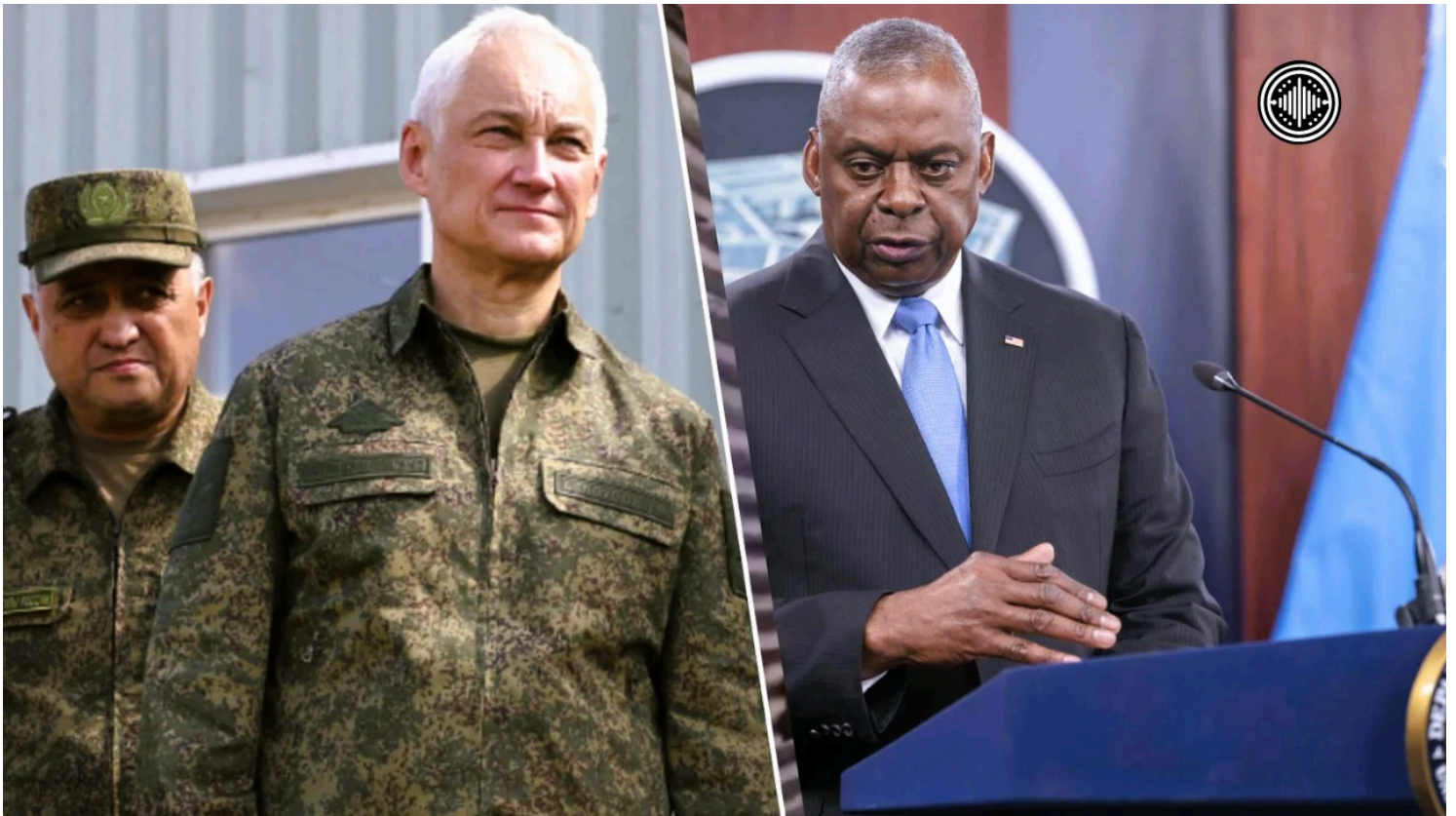


## Pentagon Halts Ukraine Arms, Experts Warn of Escalation

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Security experts raise alarm after U.S. weapons delay, warning it could fuel Russian aggression and weaken ceasefire efforts.

The Pentagon's recent decision to halt the delivery of air defense systems and ammunition to Ukraine has sparked serious concern among Washington-based security analysts. Experts warn that the move could not only encourage Russian President Vladimir Putin to intensify attacks but also weaken the United States' and Ukraine's negotiating power as efforts for a ceasefire continue.

The Pentagon delayed the promised weapons after Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Elbridge Colby raised concerns about dangerously low U.S. munitions reserves. Although the equipment did not come directly from American stockpiles, officials had procured it specifically for Ukraine through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative and positioned it in Poland for delivery.

John Hardie, Deputy Director of the Russia Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), defended the Trump administration's stance on prioritizing U.S. warfighters. However, he warned that pulling back aid to Ukraine could backfire. "By weakening Ukraine's defenses and fueling perceptions that America is tiring of supporting Ukraine, this decision will likely reinforce Putin's belief that he has the upper hand," Hardie said.

Military officials confirmed that the delayed equipment includes missile interceptors and 155mm artillery shells, which are crucial for Ukraine's defense as Russia ramps up its offensive operations. In June alone, Russia launched over 5,300 drones at Ukraine, breaking its previous record of nearly 4,200 in March.

Clifford May, FDD President, echoed these concerns. "Putin has launched an intensified aerial assault, targeting civilians in cities across Ukraine with hundreds of drones and missiles," he said. "Cutting off or even slowing munitions to Ukraine now can only encourage Putin to continue and even escalate this offensive."

Ukrainian officials responded swiftly. On Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry summoned John Ginkel, Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, to express their concerns. In a statement following the meeting, the ministry warned, "Any delay or slowing down in supporting Ukraine's defense capabilities would only encourage the aggressor to continue war and terror, rather than seek peace."

The weapons delay also comes at a sensitive moment, as President Donald Trump's administration attempts to broker a ceasefire. However, the growing number of Russian troops estimated at 50,000 along Ukraine's northern border has added to fears of another major ground offensive.

While Special Envoy to Ukraine Gen. Keith Kellogg has not commented on how the Pentagon's decision could impact ceasefire talks, analysts agree that timing is critical. As

Ukraine faces its most intense wave of attacks yet, many warn that reduced support could undermine both peace efforts and regional stability.