



# Ground Truth Symposium

Operational Briefing on Drone Warfare and Modern Battlefield Lessons

Washington, D.C. · March 25, 2026 · 11:00 am – 3:00 pm · Invitation Only

The Ground Truth Symposium convenes Members of Congress, congressional staff, defense officials, and select industry leaders for an operational briefing on how drone-dominant warfare in Ukraine is reshaping modern combat and what it means for U.S. force design, allied defense, and American national security. Ukrainian front-line leaders and U.S. practitioners will share direct battlefield insight on force protection, training, battlefield adaptation, and the scaling of modern military capabilities.

The objective is to translate frontline experience from Ukraine into practical lessons for U.S. stakeholders responsible for defense strategy, procurement, and force readiness.

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*Agenda, speakers, and timing remain subject to change.*

Panel speakers are military officers from the **429th UAV Brigade "Achilles"**, the **414th UAV Brigade "Magyar's Birds"**, the **59th UAV Brigade "Steppe Predators"**, **Azov**, and the **Lazar Group**. The names of the military officers taking part in the symposium are classified and will not be disclosed.

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## Opening Remarks and Welcome

**Approx. 10 minutes**

**Opening:** Bill Cole, Peace Through Strength Institute **Keynote Speaker:** Congressman Don Bacon

Opening remarks will set the purpose of the symposium and explain why direct frontline insight matters for congressional understanding, defense planning, and practical decision-making. The session will frame the event around operational reality, adaptation, and the need for current battlefield lessons to inform policy and procurement.

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## Strategic Framing Discussion

**How Ending the War in Ukraine Serves U.S. Interests · Approx. 15 minutes**

**Speakers:** Bill Cole, Alik Kasman, USF Commander Robert "Magyar" Brovdi (remote remarks)

This opening discussion will briefly frame the war in Ukraine in terms relevant to U.S. audiences. It will focus on why battlefield outcomes matter to American interests, why prolonged war benefits U.S. adversaries, and why operational effectiveness and speed are central to changing the course of the war. Ukraine has been forced to adapt in real time under fire, and that experience delivers a clear warning to the United States: modern war is not merely changing quickly. It has already changed. The key technological shifts are no longer emerging. They are already shaping the battlefield, and institutions that have not adapted by now are playing catch up.

## Panel I — What Makes Time Work Against Russia

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Approx. 40 minutes

**Moderator:** Ilyya Sekirin **Speakers:** Ukrainian Armed Forces commanders and officers (names not publicly disclosed)

This panel will examine what it means, in practical military terms, to flip the script so that time works against Russia rather than for it. The discussion will focus on degrading hard-to-replace Russian capabilities while strengthening and scaling the areas where Ukraine already holds operational advantages. The central question is how to create battlefield conditions in which Ukraine gains momentum, Russia loses it, and tomorrow looks worse for Putin than yesterday.

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## Panel II — Air Defense and Counter-Drone Defense Lessons

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Approx. 25 minutes

**Moderator:** Oleg Gorenko **Speakers:** Ukrainian Armed Forces commanders and officers (names not publicly disclosed), Congressman Pat Harrigan

This session will explore one of the most urgent challenges in modern warfare: defending forces, cities, and critical infrastructure from drones and mixed aerial threats. It will highlight lessons from Ukraine on layered defense, low-cost interception, and resilience under sustained attack, while emphasizing that these challenges are becoming increasingly immediate for U.S. force protection, homeland security, and the defense of critical systems.

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## Panel III — Battlefield Reality: How Ukraine Imposes Costs and Denies Russian Gains

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Approx. 30 minutes

**Moderator:** Sergey Lubarsky **Speakers:** Ukrainian Armed Forces commanders and officers (names not publicly disclosed)

This panel will focus on what is already working on the battlefield and how Ukraine has adapted to blunt Russian advantages. Speakers will discuss the evolving battlefield ecosystem, the role of drones, electronic warfare, intelligence integration, and the operational innovations that are reshaping the fight.

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## Break

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Twenty-minute networking and transition break.

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## **Panel IV — From Training to Output: Building Effective Drone and Tactical Operators**

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**Approx. 25 minutes**

**Moderator:** Alik Kasman **Speakers:** Ukrainian Armed Forces commanders and officers (names not publicly disclosed)

This discussion will examine how effective operators are developed, trained, and sustained in a fast-changing combat environment. It will cover the path from initial training to battlefield performance, the skills that matter most in modern drone warfare, and the lessons Ukraine offers for future force development. It will also highlight that Ukraine is no longer only learning from its partners; it is now helping teach allied forces what modern war demands in training, adaptation, and battlefield readiness.

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## **Panel V — Scaling What Works: Equipment, Bottlenecks, and Operational Results**

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**Approx. 30 minutes**

**Moderator:** Illya Sekirin **Speakers:** Ukrainian Armed Forces commanders and officers (names not publicly disclosed), Volodymyr Stepanets

This panel will showcase the operational results Ukraine is already delivering on the battlefield and the proven battlefield models behind them, with a focus on what must be scaled to multiply those effects. The discussion will examine what is already working, what effective units are achieving now, and the equipment, logistics, connectivity, and sustainment barriers that prevent those successes from being replicated at greater scale.

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## **Fireside Conversation — Industrial and Capital Bridge**

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**Approx. 25 minutes · Fireside Conversation format**

**Speakers:** Bill Cole, Dmytro Dobrodomov, Bill Cronenberg, Perry Boyle

This conversation will explore the industrial and financial dimension of the war, including Ukrainian drone manufacturing, the speed of innovation, and the potential for U.S.–Ukraine industrial partnership. It will also address the capital and production pathways needed to scale proven capabilities faster.

# Closing Synthesis — What the United States Should Take Away

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Approx. 15 minutes

**Moderator / Speakers:** Bill Cole and Alik Kasman

The symposium will conclude with a practical synthesis of the day's major lessons for lawmakers, staff, defense leaders, and industry. The closing segment will focus on what U.S. institutions should learn from Ukraine's experience and what implications these lessons hold for doctrine, procurement, training, force protection, and future conflict readiness.

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