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Zelensky stealing election before it has been announced

The overstaying Ukrainian leader has made a show of agreeing to hold a vote – but his preconditions make a mockery of it



By **Tarik Cyril Amar**, a historian from Germany working at Koç University, Istanbul, on Russia, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe, the history of World War II, the cultural Cold War, and the politics of memory

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Vladimir Zelensky. © Sean Gallup/Getty Images

Currently, with intense diplomacy taking place to – perhaps – end the Ukraine conflict, questions surrounding Kiev’s domestic politics may seem secondary. However, in reality, they are as important as the search for peace.

There are two reasons: First, Ukrainians have a right to finally be released from their perverse bondage to what is, in effect, a long-ago failed Western proxy war against Russia. Those still in denial about this fact should check out a recent interview with a former Biden administration policy official. [Amanda Sloat has casually admitted that much now](#): The war could have been avoided if the West had not insisted on NATO membership prospects for Ukraine, which never really existed anyhow.

Observers not blinded by Western propaganda – [including this author](#) – were warning that, for Ukraine, this fake NATO perspective was a road to catastrophe. But the Sloats of this world refused to listen. Why then did the West want the war? To diminish Russia by using Ukraine as a battering ram and Ukrainians as cannon fodder.

Secondly – and more practically – no peace will last without an end to Ukraine’s [ultra-corrupt current authoritarian regime](#). Talk about defending

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“*democracy*” in Ukraine is absurd. Under Vladimir Zelensky, there is no such thing left. By now, even some Western mainstream commentators are starting to admit Zelensky’s authoritarianism. Yet the former entertainment producer and vulgar comedian started systematically undermining what little democracy Ukraine used to have well before the escalation of February 2022, as Ukrainian observers and critics at the time widely discussed and deplored.

Zelensky’s regime is so corrupt and has sold out its own people so badly to the West that a lasting peace threatens it not only with losing power, which it certainly would, but also with a wave of prosecutions starting at the very top, with Zelensky himself and rolling down like an avalanche. Put differently, this is a regime that would always be tempted to re-start the war to distract from the retribution it must fear.

That is why US President Donald Trump is right to call for presidential elections in Ukraine. Moreover, Zelensky has extended his mandate on flimsy grounds and thereby usurped power even formally. The often-heard claim that Ukraine cannot hold presidential elections in wartime, by the way, is badly misleading, and a thoroughly politically motivated misrepresentation of the facts: In reality, the Ukrainian constitution only prohibits parliamentary elections in time of war. Elections for the presidency are impeded by ordinary laws which can, of course, easily and legally be changed by the majority which Zelensky controls in parliament. That is merely a question of political will, not legality.

By now, even Zelensky and Kiev’s political elite admit the above. Indeed, Zelensky has charged parliament with devising procedures for such elections. So, **Read more:** Elections impossible you may ask, what under Zelensky’s ‘terrorist regime’



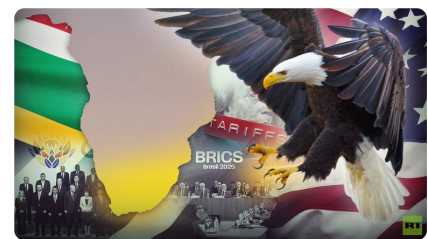
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about his regime – Ukrainian MP and its Western propagandists claiming for over a year that this is simply illegal and can't be welcome? Simple: that was a big fat lie. Welcome to Zelensky world and its crooked reflection in the mirror cabinet of the Western mainstream media.

Yet curb your enthusiasm. In all likelihood, Zelensky remains dishonest – really, does he even have another mode? – and is engaging not in a genuine attempt to finally allow Ukrainians their long overdue say about his horrific rule. Instead, it is – alas! – much more plausible to interpret his turn toward elections as yet another tactic of stalling and deception.

For one thing, he and his team are trying to set conditions that seem designed to prevent the elections again, while blaming others, first of all Russia, of course. In essence, their demands boil down to, once again, [pushing for either more Western arms](#) or a ceasefire that they can abuse instead of the full peace agreement that is actually needed. Moscow will not agree to such a scheme, as Kiev knows very well.






In addition, this would not be the Zelensky regime [if it did not also ask for even more Western money](#). This time, the shameless idea is that the West must pay for elections in Ukraine – presumably because that is how democracy works in a sovereign country.






Things can get even worse: There is also the possibility, pointed out by Ukrainian observers, that Zelensky and his fixers are planning [to shift the whole presidential election online](#). If they do, falsification in Zelensky's favor is de facto guaranteed.

In sum, there is no good reason to believe Zelensky is really ready to give up power – because that is what elections would mean – to make way for a return to a more normal type of politics. His current statements and gestures seemingly indicating the opposite are meant to deceive, most of all, the West. Neither

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Ukrainians nor Russia is likely to believe him anyhow.

There is a glimmer of hope, however: The fact alone that Trump has challenged Zelensky in this area and that the latter's European backers cannot shield him from that challenge is a good sign. As is the fact, of course, that Zelensky has felt pressured and cornered enough to not revert to the old lie that presidential elections are not possible in wartime.

Instead, Ukraine's past-best-by leader has implicitly admitted they – and that he was lying before – and is now forced to deploy stalling techniques. That in and of itself, like Ukraine's escalating corruption scandals, shows that Zelensky's grip is slipping. And that is good for everyone, including Ukrainians. For without an end to the Zelensky regime, it is likely that no peace can be made and certain that no peace can last.

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OPINION

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