



From Trenches to Factories: The Ukrainian Model That Should Inspire the West

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As modern conflicts evolve at an unprecedented speed, driven by technological innovation and the digitalization of the battlefield, the traditional defense supply chain often risks getting bogged down in bureaucracy. It is a global challenge that sees Ukraine pioneering a radical breakthrough: for the first time, commanders of the main Ukrainian army corps have met directly with national arms and equipment manufacturers.

A summit strongly advocated by President Volodymyr Zelensky – which brought together the leaders of frontline units, the defense industry, and key ministries – and outlines a **master path** from which Western countries could learn a lot.

Shortening the supply chain: from the front to the factory in real time

The heart of the Ukrainian initiative lies in resolving a historical problem: the time gap between the real needs of the front and the response of the production apparatus. Traditionally, technical specifications pass through a dense network of bureaucratic intermediaries, slowing down the adaptation times of military technologies.

In Ukraine, this wall has been torn down:

- **Immediate feedback:** Operational commanders (including those of the Air Assault Forces, army corps, and iconic units like Azov and Khartia) were able to share directly with manufacturers the defects found in the field and the performance of systems in real time.
- **Solving bottlenecks:** The meeting directly addressed procurement delays, unresolved supply issues, and real funding needs.
- **Targeted technological priorities:** The focus was on real wartime urgencies, from drones to ground robotic systems, to long-range artillery ammunition and air defense systems.

A crucial lesson for Western countries

Ukraine's Western allies possess some of the most advanced military-industrial apparatuses in the world, but they often suffer from chronic fragmentation and long-term planning disconnected from the harsh reality of modern warfare.

Adopting the “Ukrainian method” would mean for the West to revolutionize its approach to defense through three fundamental pillars:

1. Institutionalize operational listening

Western countries should create permanent and agile forums where infantry officers, pilots, and drone operators can communicate unfiltered with defense engineers and managers. Reducing hierarchical levels in the feedback process means accelerating technological innovation by months, if not years.

2. Overcome the bureaucratic slowness of procurement

Western defense procurement cycles often take years to be approved and deployed. The urgency imposed by the Ukrainian conflict shows that it is possible — and necessary — to establish rapid coordination mechanisms (like the permanent committee led in Kyiv by the Ministry of Defense and the National Security Council) capable of unlocking contracts and funds

in record time.

3. Industrial flexibility and adaptability

Today's wars are won by the ability to update a drone's software or the frequency of an electronic warfare system within a few weeks. The Western industry, traditionally oriented towards large, rigid, and long-term orders, must evolve towards an **agile and modular production**, capable of immediately incorporating battlefield lessons.

A look to the future

The initiative launched in Kyiv is not just an emergency measure to face an existential conflict, but the cornerstone of a new industrial paradigm.

While Ukraine aims to strengthen its strategic position and prepare for future scenarios, Western governments and defense giants would do well to look at this model. Learning to make those who fight communicate directly with those who produce is no longer just a competitive advantage: it is an imperative necessity for global security.