**Musk suggests Ukraine should cede Crimea, draws rebuke from Zelenskyy**

On Twitter, the billionaire tech magnate floated ideas for a possible Russia-Ukraine peace deal. Ukraine’s president wasn't happy.

Billionaire tech executive Elon Musk triggered the ire of Ukraine and its supporters on Monday after he suggested in a Twitter poll that the country should cede the strategically important Crimea region to Russia and make other concessions as part of a peace deal.

Andrij Melnyk, Ukraine’s ambassador to Germany, had a curt response to Musk’s initial poll.

“F--- off is my very diplomatic reply to you @elonmusk,” he [wrote on Twitter](https://twitter.com/MelnykAndrij/status/1576977000178208768).

Musk also drew direct criticism from Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who in a dueling Twitter poll accused Musk of contradicting himself. Zelenskyy asked users which version of Musk they like more: the one who supports Ukraine, or the one who supports Russia?

[That was a reference to Musk’s early and prominent suppor](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1577006943499350016)t for Ukraine after the Russian invasion in February. Musk’s company SpaceX [shipped equipment for its Starlink internet service](https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/elon-musks-starlink-internet-becomes-lifeline-ukrainians-rcna25360) so Ukrainians could maintain online access to the rest of the world.

The dispute began when Musk, the world’s wealthiest person according to the [Bloomberg Billionaires Index](https://www.bloomberg.com/billionaires/), floated ideas for ending the conflict. His four-point plan included Ukraine ceding Crimea, a region that Russia [has occupied by military force](https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/18/russia-took-crimea-from-ukraine-in-2014-now-kyiv-is-fighting-back.html) since 2014.

Crimea [is strategically important](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/world/europe/crimea-ukraine-russia.html), for its access to the Black Sea and, by extension, the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic and Indian oceans.

“This is highly likely to be the outcome in the end — just a question of how many die before then,” Musk said in a Twitter thread Monday.

“Also worth noting that a possible, albeit unlikely, outcome from this conflict is nuclear war.”

Late Monday, Musk responded directly to Zelenskyy in a public tweet, saying he still supported Ukraine but feared the consequences of escalating the war.

Musk has no formal experience in diplomacy and little in the way of public connection to either Russia or Ukraine. But he has a history of wading into world events not directly connected to him or his businesses. In 2018, he criticized efforts in Thailand to rescue a group of boys trapped in a cave and sent a miniature submarine to try to assist.

Musk amended his initial four-point proposal from Monday in a subsequent tweet, asking users if they’d support a referendum in Crimea.

But some people interpreted even that proposal as a betrayal of Musk’s earlier support for Ukraine.