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‘Empty Words’: Russian Officials Unswayed By Zelensky’s U.S. Visit

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and U.S. President Joe Biden hold a joint press conference Wednesday. **president.gov.ua**

Russian officials and other prominent figures have dismissed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s first wartime trip to the United States as an empty gesture that would not advance Russian-Ukrainian peace talks.

More hawkish voices, meanwhile, called for Ukraine to be “destroyed” altogether following Zelensky’s meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden and widely praised address to Congress.

Here’s a roundup of their reactions:

— Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov:

“We can say with regret that so far neither President Biden nor President Zelensky have said even a few words that could be perceived as potential readiness to listen to Russia's concerns.”

“Not a single word was heard warning Zelensky against the continued shelling of residential buildings in towns and villages in Donbas and there were no real calls for peace.”

“This suggests that the United States is continuing its line of de facto fighting an indirect war with Russia to the last Ukrainian.”

“The U.S. and other countries are going to expand the range of arms supplies to Ukraine; this does not contribute to a fast resolution. Arms supplies to Ukraine prolong the suffering of the Ukrainian people.”

— **Anatoly Antonov, Russia’s ambassador to the United States**:

“Zelensky's visit to the American capital, the talks in Washington showed that neither the administration nor Zelensky is ready for peace.”

“The Hollywood-style trip to Washington by the head of the Kyiv regime has confirmed that the administration's conciliatory statements about the lack of intention to start a confrontation with Russia are just empty words.”

“What was essentially announced to applause and sarcastic smirks, was the need to continue the ‘proxy war’ against our country. Until a full victory over us.”

— Valentina Matviyenko, speaker of Russia’s upper-house Federation Council:

“I’m sure there will be no preconditions for forcing Ukraine to peace [and] forcing negotiations in Zelensky’s visit to the United States.”

“I think they’ll put on a show with a performance, then pat him on the shoulder, give him a backpack on his shoulders and send him back to war.”

— Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of the Wagner mercenary group:

“It’s not fair, Volodymyr Oleksandrovych. I’m waiting for you near Bakhmut and you wagged your tail to the U.S.”

“I, like you, am a patriot of my country and haven’t gone anywhere since February. I guess I’m off to the United States. Tell Joseph [Biden] to meet me.”

— Vladimir Solovyov, pro-Kremlin television host:

“I kept thinking during this [Biden-Zelensky] press conference that this bastard [Zelensky] should simply be destroyed.”

“‘Russia hasn’t achieved any of its goals.’ Has anyone told Biden about 100,000 square kilometers and four new regions?”

“The enemy should be destroyed, without any thinking or explanations.”

“‘We’ll support Ukraine as long as Ukraine exists.’ In that case, there won’t be any Ukraine.”

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