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Zelensky Says ‘Pauses’ in Conflict Would Help Russia

By AFP

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President Of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Thursday that any "pauses" in Ukraine's defense against Russia's invasion would only help Moscow to re-arm and allow it to "run us over."

Zelensky spoke in Estonia on the second leg of a Baltic tour aimed at boosting flagging support for his country's almost two-year-long fight against Russia.

"Give the Russian Federation two to three years, then they will simply run us over. We wouldn't take that risk... There will be no pauses in favor of Russia," he said at a press conference with Estonia's President Alar Karis.

He added that a "long war" would also not be good for Ukraine.

"We are against this war from the first day and will be until the last," he said.

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Zelensky also said Kyiv "deserves" an invitation to join NATO, saying its army would "strengthen" the bloc's eastern flank.

He said the bloc would gain "an army with military experience — not theory but practice."

Ukraine has expressed some frustration toward Western allies for the lack of a timeframe to join the Western military alliance.

Zelensky arrived in Tallinn overnight along with his Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba.

Estonia, one of Ukraine's main allies and a NATO member, has called for continued support for Kyiv as some allies waver.

"Democratic countries have done a lot to assist Ukraine, but we must collectively do more to ensure Ukraine wins and the aggressor is defeated," said Estonia's leader Karis.

He added that "there is hope that this will be the last military aggression in Europe."

Estonia's Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said on social media that the country will "give a strong message and confirmation to Ukraine that Estonia stands firmly by their side, and together we will win this war."

Zelensky appealed for badly needed air defense systems when he began his tour on Wednesday in Lithuania, warning that Western hesitation on aid for Ukraine was emboldening Russia.

Zelensky will end his tour of the three Baltic nations in Latvia.

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