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# A billion-dollar mirage: Do Ukraine's new missiles match the hype?

Backed by nearly \$1 billion in contracts, Fire Point has risen on bold claims of deep strikes inside Russia. But how real is its success?

Published 6 Apr, 2026 13:27



In less than two years, a little-known Ukrainian startup has secured nearly \$1 billion in state contracts, built one of the country's most ambitious missile programs – and drawn the attention of anti-corruption investigators.

A February article by Deutsche Welle and subsequent interviews with co-founder Denis Shtilerman have helped propel Fire Point into the

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European media spotlight, with bold claims about long-range strike capabilities deep inside Russia. But beyond the publicity, evidence of real-world effectiveness remains limited.

What, then, can these missiles actually do – and how serious a threat do they represent?



## Fire Point: Sudden success

In 2025, Fire Point rapidly

emerged as a leading name in Ukrainian missile manufacturing. Today, it stands out as one of the most dynamic yet secretive defense startups in Ukraine, specializing in the production of long-range drones and missiles. Initially, the company developed only cruise missiles, but now it also designs ballistic missiles.

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Reports suggest that the startup launched with \$1.5-\$2 million invested by the founders themselves. However, in 2024-2025, the company secured government contracts worth approximately \$1 billion, which is truly remarkable. Perhaps the answer to this mystery lies in the backgrounds of the founders?

At the helm of the company is Denis Shtilerman, the chief designer, founder, and majority owner (with a 97.5% share) of FP. He describes himself as a wealthy individual unafraid to invest his own money into the project. The co-founder is Yegor Skalyga (2.5% share) who previously headed a film industry company, suggesting ties to Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky and his Studio Kvartal 95. Irina

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**Mission accomplished? The costly reality**

Terekh, the technical director and co-owner of FP, joined the team in 2023. And lastly, there is... former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who joined the advisory board in November 2025. Now that's a smart move, considering the current situation in Ukraine.



RT composite: Mike Pompeo; Denis Shtilerman. © Siavosh Hosseini / SOPA Images / LightRocket via Getty Images; social media

High-ranking Ukrainian officials have actively promoted the company's products. Zelensky referred to the FP-5 Flamingo as the "*most successful*" missile in Ukraine's arsenal. The company also reportedly has ties to the former head of Zelensky's office, Andrey Yermak. This is quite possible, since Fire Point has become the largest recipient of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense's budget allocations for the construction of drones. Shtilerman attributes this to the fact that some state enterprises maintain secret ties with Russia, which is unacceptable at this time.

However, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) may have a different opinion about the company's success. NABU has launched an investigation on several fronts: firstly, it is investigating possible price inflation for components used in FP-1 drones; secondly, NABU is examining the company's connections with Timur Mindich and potential corruption schemes related to procurement through government structures.

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Amid these scandals, the appointment of Mike Pompeo to the advisory board has been viewed by many analysts as an attempt by FP to bolster its reputation and shield itself from corruption allegations.



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## Pink Flamingo

FP indeed emerged out of nowhere and quickly became a leader in Ukraine's drone and missile

manufacturing sector. It specializes in the development and mass production of long-range FP-1 and FP-2 strike drones, as well as the FP-5 Flamingo cruise missile. By 2025, its workforce expanded to 3,500 employees, including 650 engineers, with production facilities covering 175,000 square meters across several secret locations.

The company's most notable product so far is the FP-5 Flamingo cruise missile powered by a AI-25TL turbofan engine. It is reported that the company has been gathering these engines from decommissioned training aircraft all over Eastern Europe. The missile is marketed as a long-range weapon designed for deep strikes. In size, it surpasses its Western counterparts like the Tomahawk or Storm Shadow missiles. Its flight range is up to 3,000 kilometers, and the warhead weighs 1,000-1,150 kilograms (with about 600 kilograms allocated for explosives). The missile travels at speeds of 850-900 km/h and has a launch weight of approximately 6,000 kg. The fuselage length is about 12 meters and the

wingspan is six meters. Equipped with a relatively modern guidance system – a combination of an inertial navigation system and a jamming-resistant satellite navigation system – it boasts a reported accuracy of approximately 15 meters from the intended target. However, confirming these specifications in real-world conditions has proven challenging – it is unclear how many of the missiles have been launched and how many have failed during testing.

