrupt schemes or simply went to support the country's livelihood, accelerating inflationary processes. Adding to the difficulty of working in China were the unrealistic demands of officials.

For example, the Chiang Kai-shek government demanded deliveries of four-ton trucks, which were produced in limited quantities in the United States and were not suitable for China's transportation system. Subsequently, the tendency to demand U.S. supplies of modern and powerful weapons only increased (Clough et al., 1968). In particular, the Chinese military claimed the need to arm its infantrymen with Garand semiautomatic rifles, believing that supplying older weapons would be a reputational blow. In reality, the type of weapons the Chinese wanted were not produced in large quantities in the United States, and the U.S. military was not equipped with semi-automatic weapons in the necessary quantities (Nachmani, 1983). Also, the use of Garand rifles increased the consumption of ammunition - due to the limited supply by sea through the Lend-Lease it was difficult to meet these wishes of the Chinese government. Likewise, U.S. generals did not agree to turn over one-third of the Pacific Fleet's deck-based dive bombers to Chinese pilots and American volunteers serving in the Celestial Air Force (Pyle, 2018). Chinese specialists could not provide service maintenance for them, shells and fuel were in short supply - the insistence of the Chiang Kai-shek government and its unrealistic demands sowed mistrust in cooperation with the F. Roosevelt administration. At the same time, the American side was making considerable concessions.

In particular, Chinese units received about fifty modern 75-mm howitzers through Burma, while U.S. forces in the Philippines were still equipped with much older and less rapid-fire weapons (Stone, 2014). Sometimes the eagerness to help crossed the limits of common sense - at China's request, lead was shipped through Burma, while the region itself was the most natural source of the metal.

Consequently, we note that the Lend-Lease experience was studied by American theorists, who summed up that receiving U.S. aid depended on a country's ability to stand up to an aggressor. For example, supplies to the USSR increased significantly after the Battle of Stalingrad. This aspect, as well as the scenarios of subsequent possible developments, became decisive in decision-making in 2022.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Lend-Lease Program in 2022 will have certain peculiarities if we compare it with the times of World War II. A certain special point is that today this sup-

port is oriented against the Russian state, although almost eighty years ago it (in the form of the USSR) was the final recipient of a huge number of military supplies. Today's Lend-Lease seeks to solve the problem of Ukraine's arms shortage, to provide the Ukrainian Armed Forces with the necessary material and technical support, the necessary means to defeat the enemy, etc. (Wiewiorka, 2022).

Act S.3522 "Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022" was passed by representatives of the U.S. House of Congress on April 28, 2022, by an absolute majority vote. It was signed into law by President Biden on May 9, 2022. The document specifies that authorized persons from the U.S. government may lend various types of military-technical products to support Ukraine or other governments of Central and Eastern Europe that have suffered losses due to Russian aggression. In addition to protecting democracy in Ukraine, the main goal of the program is also to help friendly countries whose military or civilian population has already suffered from possible invasion or progressive aggression by the Russian armed forces (Ghilès, 2022). In addition, certain provisions of this bill allow the U.S. President to expedite the delivery and transfer into service of military equipment and combat gear, as well as to influence the acceleration of the delivery of this assistance and to guarantee the timely fulfillment of obligations. Other clauses of the law S.3522 specify that the United States will not demand immediate payment from the Ukrainian side. Obviously, the issue of payment for the aid provided will be solved after the war, the same applies to the problem of the return of residual equipment and ammunition (Cybulsky, 2022). This creates a certain uncertainty in the future, but without the said aid, with which the Armed Forces of Ukraine have already received many types of weapons (above all artillery systems, shells, and multiple rocket launchers), the defeat of Ukraine would be inevitable (Ghilès, 2022). Separately, financial support was discussed - military losses have destroyed the foundations of the Ukrainian economy, so financial injections, while accelerating inflation, are necessary.

In early July 2022, the White House officially announced that until the end of the fiscal year, the U.S. priority was to provide nonrefundable aid to Ukraine. Only after exhausting this resource, which Congress provided to Ukraine in the spring, will the U.S. begin to use Lend-Lease opportunities. Currently, we are talking about using the \$40 billion that Congress previously provided. This program and the U.S. Presidential Authorization Program are enough to provide aid to the Ukrainian military without expecting a refund (Cybulsky, 2022). The Lend-Lease program will go into effect later when needed, but it will already require reimbursement mechanisms.

