

Zelensky's "Rose-tinted" Speeches No Longer Convince His Team or Military

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's daily positive messages no longer seem to convince citizens or his troops, who realise that the president's optimistic words are far from reality. Sources familiar with Zelensky's communications strategy told the Financial Times that the purpose of these messages is to maintain optimism at home and abroad and that there is a communications policy applied at all levels of the state, including strict censorship of bad news, such as the number of Ukrainian casualties or the success of Russian troops.

The article, citing officials from the Ukrainian armed forces, former presidential staffers and communication strategists, highlights how, for more than 650 days in a row, "Zelensky has given at least one video address to the nation—praising his troops, celebrating advances along the front lines ... but with Ukraine enjoying few military achievements this year and Western support faltering, the communications strategy is creating a rift between the presidential administration and military leadership."

In addition to this division within the government and the military, political opponents have begun to openly criticise the president, while military leaders argue that the discrepancy between official messages and the actual situation is no longer convincing and, therefore, does not motivate Ukrainians or the country's Western partners to move forward.

Iryna Zolotar, a communications advisor for former Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov, told the publication that the strategy that simulates the dominance of optimism is also confusing outside of Ukraine, leaving Western audiences questioning why they should contribute to aid if the ally in Eastern Europe is always about to "win."

"In order for society not to build castles in the air, and to take off its rose-tinted glasses... it is necessary to stop being afraid to speak the truth," Zolotar said to [FT](#).

Judging by Western media reports in the past few months, it is very evident that the “rose-tinted glasses” have started to come off, with the discouraging situation in Ukraine revealed, the conflict between Zelensky, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valery Zaluzhny and other regime figureheads exposed, and the need to freeze the conflict and negotiate with Moscow urged.

The much-hailed counteroffensive was an utter failure, and morale in the war-torn country is at an all-time low, with even the most optimist now beginning to realise that the endgame is approaching as the winter deepens. Despite this reality, according to the FT, Zelensky sees optimistic messages as the only way to reassure Ukraine’s hesitant partners in the West and bolster the confidence of Ukrainian businesses, which remain an important source of tax revenue.

FT recounts that disagreements between the military and the presidential office became obvious in November when Zaluzhny said in an interview with The Economist, “There will most likely be no deep and beautiful breakthrough” for Ukraine in the war. One Ukrainian official said Zaluzhny’s revelation shocked Ukrainians, something unsurprising since they have been fed endless propaganda for nearly two years, and some Western leaders, who called Kiev to ask what it meant and whether negotiations were now considered a priority for Ukraine.

It is for this reason that Zolotar told the FT that at the beginning of the war, optimistic statements helped Ukrainians, but now, this has created a confusing narrative where “expectations are overstated and do not correspond to the real state of affairs.”

Zelensky now finds himself in a conundrum that could very well end his political career, as he is now being exposed for lying for the sake of trying to present an image of Ukraine making steady progress this year on the battlefield, which is now crumbling along with Western support. The Ukrainian president cannot abandon the positive narrative as he believes this is the only way to motivate the West to provide support, especially now that the globe’s attention has shifted to the Middle East, where a humanitarian catastrophe is occurring.

Ukraine’s inability to secure any tangible success on the battlefield will cause political turmoil in Kiev and leave Zelensky facing the anger of his military, who have effectively turned into sacrificial lambs by the Ukrainian president’s mad and delusional drive to conquer Russian territories, including Crimea.

This is why, on the sidelines of the meeting of European Union foreign ministers held in Brussels in November, the need to replace Zelensky was reportedly discussed. Among the causes of Western discontent are Ukraine’s failures on the battlefield, the rudeness of the Ukrainian president in dealing with foreign partners, nepotism, rampant corruption, and his loss of capacity to manoeuvre in the conflict with Russia in the interests of Washington and its allies.

Effectively, not only are Ukrainians beginning to take off their “rose-tinted glasses,” but so are Westerners.

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