Fire Point had ambitious plans to ramp up production to 200 missiles per month by 2026, but apparently, these are still distant prospects. To create an illusion of ongoing missile production, news reports occasionally surface about the deployment of these missiles, often accompanied by video footage. It seems the company has allocated funds for PR, as multiple stories about FP have appeared in leading Western media outlets within the past month.



Workers inspect a Flamingo cruise missile at Fire Point's secret factory in Ukraine, August 18, 2025. © AP Photo / Efrem Lukatsky

The effectiveness of the missiles remains unknown. Russia's existing missile defense systems were all designed to counter more advanced and stealthy weapons like Tomahawks and Storm Shadows. So they can surely detect the bulkier Flamingo, especially since it flies at higher

altitudes. Furthermore, indications suggest that the missile lacks any countermeasures and its design is rather straightforward. Shooting down such a missile shouldn't pose a substantial challenge.

However, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) may hope to overwhelm Russian air defense systems if they manage to construct enough of these missiles. Currently, FP is struggling with producing a sufficient number, likely due to corruption issues or the difficulties of organizing production amid Russian airstrikes – likely, both issues are at play. Additionally, supplies of AI-25 engines aren't infinite, and no one currently produces new ones. All this suggests that this ambitious program may remain largely theoretical, confined to paperwork and media headlines.

So why were the missiles named 'Flamingo'? Most likely, a manufacturing error is to blame.



According to the Associated Press, the first prototypes were mistakenly colored pink due to a simple error in mixing paint components during production. Whether the story is true or not, the name has stuck.

**Read more:** Arming Ukraine with nukes: Western elites have 'lost touch with reality'

## What's next?

At the end of 2025, news emerged that Fire Point is set to produce FP-7 and FP-9 ballistic missiles, among other projects. The FP-7 is expected to replace ATACMS missiles and is predicted to boast a range of up to 300 kilometers. It will be equipped

with a small warhead. The second missile will be larger, and will carry an 800-kilogram warhead capable of hitting targets at distances of 800-850 kilometers. Apparently, the AFU intends to use these missiles to strike cities like St. Petersburg and Moscow.

According to the available information, the company's goal is to produce simple and efficient missiles. The design is based on surface-to-air missiles from Soviet-era S-300 systems. The company does not plan to produce hypersonic missiles, separating warheads, or missiles capable of evasive maneuvers. Modern missile defense systems should be able to intercept such missiles more effectively than GMLRS and ATACMS from the HIMARS system. However, ballistic missiles are undoubtedly more challenging to intercept than cruise missiles. Fire Point aims to roll out the production of ballistic missiles by 2026, with FP-7 already undergoing tests and possibly entering serial production in the coming months. FP-9 is expected to enter production by the end of summer.



**Read more:** Who profits from a world at war? Inside the global boom in arms transfers

missile defense solutions for Europe.

But the company's ambitions extend beyond strike systems. Fire Point has also outlined plans to develop a new air defense architecture, positioning itself as a potential provider of

The proposal includes claims of significantly

reducing interception costs – from an estimated \$6 million per Iskander missile today to roughly \$1–1.5 million per intercept. These projections are being presented at an early stage, before the systems themselves have been designed or tested.

At the same time, the company has not demonstrated prior experience in developing or producing complex air and missile defense systems. Taken together, the emphasis on future efficiency and cost advantages may suggest that attracting investment is, at this stage, as central to the project as technological delivery.

Whether Fire Point can convert these ambitions into viable systems remains uncertain – particularly as its activities continue to draw the attention of anti-corruption investigators.



By **Dmitry Kornev**, *military expert, founder and author of the MilitaryRussia project*

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- A** **AWhiteMan InMaine** 4/6/2026 at 6:20 PM **3**
- How stupid can Z Bag O Shet be ? What does he want Russia to Nuke the Ukraine ?
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- D** **David Dunbar** 4/8/2026 at 1:20 PM ↑ **0**
- Perhaps. Or maybe London first then Paris, and then Ukraine. Then he can go retire in Miami Beach.
- [Reply](#)
-  **Nunya Bizness** 4/6/2026 at 5:19 PM **5**
- Typical Nazi behavior – to pattern their new weapon after the 70+ year old V1s their heroes used against London. Shtilerman is 'of the tribe' and deserves and Iskander enema, or just some rapid lead poisoning.
- [Reply](#)
-  **Avuncular** 4/7/2026 at 12:32 AM ↑ **1**
- Well, form follows function
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- D** **David Dunbar** 4/8/2026 at 1:17 PM ↑ **0**
- «and Iskander enema» LOL I like that.
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-  **Anonymous** 4/8/2026 at 1:17 PM ↑ **0**

