

Zelensky Accuses West of Grabbing \$88.5 Billion or Half of All Money Sent to Ukraine

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In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

*In a recent [interview](#) with podcaster Lex Friedman, when asked about Ukrainian corruption and accusations, Zelensky, while admitting that “there are many issues”, claimed they had the “most sophisticated” mechanism to fight corruption, “as required by the European Union”, and gave as an example the fact that **Ihor Kolomoysky** (former Governor of Dnipropetrovsk), “the most influential Ukrainian oligarch”, is now in prison. However, Zelensky also, in a way, turned the accusation around by [saying](#):*

“During all this time of the war, around \$177 billion have been voted for or decided upon, \$177 billion... Let’s be honest. We have not received half of this money... where is the half? If you find the second half you will find corruption” (around 2:18:00).

The Ukrainian leader then asked: “is it corruption? Whose corruption?” He added that when the US agrees on a certain sum, the way it is spent is questionable. His example was: Ukraine offered to use its own cargo jets to transport American arms, but the US refused and chose to use American cargo jets instead, which is way more expensive; Zelensky’s reasoning here being that, by employing Ukrainian ones, it would be possible to save money and Kyiv could thus get more weapons. Zelensky then asks quite rhetorically whether this is about “lobbyism” and adds that “I can’t be open about it, nor did I intend a scandal to arise.”

Zelensky’s claims about his country’s anti-corruption efforts are hardly convincing.

The issue with his former ally and backer Kolomoysky, the oligarch, is quite complex, to say the least. It merits some attention because rather than being an evidence of judicial independence, indicates instead that such a powerful figure only gets in trouble [when there is significant American pressure](#). The businessman in fact only started to lose favor with the Ukrainian President after US authorities started investigating him, especially in early 2022. Be it a coincidence or not, American pressure against the billionaire increased after he started saying that NATO would soon be [“soiling its pants and buying Pampers.”](#)

Before that, Kolomoysky’s relationship with Zelensky was very close. In 2019 he owned 70% of the whole 1+1 Media Group, whose 1+1 TV Channel happened to air a comedy series called “Servant of the People”. In this TV series, then actor Volodymyr Zelensky played a school teacher who, against all odds, becomes the President while championing an anti-corruption platform.

Zelensky did become President in real life the same year, and was always seen as

Kolomoysky's creature: an April 2019 Reuters news report [described](#) Zelensky as a comedian under scrutiny, during the presidential race, over his "[oligarch ties](#)". Kolomoysky's personal lawyer was even appointed as Zelensky's key campaign advisor, and, after elected, Zelensky [removed officials who posed a threat](#) to the billionaire's interests, such as **Rusian Ryaboshapka**, then the Prosecutor General. One should keep in mind that this is an oligarch known to maintain "a shark tank in his office, which he would fill with bloody chum whenever he wanted to intimidate a visitor," like a James Bond's "villain", as the Spectator [described](#) him.

Interestingly, during the aforementioned [interview](#) with Lex Friedman, the Ukrainian President, despite mentioning Kolomoysky's arrest, did not comment on the fact that the Pandora Papers, back in October 2021, [showed](#) that Zelensky himself and at least two of his Kwartal 95 company associates were operating a [network](#) of offshore companies in Belize, the British Virgin Islands, and Cyprus since 2012. The network is alleged to have laundered some \$41 million from Kolomoysky's Privatbank.

All this, rather than being just a digression, goes to illustrate that Zelensky may point fingers, but he himself has his own share of skeletons in the closet. This being so, it is hard to understand what his motivations could be in making such impressive accusations. He is basically accusing the West of embezzling around \$88.5 billion or half of all the money sent to Ukraine, in his own words. If Western war propaganda were not so hegemonic within the major media outlets in the West, this allegation, coming from no less than the Ukrainian head of state, would make it to front-page headlines everywhere. And the fact that it has not speaks volumes.

If Zelensky is trying to send a message for leverage, maybe out of desperation, it is easy to see how this could backfire quite badly for him. Maybe this is the reason why he did not talk about this during a press conference or while being interviewed by CNN or, say, the New York Times, but rather did so during a 3 hour long podcast. In his own words, after all, he "can't be open about it", nor does he "intend a scandal to arise."

While Ukraine was [described](#) in 2015 by the Guardian as "the most corrupt nation in Europe", in the corruption index for 2023, Transparency International still [ranked](#) Ukraine at 104 out of 180 countries, which is very high even globally. Such a factor even plays a part in [ruining the country's energy infrastructure](#) during the war.

The thing with corruption is that, by its very nature, it always cuts both ways. I've written elsewhere about the American defense industry's [interests](#) and the shady businesses involving even the [Biden family](#) and American members of congress and, considering all the evidence, Zelensky's accusations should be taken seriously.

In any case, by this point, any expose of corruption in the West would only fuel further inquiries on the Ukrainian government's and Zelensky's own skeletons in the closet, so as to divert attention, and would thereby potentially compromise further aid to the Eastern European country, considering the current political climate.

President-elect Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to cut US aid, while saying it is "time to end the war", and even German **Chancellor Olaf Scholz** is currently blocking a multi-billion euro financial aid package for Kyiv.

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Featured image: April 14, 2022, Kyiv, Ukraine: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, during an interview with BBC reporter Clive Myrie for BBC Television from the situation room, April 14, 2022 in Kyiv, Ukraine. (Credit Image: © Ukraine Presidency/Ukraine Presi/Planet Pix via ZUMA Press Wire)

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