

Ukrainian president holds crisis talks in Washington amid failure of “spring offensive”

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Amid a deepening military crisis triggered by the collapse of Ukraine’s spring offensive, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spent hours Thursday meeting behind closed doors at the Pentagon, as well as with US President Joe Biden, top Cabinet officials, the US Senate, and leading House lawmakers.

The meetings followed saber-rattling speeches by Biden and Zelensky at the U.N. Security Council, where Biden ruled out any negotiated settlement of the conflict while Zelensky used ethnically charged language to call Russians “evil” and “terrorists.”

Despite months of media propaganda, the Ukrainian offensive has been a bloody debacle, which US intelligence agencies now admit will fail to achieve its objectives. Over the past month, the Biden administration has facilitated the replacement of virtually all leading officials in Ukraine’s Ministry of Defense, as the US prepares to take an ever more direct role in the conflict.

Zelensky began the day with a meeting with US military officials, including Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. The Pentagon said that the meeting sought “to discuss Ukraine’s longer-term capability requirements and how to support them in the future in terms of deterring Russia.”

Following two hours of meetings at the White House, Biden announced that the United States would send yet another major arms shipment to Ukraine, and that Abrams battle tanks would begin arriving on the battlefield imminently.

“Today, I approved the next tranche of US security assistance to Ukraine, including more artillery, more ammunition, more antitank weapons,” Biden said. “And next week, the first US Abrams tanks will be delivered to Ukraine.”

The latest weapons delivery includes additional cluster munitions, a weapon that scatters unexploded ordnance over a wide area, as well as dozens of combat vehicles

and over 3 million rounds of ammunition.

Biden continued, “We also focused on strengthening Ukraine’s air defense capabilities to protect the critical infrastructure that provides heat and light during the coldest and darkest days of the year. That includes providing a second HAWK air defense battery with steady deliveries of additional HAWK and other systems each month through the winter. And a new package of launchers and interceptors.”

Following the meeting, Biden declared, “Mr. President, we’re with you, we’re staying with you.”

The announcement comes as the debacle facing the Ukrainian military becomes impossible to conceal. US media outlets published Russian videos showing the destruction of advancing Ukrainian armored vehicles from a distance, citing them as evidence, yet again, that Ukrainian troops were making a “breakthrough.”

A far more realistic picture was presented the same day by veteran journalist Seymour Hersh, who cited a US foreign policy official as saying, “The truth is if the Ukrainian army is ordered to continue the offensive, the army would mutiny. The soldiers aren’t willing to die anymore, but this doesn’t fit the B.S. that is being authored by the Biden White House.”

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian troops have died in the current offensive, likely bringing the total Ukrainian death toll in the war so far to the hundreds of thousands. In July, the *New York Times* reported that some Ukrainian military units had been wiped out and reconstituted multiple times, and now consisted of older recruits “forced into action.”

In his meeting with Zelensky, Biden called on Congress to pass another \$24 billion in funding for the war. “I’m counting on the good judgment of the United States Congress. There’s no alternative,” Biden said.

Zelensky, dressed in military green, gave a secret briefing to the US Senate. Following the briefing, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer asserted that Zelensky

told the senators, “If we don’t get the aid, we will lose the war.”

Afterward, Zelensky held a smaller meeting with Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and a group of other members of the House of Representatives. Michael McCaul, the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that the United States would “get [Ukraine] everything they need” and indicated that the US would ultimately provide the ATACMS long-range missile to Ukraine.

He continued, “There are a lot of political machinations right now, but I assure you we are going to get it passed,” in reference to the White House’s request to send an additional \$24 billion to Ukraine.

However, revealing the dwindling support for Ukraine in his caucus, McCarthy denied Zelensky the privilege of addressing a Joint Session of Congress, and removed Ukraine military aid from the latest draft of a continuing resolution that must be passed by September 30 to avoid a partial shutdown of the federal government. A growing section of the Republicans in the House, aligned with Trump, wants to prioritize China rather than Russia as the immediate target of US imperialism.

Biden’s speech to the United Nations Tuesday, in which he declared, “Russia alone bears responsibility,” was aimed at precluding any negotiated settlement of the conflict.

The Biden administration is fearful that the outcome of the 2024 election would jeopardize continued US involvement in the conflict and is seeking, by escalating the war into a direct clash with Russia, to create “facts on the ground” that would make it impossible to end the conflict.

With the failure of Ukraine’s offensive, the Biden administration has concluded that the only way to achieve the United States’ sweeping aims in Ukraine is to massively escalate its involvement in the conflict, including the potential direct deployment of US-NATO troops in a shooting war with Russia.



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