

(U) Reporting Notice: This product was prepared by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Office of Intelligence (OI), Northeast Regional Intelligence Center and the Office of Field Operations (OFO) New York Field Office, Center for Intelligence, Targeting, and Enforcement (CITE). This product was coordinated with Office of Intelligence, U.S. Border Patrol, Air and Marine Operations, Office of Field Operations (National Targeting Center), CBP Office of Chief Counsel, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) New York.

(U//LES) United States Citizens Joining the Fight for Ukraine

(U//LES) United States citizens (USC), including some with previous service in the United States, will continue to attempt to depart the United States with the intention of fighting alongside the International Legion of Territorial Defense of Ukraine to fight in the armed conflict against the Russians. We have high confidence in this assessment based on recent CBP encounters at John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and the large body of reporting indicating individual intentions and recruitment efforts for travel to Ukraine.^{1,2,3,4} On 5 March 2022, the Ukrainian government launched a website to recruit foreign volunteers to fight invading Russian forces. The website provides detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to join the fight against Russia, which 16,000 foreigners volunteered for as of 3 March 2022.⁵ It recommends individuals contact the Ukrainian embassy in their respective countries.^{6,7} According to open-source reporting, the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, DC, received more than 3,000 applications from U.S. citizens—including military veterans⁸—hoping to fight for Ukraine as of 3 March 2022.⁹ In addition, Ukrainian nationalist groups including the Azov Movement* are actively recruiting racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist-white supremacists (RMVE-WS)^{†‡} to join various neo-Nazi volunteer battalions in the war against Russia. RMVE-WS individuals in the United States and Europe announced intentions to join the conflict and are organizing entry to Ukraine via the Polish border.¹⁰

- (U//LES) On 5 March 2022, CBPOs at JFK encountered an identified USC (SUB1) traveling to Warsaw, Poland, via Helsinki, Finland, with full intention to travel to Ukraine to fight.

* (U) Azov is a far-right all-volunteer infantry military unit whose members—estimated at 900—are ultra-nationalists and accused of harboring neo-Nazi and white supremacist ideology. The unit was initially formed as a volunteer group in May 2014 out of the ultra-nationalist Patriot of Ukraine gang, and the neo-Nazi Social National Assembly (SNA) group. Both groups engaged in xenophobic and neo-Nazi ideals and physically assaulted migrants, the Roma community and people opposing their views.

† (U//FOUO) RMVE-WS: Groups or individuals who facilitate or engage in acts of unlawful violence or intent to intimidate or coerce the federal government, ethnic and racial minorities, or non-Christian faiths, and often specifically Jewish persons, in support of their belief in the inferiority of nonwhites and non-Christians.

‡ (U//LES) For additional information on CBP encounter with U.S.-Based White Supremacist Extremists with Nexus to Ukrainian Nationalist Group and the Conflict in Ukraine, see IN-SIA-20-2191377.

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SUB1 stated that he was flying into Warsaw, Poland, to connect with three members of the French Foreign Legion, who are currently in Krakow, Poland. SUB1 stated he intends to hitch a ride to Lviv, Ukraine, and will attempt to apply for recruitment via a recruitment center and will be working with a local militia group, who will provide him with weapons. Open-source information indicated SUB1 was a reported Boogaloo movement⁹ leader in Virginia. When questioned about his involvement with the Boogaloo movement, SUB1 stated he had not been involved with the group for almost a year due to the direction they were heading in. A search of SUB1's checked, and carry-on baggage revealed multiple first aid items (gauze, pain killers,



(U//LES) Figure 1: Tactical military gear found during baggage examination

tourniquets), military gear to include face paint, camouflage knee pads, handcuffs, a gas mask, and a fixed blade knife, military style clothing, a water canteen, a pair of hearing protection, face paint, and a folder containing documents (see Figure 1). SUB1 is a U.S. Marine veteran who was discharged for medical reasons in 2018 or 2019 and recently worked as a Corrections Officer.¹¹

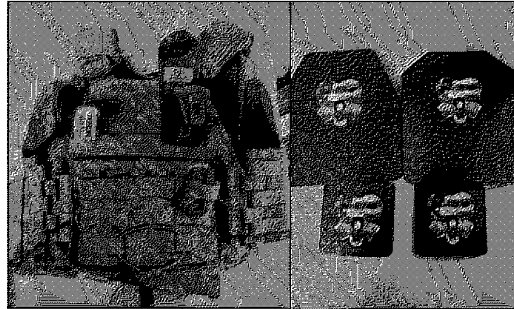
- (U//LES) On 5 March 2022, CBPOs at JFK encountered an identified USC (SUB2) traveling to Warsaw, Poland, for further travel to Ukraine to fight in the war alongside the Territorial Defense of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. SUB2 stated he visited the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, DC, to obtain instructions on how to join the Territorial Defense of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which is primarily comprised of foreign fighters. SUB2 also provided detailed instructions on who to contact and how to cross the Polish-Ukrainian Border check point of "Korczowa-Krakovets" where further deployment orders will be provided at a specific location in Lviv, Ukraine. SUB2 did not have a return ticket as he was told that joining the Territorial Defense of Armed Forces of Ukraine requires a one-year contract. SUB2 stated he served four years in the U.S. Army as an infantryman and previously served in Afghanistan. SUB2's Territorial Defense of Armed Forces of Ukraine Foreign Legion Interview Questionnaire Form indicated that SUB2 had small arms expertise as a javelin gunner. SUB1 did not travel with any checked luggage and stated that he would be issued all necessary equipment needed in Ukraine.¹²

