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Ukraine's Ex-Army Chief Zaluzhny Appointed Ambassador to U.K.

By AFP

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Then-Commander-in-Chief Valeriy Zaluzhny (R) speaking with a Ukrainian serviceman at a training center on the "Missile Forces and Artillery and the Engineering Troops" Day at an undisclosed location in Ukraine on Nov. 3, 2023. **Handout / Ukrainian Presidential Press Service / AFP**

Ukraine on Thursday named Valery Zaluzhny as its new envoy to the U.K., a month after he was removed from his position as the country's commander-in-chief.

The announcement came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met British Secretary of State for Defense Grant Shapps.

"On March 7, 2024, the President of Ukraine approved the candidacy of Valery Zaluzhny for the post of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine to the United Kingdom," the Ukrainian foreign ministry said in a statement.

Zelensky praised the appointment of Zaluzhny, saying "our alliance with Britain should only

get stronger."

"Zaluzhny told me that this is the direction he would like to take — diplomacy," he added.

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The popular general had led the Ukrainian army since the start of the war against Russia, pushing back a vastly more powerful invading force in the first months of the conflict.

Dubbed the "Iron General" by Ukrainian media, Zaluzhny came to symbolize the country's resistance and enjoyed sky-high approval ratings among the public.

But the failure of a much-vaunted counteroffensive last summer and public disagreement with Zelensky tarnished his reputation in the president's office.

He was replaced by Oleksandr Syrsky, who commanded Ukraine's lightning autumn 2022 counteroffensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region.

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