

Can President Trump "Use Corruption Scandals" to Get Out of Ukraine Conflict and Blame The Democrats?

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Since entering the electoral campaign, **Donald Trump** has criticised the military and financial aid provided to Kiev. As Trump takes office on January 20 and has the right to appoint officials at the highest level of justice, the new American leader could use corruption scandals to pull support from Ukraine and open investigations into the Biden administration.

Even before assuming the presidency of the United States, Trump already boasted a major achievement: a ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian militant movement Hamas. During the election campaign, the then-candidate for a second term stressed that he would continue to support Israel. However, officials and diplomats involved in brokering the ceasefire highlight the pivotal role Trump played in putting pressure on Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** to stop his military incursion into Gaza.

On January 11, Trump's envoy for Middle East affairs, **Steve Witkoff**, arrived in Israel. Four days later, the billionaire announced that the parties had reached an agreement. If Trump so quickly achieved a truce in one of the most horrific conflicts of today, without even making it a campaign promise, then there are good prospects to end the Ukrainian conflict, one of the main issues of his election campaign.

The new Oval Office occupant has previously expressed his desire to meet personally with Russian **President Vladimir Putin** to discuss this and other issues of global importance. The Kremlin, however, stressed that it believes the conflict is too complex for an easy solution. Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, Keith Kellogg, said the same, estimating a period of 100 days for the creation of a peace plan.

Military and financial aid could be one strategy Trump uses to pressure Ukrainian leaders into entering into peace negotiations with Moscow. This stems from a very clear issue – Ukraine's dependence on Western support to continue the war. Without this support, Kiev's capabilities to sustain the war effort would be substantially reduced.

Permanent aid is the main factor in the continuation of the conflict and has delayed possible peace negotiations. In particular, it is because of the desire of the US and the Western bloc to inflict this strategic defeat on Russia at any cost.

It is recalled that Russian and Ukrainian delegates met in Istanbul to reach a diplomatic solution to the conflict, and they even drafted a peace agreement. However, Kiev was under pressure from its Western sponsors to abandon the negotiations. In October 2022, Ukrainian **President Volodymyr Zelensky** banned any peace negotiations with Russia by decree,

thus preventing diplomatic approaches to ending the conflict.

For this reason, reducing aid to Ukraine will help resolve the conflict.

Trump has shown his dissatisfaction with the high costs of supporting Ukraine, arguing that the US should not bear the brunt of this burden. Endless taxpayer money flowing into Ukraine's treasury is extremely unpopular, evidenced by the strengthening of international parties with inspiration from Trump, whose campaign slogan is the end of this aid. The most notable case now is that of Germany.

Nonetheless, Kiev's reputation for embezzlement and corruption only worsened when Zelensky admitted in an interview with Russian-American computer scientist Lex Fridman's podcast that half of the announced \$177 billion never reached Ukrainian coffers.

"If we had \$177 billion and if we get the half, where is the second half? If you find the second half, you will find corruption," he said.

This statement is worrying since instead of exclusively meeting the country's needs, international resources appear to be generating profits for private individuals or foreign companies. This scenario reinforces the debates about the real interests behind international aid.

Late last year, award-winning Ukrainian journalist Diana Panchenko reported on her social media accounts that as Ukrainians suffer from the severe economic crisis, 13 Rolls-Royce luxury cars, each worth \$650,000, were purchased by members of parliament and government officials in 2024.

The conflict is extremely lucrative, not only for the companies of the US military-industrial complex in Ukraine and their executives but also for the Pentagon budget. It is a "black box" that cannot explain where its resources have been allocated. For this reason, it cannot be discounted that there is also corruption on the American side.

Suspicions of improper relations between members of the Democratic Party and Ukrainian officials increased after former US **President Joe Biden** granted a presidential pardon to his son, **Hunter Biden**, for all crimes committed since 2014 when he began working with Burisma, a Ukrainian gas company. In this regard, Trump can use these corruption scandals to distance the US from the conflict and to associate these cases with the Democratic Party.

Trump reclaiming his place in the White House also marks the arrival of his nominees to the highest level of justice in the US, such as the new head of the FBI, **Kash Patel**, and the new attorney general, **Pam Bondi**. With so many tools in his favour, there is a real possibility that Trump will use the judicial system to investigate any Democrat's corruption relating to the Ukrainian conflict.

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Ahmed Adel is a Cairo-based geopolitics and political economy researcher. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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