 **Anonymouse** 4/6/2026 at 4:26 PM 1

Totally not a V1 pulse-jet

[Reply](#)

 **Avuncular** 4/7/2026 at 12:33 AM 1

AI-25TL turbofan engine

Indeed not

[Reply](#)

 **David Dunbar** 4/8/2026 at 1:16 PM 0

LOL. No, it isn't but it looks like a modernized V1.

[Reply](#)

 **Dave** 4/8/2026 at 9:58 AM 0

Pompeo involved..


Enough said.

[Reply](#)

 **aZn\_okay** 4/8/2026 at 4:27 AM 1

It's another gift. The missile looks like something from the sixties. There's no market for such a missile outside of Ukraine. It fulfills a purpose in adding distance to Ukraine's European allies who might fund it in lieu of supplying such a weapon.

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 **Howie J** 4/8/2026 at 4:55 AM 0

The Arabs will buy it...

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 **George William** 4/7/2026 at 8:45 PM 1

Looks like a V1 flying bomb, one of Adolf's 'wunderwaffe'. Those Nazis are persistent but not very imaginative.

[Reply](#)



**J.S.** 4/8/2026 at 2:48 AM ↕

0

Like ancestors, like descendants.  
That's not rocket science.  
Oh, well. It is, actually. 😞

[Reply](#)



**nosadcells** 4/6/2026 at 4:19 PM

6

seems to me the only reason to continue this war  
is corruption since no one cares about human life.

[Reply](#)



**Joseph Lieberman**

4/7/2026 at 5:28 PM ↕

1

Indeed. Sadly.

[Reply](#)



**Mr. Patrick** 4/8/2026 at 1:07 AM ↕

1

All the Ukrainians have to do is surrender, have  
a fair election and promise not to try ethnic  
cleansing her Russian minority.

[Reply](#)



**Mr. Patrick** 4/8/2026 at 1:05 AM

0

Well, Russia is still there, so the new ukrainian  
missiles must not be that great. The proof is in  
what happens.

[Reply](#)



**Regis Tremblay** 4/7/2026 at 7:58 PM

0

Seems to me Russia has no answer to the daily  
strikes deep inside Russia striking stratetic  
infrastructure and oil refineries!

[Reply](#)



**will R** 4/6/2026 at 11:44 PM

1

Surely the factory will be located and taken out.

[Reply](#)



**Avuncular** 4/7/2026 at 12:31 AM ↕

0

It will be found in Denmark

[Reply](#)

**C** **Carla Muss-Jacobs**

0

4/7/2026 at 6:11 PM ↑

Miami, Denmark.... 🦩

[Reply](#)

**C** **Carla Muss-Jacobs**

1

4/7/2026 at 6:02 PM

Fire Point created an advisory board on 12 November 2025, and former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was reported to have joined this board on November 17. Iryna Terekh, the company's CEO and CTO, described as having a background in the concrete construction business and running a casting agency before leading Fire Point.

[Reply](#)



**Joseph Lieberman** 4/7/2026 at 5:22 PM

0

First of all, Fire Point's secret factory in Ukraine (or wherever it is actually located) will be decimated/destroyed, those warmongering criminals, founders and administrators and collaborators of the venture are all over shadowed by every sort of surveillance and they themselves will be eliminated.

And that German weapons manufacturing company which ambitiously involves itself in the hostility against Russia will enjoy the same fate.

[Reply](#)



**Yennai** 4/7/2026 at 3:30 PM

-3

The truth is when Soviet Union was there Ukraine was the brain, most advanced, most industrious, advanced in technology, agriculture and most advanced in aerospace and nuclear sciences. Rest of the Soviet Union were by far behind and had natural resources. So it's going to be difficult for present day Russia to fight them. Russia used

WW II strategy and invaded them with tanks and got routed. Drone technology of Ukraine is keeping Russia at bay . Russia is catching up with Ukraine .

