



## POLITICS

# Trump warns Zelenskyy to quickly negotiate war's end with Russia or risk not having a nation to lead

1 of 9 | Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday that US President Donald Trump is living in a Russian "disinformation space" regarding his comments Tuesday about the Ukrainian leader's approval rating.

BY [STEPHANY MATAT](#), [AAMER MADHANI](#) AND [MIKE PESOLI](#)

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MIAMI (AP) — President [Donald Trump](#) on Wednesday warned Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelenskyy](#) that he "better move fast" to negotiate an end to [Russia's invasion](#) of Ukraine or risk not having a nation to lead.

The rhetoric from Trump toward Ukraine comes amid an escalating back-and-forth between the two presidents and rising tensions between Washington and much of Europe over [Trump's approach](#) to settling the biggest conflict on the continent since World War II.

Trump's harsh words for Zelenskyy drew criticism from Democrats and even some Republicans in the United States, where Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression has had bipartisan support. Zelenskyy said Trump was falling into a Russian disinformation trap — and was quickly admonished by Vice President JD Vance about the perils of publicly criticizing the new president.

Trump, who is trying to bring the fighting to a close on terms that Kyiv says are too favorable to Moscow, used an extended social media post on his Truth Social platform to lash out at Zelenskyy and call the Ukrainian a "dictator without elections."

"Think of it, a modestly successful comedian, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, talked the United States of America into spending \$350 Billion Dollars, to go into a War that couldn't be won, that never had to start, but a War that he, without the U.S. and 'TRUMP,' will never be able to settle," Trump said of Zelenskyy, who was a popular television star in Ukraine before running for office.



### AP AUDIO: Trump warns Zelenskyy to quickly negotiate war's end with Russia or risk not having a nation to lead

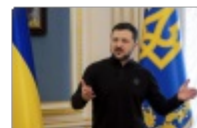
AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports President Trump and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy are trading barbs as relations sour over the Russia war.

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The U.S. has obligated [about \\$183 billion](#) since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, according to the U.S. special inspector general, conducting oversight of American assistance to Ukraine.

Trump accused Zelenskyy of being "A Dictator without Elections!!" Due to the war, Ukraine did delay elections that were scheduled for April 2024.

He later repeated many of the criticisms of Zelenskyy, who he said has done a "terrible job," during an address before a meeting in Miami of business executives hosted by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.

Trump also contended that Zelenskyy was misusing American aid intended for the war effort and had taken advantage of Democrat Joe Biden's administration.

The Republican president was riled by Zelenskyy's charge that Trump "lives in this disinformation space" fostered by Moscow. "We have seen this disinformation. We understand that it is coming from Russia," Zelenskyy said.

Vance told [the Daily Mail](#) that Zelenskyy's criticism of Trump was not helping his cause. "The idea that Zelenskyy is going to change the president's mind by bad mouthing him in public media, everyone who knows the president will tell you that is an atrocious way to deal with this administration," Vance said.

Ukrainian officials, however, continue to raise their concerns about Trump's approach.

"Why should dominance be handed over to a country that is an aggressor, a violator of international law, and the author of aggression against Ukraine?" said Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskyy. "We still do not understand this strategy."

U.S. and Russian officials meeting in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday agreed to negotiate a settlement to an end to the war. Ukrainian and European officials were not included.

Trump said Zelenskyy should have worked out a deal earlier. "Zelenskyy better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left," Trump said.

"In the meantime, we are successfully negotiating an end to the War with Russia, something all admit only 'TRUMP,' and the Trump Administration, can do. Biden never tried, Europe has failed to bring Peace, and Zelenskyy probably wants to keep the 'gravy train' going," Trump wrote.

The rhetoric from Trump went even further than the false charges he made Tuesday against the Ukrainians when he suggested Kyiv was responsible for starting the war. Russia invaded its smaller neighbor.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York was appalled that Trump was blaming Ukraine for Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion.

"It's disgusting to see an American president turn against one of our friends and openly side with a thug like Vladimir Putin," Schumer said.

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said he disagreed with Trump's suggestion that Ukraine was responsible.

"I think Vladimir Putin started the war," Kennedy said. "I also believe, from bitter experience, that Vladimir Putin is a gangster. He's a gangster with a black heart" who has Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's "taste for blood."

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said Trump's words were insulting to the thousands of Ukrainians who have died in the war and he accused the president of parroting Putin. "I would call on President Trump to apologize to the people of Ukraine, but it would be a waste of breath," Durbin said. "Donald Trump is a pushover for Putin."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota is among the Republican lawmakers who have supported Ukraine over the course of the war. He said the Trump administration needed space as it seeks a resolution. "The president speaks for himself," Thune said about Trump's sharpening rhetoric toward Zelenskyy. "What I want to see is a peaceful result, a peaceful outcome."

The administration has also shown frustration with Zelenskyy for directing his ministers last week not to sign off on [a proposed agreement](#) to give the United States access to [Ukraine's rare earth minerals](#). The Ukrainians said the document was too focused on U.S. interests.

The proposal, a key part of Zelenskyy's talks with Vance on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, did not offer any specific security guarantees in return. Trump during his speech in Miami fumed about the Ukrainians walking away from an agreement. "They broke that deal," Trump charged.

Trump, speaking with reporters aboard Air Force One after his speech Wednesday evening, said the U.S. believed it had a deal on accessing Ukraine's critical minerals when Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent travelled to [Kyiv](#) last week.

Trump added the Ukrainians "agreed to it more or less and then Scott Bessent went there and was treated rather rudely because essentially they told him no."

Ukrainian officials met Wednesday in Kyiv with retired U.S. Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia.

"It's an egregious war in the sense of the length of time and casualties there and he understands the human suffering," Kellogg said of Trump's thinking. "He understands the damage that we can see and we want to see an end to it."

Madhani and Pesoli reported from Washington. AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro in Washington and Associated Press writers Susie Blann and Hanna Arhirova in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed to this report.



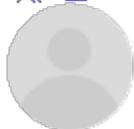
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