The implementation of Lend-Lease will have much in common with the British, Soviet, and Chinese experiences of World War II. In particular, arms transfers will be similar to British practice: at some point, Britain also began to transfer arms to the Soviet Union (Nachmani, 1983). In 2022 it is said that the U.S. government will provide modern weapons to other countries, while the latter will transfer obsolete models to the Ukrainian army. In particular, the Polish military agreed to transfer 400 modernized and mothballed (not upgraded) T-72 tanks to Ukraine in exchange for signing a

contract to supply modern American Abrams tanks. Slovakia plans to give several MiG-29AS fighters, get additional security guarantees from its neighbors, and modern multi-purpose F-16s. Earlier, the Ukrainian military received S-300 anti-aircraft systems according to the same scheme.

U.S. supplies play as important a role in modern Ukraine as they once did for the Soviet Union. It is not only a question of supplying equipment but also of supplying shells and ammunition, modern military technology, and additional materials. For the realization of this plan today it is not necessary to equip the caravans of ships - the USA military bases are located in the European countries of NATO blockade, so the bulk of weaponry will be sent there and then delivered to Ukraine. This greatly facilitates logistical tasks and speeds up Lend-Lease if we compare it with the times of World War II.

The Chinese experience looks most dangerous. The tendency of the Ukrainian power elite to corrupt deals has already caused a kind of friction between American congressmen and the Office of the President of Ukraine. In the future, with the expansion of aid, these negative processes can become extremely threatening - first of all, it is about the credibility of the American authorities in Ukraine and Ukrainians. another problem is that the Ukrainian armed forces used Soviet-type military equipment. The technological lag formed a certain vacuum in the professional training of the Ukrainian military (Binã, & Dragomir, 2020). For this reason, appeals by Ukrainian politicians and public sentiments for the transfer of modern weapons (e.g., F-16 aircraft) may be a negative manifestation in the implementation of the Lend-Lease (Cybulsky, 2022). The training of pilots or tank crews, when it comes to operating modern tanks, is valuable and time-consuming. Under current circumstances, the Ukrainian Armed Forces cannot afford such a luxury, so it is fair for the U.S. administration to be interested in transferring Soviet weaponry from other countries, including those in the socialist camp. The fact that the armies of modern European countries (even those belonging to NATO) were not prepared for military deployment in Europe in the 21st century may also prove to be a problem. So, the real stocks of serviceable equipment and weapons are quite limited, and it takes time for new batches to come out of the conveyor belt. However, time is playing against the Kremlin regime, and the introduction of mobilization into the Russian army in September 2022 is an attempt by the Kremlin autocrats to seize the moment when U.S. supplies under the Lend-Lease are not yet permanent, and the European military has also not received enough weapons for its own needs.

An important feature of modern Lend-Lease is that the Ukrainian side did not invite aid in the form of food. Ukraine's agricultural capacity allows it to export food even under war conditions. But there is the possibility of assistance with fuel and lubricants and, crucially, the injection of additional volumes of gas into Ukrainian gas storage facilities. Before 2014, Ukraine was very dependent on energy supplies from the Russian side, but after the start of Russian aggression, official Kyiv took a bite out of the Kremlin's gas blackmail. Although it was not possible to completely avoid gas dependence, it was minimized. However, the support of

the Ukrainian population and Ukrainian industry is extremely important to neglect amid hostilities.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The practice of Lend-Lease demonstrates both its advantages and its disadvantages. Such a trend is tangible as far back as World War II, as indicated by the not very successful Chinese experience and, on the other hand, the successful implementation of Lend-Lease between the United States and Great Britain. The main purpose of modern aid is to protect democracy in Ukraine, to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine in confrontation with Russian troops. Legally, as of September 2022, the Lend-Lease has not yet begun to work - until then, U.S. military aid has been provided from other sources. In the long run, the use of U.S. arms will enable a turnaround in hostilities against the Kremlin regime. Among the dangers should be identified the problems that China felt during World War II: the lack of trained specialists capable of using the latest weapons, the problem with the latest weapons, etc. At the same time, if the support program for the Ukrainian army is successfully implemented, it is possible to reequip the latter from the use of obsolete Soviet models of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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