[Reply](#)

**Bo** **Bo Tchi** 4/7/2026 at 2:50 PM

0

Wining the war is a mirage for Z too.

[Reply](#)

**S** **SaysTheBronxBoy** 4/7/2026 at 9:14 AM

2

Yes another Jew-ish Gangster in The mist , n of Course finds Pompeo who's looking for a life line of Credibility to latch on too.. If that was a German Christian Manufacturer out of The Government he would be a Nazi. If an Arab he would be an islamic terrorist. If An Irishman he's a Terrorist, but if Jew-ish he a Boy in the loop of The terrorist state of Israel;(!

Says The BronxBoy!

It looks like Pompeo took ozempic;(!

He looks terrible!

[Reply](#)

 **Richard Castle** 4/7/2026 at 8:47 AM

1

The A1, a cheap alternative to Raytheon's latest gizmo?

How did Germany bomb London without loosing a single person, by creating the ballistic missile.

Built out of bits, feeble as hell and not much different than a bottle rocket, the A1 (or V2) could be set up and launched in about an hour. One ton of explosives and supersonic, it would easily get through to Israel.

And remember, it would cost more to shoot it down than to build it! That's how you win wars....

[Reply](#)

 **Richard Castle** 4/7/2026 at 8:37 AM

0

As has been said by others, it does look like the good old V1 vengeance weapon designed and built by Germany . Once the secrets out a

built by Germany.... Cops, the secrets out, a clockwork timer that cuts off the fuel is all that is needed to hit a city, not billions of dollars worth of electronics and 75% profits for the rich.

So, a clapper motor, two wings and a launching pad is all that is required to flatten a city. The cost.... \$1,000! So, 1000 for just a million dollars. Thank god for American corruption. :-)

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## Energy crisis will last for months – Kremlin envoy

Markets will take a long time to stabilize even if the Strait of Hormuz remains open, Kirill Dmitriev has warned

Published 8 Apr, 2026 11:05



Kirill Dmitriev, © Getty Images / Sefa Karacan; Anadolu

Global energy markets will take months to recover from the shock caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran, Kremlin envoy Kirill Dmitriev has warned, noting that the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is unlikely to have an immediate effect.

His comments come after US President Donald Trump announced a *"double-sided"* two-week ceasefire with Iran to negotiate a long-term peace agreement based on Tehran's 10-point plan that would see it retain control over the strait.

While oil prices have dropped in response to the news, Dmitriev, who serves as Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy for investment and economic cooperation, has warned that energy markets *"will take months to normalize even if the Strait of Hormuz remains open."*

Dmitriev's prediction came in response to a Bloomberg report in which several Asian airline chiefs cautioned that jet fuel prices would still require *"many, many more months"* to stabilize. The director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Willie Walsh, noted that if the Strait of Hormuz *"were to reopen and remain open, it will still take a period of months to get back to where supply needs to be, given the disruption to the refining capacity in the Middle East."*

The conflict has inflicted lasting damage on energy infrastructure with multiple refineries destroyed, causing jet fuel prices to more than double since the war began. Thai



**Read more:** African nation declares energy emergency  
Airways CEO Chai Eamsiri called the current shock the worst in his near-four-decade career.

More than 800 vessels also remain trapped in the Persian Gulf after the Strait of Hormuz was virtually closed following the US and Israeli strikes in late February. According to Bloomberg, traders and shipowners are now closely monitoring which ships will begin to transit the strait under the fragile ceasefire. An International Maritime Organization

tally from late March estimated that some 20,000 seafarers are stuck aboard trapped ships, facing dwindling supplies, fatigue, and psychological stress.

A recent Newsmax report, released just before the ceasefire announcement, also warned of a looming global commodity shock, noting that the true scale of the disruptions caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran has yet to materialize. The outlet cautioned that the world could soon face sudden and severe shortages that will quickly spread from energy to fertilizers, food production, and consumer goods.

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## Ukraine's mobilization crisis deepens: The gap between numbers and reality widens

Despite millions still eligible for service, low morale, draft evasion, and economic strain are undermining Kiev's ability to sustain the war

Published 7 Apr, 2026 14:31