⁹ (U) The boogaloo movement, whose adherents are often referred to as boogaloo boys or boogaloo bois, is a loosely organized far-right anti-government extremist movement in the United States. It has also been described as a militia. Adherents say they are preparing for, or seek to incite, a second American Civil War or second American Revolution which they call "the boogaloo".

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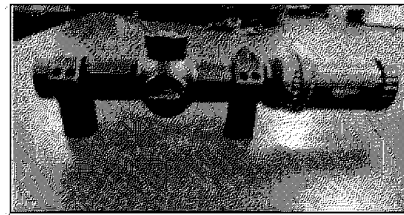
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— (U//LES) On 2 March 2022, CBPOs at JFK encountered an identified USC (SUB3) traveling to Warsaw, Poland, for further travel to Ukraine to aid in its defense against Russian forces. During inspection, SUB3 stated he intended to travel to Lviv, Ukraine, and that a friend arranged his travel from Poland to Ukraine. Additional research of SUB3's friend identified a USC (SUB4)¹³, who traveled from Chicago, Illinois, the same day, destined to Rzeszow, Poland, and further travel to Lviv, Ukraine.¹⁴ A search of SUB3's checked baggage revealed that he was traveling with a tactical plate carrier, four body-armor plates (see Figure 2), a gun sling, and a combat belt. A search of SUB4's checked baggage revealed military style fatigues, individual first aid trauma kit, plate carrier, pistol and magazine pouches, M4 buttstock and parts, two rifle optics and two armor plates.¹⁵ SUB3 admitted to contacting the Georgian National Legion but decided against joining the group as they were accused of war crimes. Based on a basic border search of his electronic device, SUB3 stated he hoped to obtain a work contract with the Azov Battalion.¹⁶ SUB3 is a U.S. Marine veteran and SUB4 is a U.S. Army veteran and active-duty police officer. They met on a social media group created by SUB4.^{17,18,19}



(U//LES) Figure 2: Tactical military gear found during baggage examination

— (U//LES) On 5 February 2022, CBPOs at JFK encountered an identified USC (SUB5) traveling to Warsaw, Poland, with intended travel to Kyiv, Ukraine. During inspection, SUB5 stated he intended to travel to Ukraine to attend a foreign language course in Kyiv. SUB5 admitted that he reached out to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army to join, but was told that they are not currently accepting volunteers. A baggage exam revealed military style clothing, a military tactical belt with two pistol magazine pouches and one rifle magazine pouch, a medical kit, a pair of Mechanix^{USBU5} brand gloves, a multitool, one head mounted flashlight, one pistol mounted flashlight, snowboarding equipment, a pair of Peltor Sport brand tactical 300 hearing protection, one armor plate carrier with three rifle magazine pouches attached, and one Aimpoint Micro T-2 Red Dot Reflex sight (see Figure 3). SUB5 stated he would give the scope to a front-line soldier if needed. SUB5 is a U.S. Army veteran with previous experience in operating various weapons platforms.²⁰ SUB5 conducted demolitions involving mostly small door charges, blasting caps, and explosive cutting projectiles. Post encounter analysis identified SUB5 featured in a media article regarding U.S. veterans training Ukrainians as of 22 February 2022.



(U//LES) Figure 3: Scope found during baggage examination

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SUB5 appears in multiple photos training Ukrainians in weapons handling and tactical maneuvers. The media article also includes quotes attributed to SUB5 about his reason for being in Ukraine and volunteering to fight.^{21,22}

- (U//LES) On 27 January 2022, CBPOs at JFK encountered an identified USC (SUB6) traveling to Istanbul, Turkey, with intended travel to Atek,** a sports complex in Kyiv, Ukraine. SUB6 claimed he intended to travel to Ukraine to render first aid and provide humanitarian help to anyone that may need it. SUB6 stated he intended to meet a man he encountered on a Ukrainian fighting group chat on a social media site. During the inspection, SUB6 admitted to previously traveling to Paris, France, to join the French Foreign Legion and participate in military training. SUB6 previously served in a French mountain infantry unit specialized in undetected movement, scaling, and rough terrain. SUB6 stated he also received medical combat training while in France. Additionally, SUB6 admitted to reaching out to the Lions of Rojava in order to help the Peshmerga fight terrorists in Syria. A baggage exam revealed military clothing, a 5.56 style ammo speed loader, military style gear, survival gear, knife, gloves, face mask, and a not-serialized Sig Sauer red dot sight. Based on a basic border search of his electronic device, the subject previously attempted to join the armed conflict in Burma, Syrian National Defense Forces, and several other groups.²³

