

Top U.S. Politicians Urge Obama to Finally Arm Ukraine Against Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. lawmakers have expressed frustration with what many see as the Obama administration's resistance to providing weapons despite what they see as increased Russian aggression.

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner and other senior Republican and Democratic House members urged U.S. President Barack Obama to quickly authorize lethal weapons for Ukraine as it battles Russian-backed separatists, according to a letter released Thursday.

"We urge you to quickly approve additional efforts to support Ukraine's efforts to defend its sovereign territory, including through the transfer of lethal, defensive weapons systems to the Ukrainian military," they wrote in a letter, dated Wednesday and signed by eight Republicans and three Democrats.

The letter followed up on a meeting between Boehner, other members of Congress and Ukrainian lawmakers last week.

Obama along with European leaders are weighing their next steps in dealing with the conflict in eastern Ukraine, including possibly providing weapons as well as additional sanctions against Moscow over its role in supporting rebels.

U.S. officials have said they are concerned about the risk of escalating the level of fighting and getting sucked into a proxy war with Russia.

Victoria Nuland, U.S. assistant secretary of state for European affairs, told a congressional hearing on Wednesday that the United States had provided \$118 million in security aid in the past 14 months. Last month, the State Department pledged nearly \$17 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

U.S. lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have expressed frustration with what many see as the Obama administration's resistance to providing weapons despite what they see as increased Russian aggression.

"In the face of Russian aggression, the lack of clarity on our overall strategy thus far has done little to reassure our friends and allies in the region who, understandably, feel vulnerable. This needs to change," the lawmakers wrote in the letter.

The House and U.S. Senate voted unanimously late last year for a bill authorizing Obama to provide weapons to Kiev but he has yet to decide whether to send any.

Wednesday's letter was signed by Boehner, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, and top Republicans and Democrats from the House Foreign Affairs, Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, as well as the Republican chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and Defense and State and Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittees.

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