

The US Is Unlikely to Coerce Zelensky Into Holding Elections Without a Ceasefire First

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

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Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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*Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) published a [statement](#) on Monday alleging that "Washington is considering holding presidential and parliamentary elections [in Ukraine] next year in the context of continued hostilities with Russia." The purpose is to act "As one of the 'legitimate' ways to eliminate the 'overly presumptuous' V. Zelensky", "if necessary." **To that end, the US is already supposedly leveraging its agents of influence in Ukraine to "create[e] a new party designed to occupy a pro-American niche".***

This analysis [here](#) from August "Assessing The Veracity Of SVR's Latest Report About Impending Political Changes In Kiev" hyperlinks to three associated analyses from December 2023, January 2024, and May 2024 in an attempt to account for why prior predictions of political changes there have yet to happen. As regards the latest prediction, which is importantly caveated with the vague claim that it'll only be done "if necessary", there are reasons to expect it to be more difficult to pull off than SVR's statement implies.

US could replace Zelensky – Russian intel agency

Washington considers the Ukrainian leader to be “overly entitled” and may remove him from power, the SVR has claimed



Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky © Jean Catuffe

The US is considering holding an election in Ukraine next year as a “legitimate” means of replacing the government of Vladimir Zelensky, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) claimed on Monday.

Zelensky remains in power in Ukraine despite his term in office having officially expired this May. The politician had earlier opted to scrap presidential elections, citing the martial law that had been imposed in the country due to the conflict with Russia.

The US State Department believes Zelensky to be “overly entitled” and may organize presidential and parliamentary votes to remove him in 2025 despite the ongoing fighting, the SVR said in a statement.

The only realistic way that the US can coerce Zelensky into holding elections [without a ceasefire first](#), remembering that he said that he supposedly can’t hold them till the conflict ends due to his government’s interpretation of the martial law decree, is by withholding military aid. If Trump goes through with that, then he risks facilitating a Russian military breakthrough that could raise the chances of Russia [achieving its maximum goals](#) in the conflict, which the US naturally wants to avoid happening.

Despite Trump promising to end the NATO-Russian proxy war in Ukraine that Biden was responsible for provoking, he’s still a businessman at heart and therefore likely isn’t comfortable with his country receiving no return on their hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of investments. For that reason, it’s improbable that he’ll create the conditions for Russia to achieve its maximum goals in the conflict by withholding military aid from Zelensky until the latter holds new elections as a means for replacing him.

What’s more likely is that Trump coerces Zelensky into agreeing to a ceasefire and then demands that he hold elections shortly after that, perhaps on the pretext of ensuring a democratic mandate for proceeding further with peace talks, after which he and his party could then be replaced. This “phased leadership transition” would only occur “if necessary” since Trump might also let Zelensky continue putting off elections while using the SBU to consolidate his one-party rule if he does his bidding.

It’s premature to predict whether or not Trump would demand that elections be held after a ceasefire, but it can be assessed with a high degree of confidence that he wouldn’t demand that they be held before then since that could facilitate Russia inflicting a strategic defeat

on the US. Whenever elections finally arrive, it's a certainty that the US will do everything possible to perpetuate its influence over Kiev, even if this requires "democratically" replacing Zelensky and his party with more popular proxies.

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This article was originally published on the author's Substack, [Andrew Korybko's Newsletter](#).

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Featured image: President Donald J. Trump participates in a bilateral meeting with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2019, at the InterContinental New York Barclay in New York City. (Official White House Photo by Shealah Craighead)

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About the author:

Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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