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Russia Planning to Overthrow Ukraine's Leadership By End of Year – Zelensky

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Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. **president.gov.ua**

Russian special forces are planning to remove Ukraine's leadership from power by the end of 2023, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

In an interview with the British tabloid The Sun published late Monday, Zelensky claimed Russia would use "any means available to them," including assassination, in the operation supposedly dubbed "Maidan 3."

"The goal is to change the president. Maybe not by killing, but it's a change," Zelensky told The Sun.

Ten years ago on Nov. 21, Ukrainians staged mass protests against pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych in the Maidan Uprising. The protests eventually led to Yanukovych's ouster in February 2014.

Zelensky said he had survived at least five or six assassination attempts, the most memorable

of which came at the beginning of Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Since then, he said, he's taken assassination attempts less seriously.

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After making slow progress with its summer counteroffensive, Ukraine has made small gains in recent days, including establishing new positions on the Moscow-held side of the Dnipro River and a successful attack on naval vessels in annexed Crimea.

However, the war does not seem close to an end, and Zelensky said Ukraine and its supporters need to maintain unity as the war continues.

He said he thought China could do more to pressure Russia, since China is not interested in helping Moscow occupy Ukraine. He added that combined Chinese and U.S. pressure will be needed to prevent Russia from starting World War III.

"They don't feel now that the world is totally against them."

Russia is now taking new, unspecified steps in the Balkans, training new people, and planning to start new conflicts to destabilize Europe, he said to The Sun.

"If they destroy us, if they will kill us, they will occupy NATO countries very quickly, like the Baltics, or Poland, and others. And after that, you will move your soldiers."

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