(U) Outlook

(U//LES) The New York Field Office (NYFO) Center for Intelligence, Targeting and Enforcement (CITE) continues to conduct exploitation, research, analysis, production, and dissemination on the various encounters to identify and target similar and any additional trends in the NYFO AOR and nationwide. NYFO continues to work with the National Targeting Center to automate and refine targeting processes for collection, operational, and or investigative interest. The TTPs used by these travelers will continue to evolve and adjust based on CBP targeting efforts and will require continuous updating and reporting.

(U) Intelligence Gaps

- (U//LES) How many prospective foreign fighters will travel on non-U.S. or U.S. documents from the United States?
- (U//LES) What TTPs are prospective foreign fighters using to avoid detection by law enforcement?
- (U//LES) What other groups are foreign fighters attempting to join?

** (U//LES) Atek is described as a new training base where a selection of candidates will become regiment soldiers. Selection courses last for two weeks and consist of physiological and physical checks. Subjects who train in Atek are trained by Azov Battalion soldiers who have combat experience, professional instructors, as well as foreign instructors.

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- (U//LES) What kind of training are foreign fighters receiving in Ukraine that they could possibly proliferate in US based militia and white nationalist groups?
- (U//LES) What additional online recruitment platforms are being used?
- (U//LES) What instructions and directions are given when they arrive in Ukraine?
- (U//LES) What websites or chat rooms are these fighters seeking out?

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¹ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 05 March 2022 | (U) Event Number 42855368 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

² (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) Event Number 42809441 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

³ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) TECS ID: 00002878359557 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

⁴ (U//FOUO) | DHS | 01 March 2022 | (U//FOUO) OSIR-04001-0242-22 | Extracted information is U//FOUO | Overall database classification is U//FOUO

⁵ (U) | Washington Post | 03 March 2022 | (U) Zelensky says 16,000 foreigners have volunteered to fight for Ukraine against Russian invasion | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/03/zelensky-ukraine-16000-foreign-volunteers-russia/>

⁶ (U) | Radio Free Europe | 05 March 2022 | (U) Ukraine's Government opens website to recruit foreigners to International Legion | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-recruiting-foreign-fighters/31737766.html>

⁷ (U) | Fight for UA | 06 March 2022 | (U) Defenders of Ukraine | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | www.fightforua.org

⁸ (U) | NY Times | 05 March 2022 | (U) 'I Just Can't Stand By': American Veterans Join the Fight in Ukraine | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/05/us/american-veterans-volunteer-ukraine-russia.html?smid=em-share>

⁹ (U) | Army Times | 03 March 2022 | (U) Volunteer fighters arrive in Ukraine. But the untrained should stay home | (U) Ukraine's Government opens website to recruit foreigners to International Legion | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | <https://www.armytimes.com/flashpoints/ukraine/2022/03/03/volunteer-fighters-arrive-in-ukraine-but-the-untrained-should-stay-home/>

¹⁰ (U) | Valens Global | 03 March 2022 | (U) INU-VAL-22-0001: Convergence of Violent Extremist Threats in Russia-Ukraine War | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U

¹¹ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 05 March 2021 | (U) TECS ID: 00009134533488 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

¹² (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 05 March 2022 | (U) Event Number 42855368 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

¹³ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2021 | (U) TECS ID: P4L07081800C10 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

¹⁴ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) TECS ID: 00002878359557 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

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- ¹⁵ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) TECS ID: 00002878359557 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ¹⁶ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) Event Number 42809441 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ¹⁷ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) Event Number 42809441 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ¹⁸ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 02 March 2022 | (U) TECS ID: 00002878359557 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ¹⁹ (U//LES) | CBP | AFI | 24 February 2022 | (U) FIR-N10-22-2437179 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ²⁰ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 05 February 2022 | (U) TECS ID: P4K64058200CTG | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ²¹ (U//LES) | CBP | AFI | 24 February 2022 | (U) FIR-N10-22-2472005 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES
- ²² (U) | Coffee or Die | 22 February 2022 | (U) Army Veterans Ukraine | Extracted information is U | Overall classification is U | <https://coffeeordie.com/army-veterans-ukraine/>
- ²³ (U//LES) | CBP | UPAX | 27 January 2022 | (U) Encounter Number 133415695 | Extracted information is U//LES | Overall database classification is U//LES

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