The War in Reverse – Washington Asks Kiev for Drones

Published on 29/07/2026

The global strategic dynamic is experiencing an epochal reversal: it is no longer just the West supporting Ukraine militarily with supplies and financial aid, but the United States actively seeking support from the Ukrainian defense industry to fill its own gaps in unmanned systems and free itself from Asian technological dependence.

From War Emergency to Strategic Export

Forced to lock down its arms exports at the start of the Russian invasion to concentrate every resource on the national war effort, Ukraine has progressively unlocked its industrial potential. After the initial trade agreements initiated with Gulf countries and European partners, Kiev has authorized the first invitations and supply contracts directly overseas. Last week, officials from Kiev and Washington formalized the first documents for a bilateral *drone deal*, structured to regulate operational tests, exports, and, in perspective, the joint production of advanced systems.

This industrial axis is at the heart of the Pentagon's **Drone Dominance** program, an initiative aimed at accelerating the massive acquisition of low-cost but highly operationally efficient aerial platforms. Six different Ukrainian manufacturers are preparing to each ship a hundred aircraft to the United States, where they will undergo rigorous reliability assessments and, above all, verification of industrial capabilities to support high volumes without quality compromises.

The Search for Volume, Quality, and Operational Flexibility

As highlighted by Deputy Halyna Yanchenko, a member of the parliamentary committee on arms exports, the production capacities of the Ukrainian private sector today exceed by about five times the allocation that the state budget can allocate to internal purchases. Maintaining the export ban would have stifled the technological development of the entire sector. However, authorizations remain strictly subordinate to the priority needs of the Ukrainian armed forces and are supervised by a joint committee that includes the Ministry of Defense and intelligence services.

> ***The Ukrainian Tactical Approach:*** *According to naval and defense intelligence experts, the added value offered by Kiev lies not only in the finished product but in the constructive philosophy: a myriad of laboratories and workshops constantly adapt, repair, and reconfigure engines, propellers, guidance systems, and anti-rollover protections based on the real operational conditions at the front.*

Drones, updates at lightning speed: innovative decisions needed, funds directed to Brigades and joint ventures with Ukraine (Germany shows the way)

Critical Components and Industrial Presence in the USA

Washington's interest is not limited to complete aircraft. Over 500 Ukrainian companies specializing in the production of engines, flight controllers, propellers, and chassis represent a fundamental strategic alternative for the Pentagon, engaged in the complex reduction of dependence on Chinese suppliers. In this context of deep industrial integration, the UDD Tech Corporation group — representing the F-Drones manufacturer — has planned the opening of an assembly line in the State of Ohio, with the goal of generating hundreds of highly specialized jobs by the end of the decade.

The challenge for the Pentagon will be to assimilate this agile and resilient industrial culture without stifling it under the weight of federal bureaucracy, while Kiev will have to ensure that the transfer of know-how does not deplete the technological heritage painstakingly acquired in the field.