

Zelensky faces mounting domestic political crisis amid clashes with Trump

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is facing an uncertain domestic political future as the Ukrainian government deals with the fallout from Zelensky's disastrous meeting with US President Donald Trump and the potential imminent cut-off of US aid.

The already existing tensions within the Ukrainian ruling class are being exacerbated as US imperialism and the European imperialist powers themselves are divided over the Ukraine question.

Since the pro-NATO 2014 coup against the elected President Viktor Yanukovych, the country has essentially existed as a US- and NATO-backed client state. With the funding and arms from NATO, Ukraine has waged a war against Russia for over three years now, which has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

Now, amid mounting fatigue with the war and discontent in the Ukrainian population, there is significant anxiety in the Ukrainian ruling class that Zelensky has become a serious liability following the return of Trump to the US presidency.

Last Monday, shortly after Trump labeled Zelensky a "dictator without elections," Ukraine's parliament held a vote on a resolution supporting the legitimacy of Zelensky's presidency despite the undemocratic cancellation of the country's presidential elections, which were scheduled to take place in the spring of 2024 according to Ukraine's constitution. The vote was aimed at bolstering Zelensky just prior to his White House visit on Friday.

But although Zelensky's own Servant of the People party holds an outright majority in parliament, the first vote failed to pass, garnering just 218 votes—eight short of the required 226 votes.

Later on Tuesday, the draft resolution ultimately passed after former President Petro Poroshenko announced that he and his European Solidarity party would no longer oppose the resolution as it was part of "key defense and international legislation."

Just weeks prior, Zelensky had signed a decree that placed sanctions on Poroshenko for "high treason" and supporting a

criminal organization. According to the country's domestic security agency, the SBU, which led the investigation, the sanctions were placed due to Poroshenko posing "threats to national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine" and the "creation of obstacles to sustainable economic development."

Poroshenko responded to the accusations by directly blaming Zelensky for the charges stating, "There are many accomplices in this crime: Zelensky's entire team, the Cabinet of Ministers, which was forced to submit to an absurd proposal, members of his National Security and Defense Council. But the customer, executor, and signatory is one—Zelensky personally."

Poroshenko became the president of Ukraine after the 2014 coup and has been a longtime political rival of Zelensky. In the 2019 presidential elections that brought Zelensky to power, Poroshenko was roundly defeated, despite being the preferred candidate of US imperialism at the time.

Since then, Poroshenko, a billionaire oligarch, has retained a significant political presence both at home and abroad. In Ukraine's parliament, he has been serving as head of the European Solidarity Party. He has also often met with Western leaders, while at the same time fighting a plethora of criminal charges brought against him by the Zelensky regime.

Others sanctioned by Zelensky were Viktor Medvedchuk—a former pro-Russian opposition leader in Ukraine now residing in Russia—Kostyantyn Zhevago, Hennadiy Boholyubov, and Zelensky's former financial backer and oligarch Igor Kolomoisky.

The sanctions mean that all related assets of the targeted individuals have been frozen. Poroshenko, Medvedchuk and these other individuals have also been blocked from conducting financial transactions, among other restrictions which will last indefinitely.

In the weeks since, Poroshenko has called for "national unity" and refused to criticize his political rival following last week's debacle at the White House. However, he did

state that he hopes Zelensky has a “Plan B” following his fallout with Trump.

These moves against Zelensky’s political rivals were taking place just as talk of a return to elections in Ukraine has surfaced in recent weeks, with some proposing presidential elections in Ukraine as part of any potential peace deal.

While meeting with Trump officials at the Munich Security Conference in February, Zelensky attempted to head off any attempt to impose elections on Ukraine by its Western backers.

“I am ready to speak about elections if you want. Ukrainians don’t want [them]; totally don’t want [them], because they are afraid. Because otherwise we will lose the martial law, our soldiers will come back home, and Putin will occupy all our territory,” Zelensky stated.

More recently, Zelensky offered to step down in exchange for NATO membership, a move that has been flatly rejected by the Trump administration as it seeks to abandon the US’s role in the Cold War military alliance and plot its own course for a potential war with China.

As Zelensky has turned to the EU for support in the wake of his White House visit, the Trump administration has already begun meeting with Zelensky’s rivals within the Ukrainian ruling-class.

According to *Politico*, four senior Trump officials held secret meetings in Kiev with Poroshenko, as well as with former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who in 2014 was recorded threatening to drop nuclear weapons on Russia.

Conversations reportedly centered on whether Ukraine could in fact hold snap elections with the ultimate goal of removing Zelensky from power.

As a top Republican foreign policy expert told *Politico*, “Poroshenko’s people and Yulia [Tymoshenko], they’re all talking to Trump World, positioning themselves as people who would be easier to work with. And people who would consent to many of the things that Zelensky is not agreeing to.”

While Zelensky’s White House trip ultimately failed to secure a deal based on giving up a huge share of Ukraine’s critical minerals, oil, gas and infrastructure to US imperialism, there remains hope in the Ukrainian bourgeoisie that a deal can still be worked out that would salvage Ukraine’s status as a US client state.

Speaking to the *Kyiv Independent*, former Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk—who was handpicked for his role by US imperialism following the 2014 coup—urged the signing of the minerals deal, despite the blowup between Zelensky and Trump, as a means to save the Ukrainian ruling class.

“We urgently need to develop a roadmap on how to fix the situation we all find ourselves in. Neither Ukraine nor the

Trump administration has benefited from this, only the war criminal (Russian President Vladimir) Putin. It is better to sign this (resources) agreement as soon as possible to show that Ukraine is ready for any kind of investment. If the U.S. president needs this deal to ‘sell’ it to his MAGA base, we are okay with this. But we need real investments and economic cooperation.”

Inter-imperialist tensions between the European powers and the US have also impacted the return of what the *New York Times* called in an article this week, the “Long shunned, Pro-Russia politicians.” Unsurprisingly, the newspaper failed to mention that the pro-Russia political opposition was systematically censored and persecuted under Zelensky with the help of the US prior to the start of full-scale war in 2022.

One such figure featured in the article is Oleksandr Dubinsky, a Ukrainian parliamentary member currently in prison. Dubinsky is pro-Trump and has been accused of having ties to Russia, despite at the same time being under sanctions from both the US and Russia.

Following Zelensky’s White House debacle, Dubinsky called for an emergency parliamentary session on Zelensky’s impeachment on X.

“The events of the past hours—the public humiliation of Zelensky at the White House, Trump’s acknowledgment of Zelensky’s diplomatic failure, and Ukraine’s loss of unconditional U.S. support—have marked the final act of the regime’s collapse. But Zelensky has not only failed in foreign policy—he has driven the country into a state where anyone who disagrees with his course faces repression,” Dubinsky wrote.

“I appeal to all Members of the Ukrainian Parliament: stop wasting time, stop waiting! Zelensky is bankrupt. Zelensky is not Ukraine! It is time to put him on trial. If he cannot offer a real way out of the crisis, then it is up to us to make fateful decisions,” Dubinsky declared.



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