



Ukrainian Porcupine - Security is not promised: it is produced.

Published on 10/02/2026

In the negotiation to stop the war, one of the most delicate points concerns the **external security guarantees**: who will defend Ukraine if **Russia** attacks again in the future. In recent weeks in **Kyiv**, the idea has grown that some **Western** promises may be less solid than expected. For Ukrainians, it is a sensitive issue also for historical reasons: in **1994**, with the **Budapest Memorandum**, Ukraine gave up the **nuclear weapons** inherited from the USSR in exchange for **political assurances** on its own **sovereignty**, which later proved insufficient. Today, the Ukrainian leadership wants to avoid a new **deja-vu**: working for stronger **Western guarantees**, but also building security that does not depend solely on others.

What is the porcupine strategy

Hence the choice to focus on an **autonomous conventional deterrence**, summarized in the idea of the *porcupine strategy*. The concept is simple: make Ukraine an **indigestible** target. It's not about being **invincible**, but about being too **costly** to invade. The goal is to deny the

adversary a **quick victory**, imposing **losses** and **logistical** problems from the start, and maintaining over time a capacity for **resistance** and response. In this way, a new aggression would become long, risky, and politically difficult to **sustain**.



The pillars: reform, technology, deep strikes, industry

The first pillar is the **reform** of the military instrument, designed to transform the **army** into a **stable** and sustainable force in the **post-war** period. Kyiv aims not only to maintain large numbers but to reorganize **training, command**, and management, strengthening **non-commissioned officers** and junior officers, making decision chains more efficient, and **digitizing** force management processes. The second pillar is **technological modernization**, centered on **drones, electronic warfare**, and **digital** integration: a national ecosystem of **unmanned platforms**, connected to **sensor** networks and distributed **command and control** systems, capable of striking with precision and disrupting the adversary. The third pillar is the ability to strike in **depth**, that is, to reach **military, logistical**, and **energy** targets far from the front with long-range drones and **missiles**, thus increasing the **immediate** costs of any new offensive. Finally, the fourth pillar is the **defense industry**: a stable, protected, and multi-year funded **supply chain**, increasingly integrated with **European** programs, to ensure **serial** production, **continuous** supplies, and **resilience**.

In summary, the Ukrainian “**porcupine**” stems from the idea that **external guarantees**, however important, are not enough if they do not rest on a **credible** internal force. **Military reform, technological innovation**, long-range response capability, and industrial **robustness**

are the “**quills**” with which Kyiv tries to deter future aggression and make its own **security** more solid over time.

News link: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/06/ukraines-new-theory-of-victory-should-be-strategic-neutralization>