



## Seymour Hersh: the CIA Knows Ukrainian Officials Are Skimming US Aid

### Description

**On Wednesday, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh published a report on Substack that alleged the CIA was aware of widespread corruption in Ukraine and the embezzlement of US aid.**

The report said the Ukrainian government has been using US taxpayer money to purchase diesel from Russia to fuel its military. Hersh said Zelensky “has been buying the fuel from Russia, the country with which it, and Washington, are at war, and the Ukrainian president and many in his entourage have been skimming untold millions from the American dollars earmarked for diesel fuel payments.”

Hersh said according to one estimate by CIA analysts, at least \$400 million in funds were embezzled last year. Sources told Hersh that Ukrainian officials are also “competing” to set up front companies for export contracts to private arms dealers around the world.

The issue of corruption was raised during a meeting between CIA Director William Burns and Zelensky in January. An intelligence official with direct knowledge of the meeting told Hersh that Burns delivered a stunning message to Zelensky.

Hersh wrote: “The senior generals and government officials in Kiev were angry at what they saw as Zelensky’s greed, so Burns told the Ukrainian president, because ‘he was taking a larger share of the skim money than was going to the generals.’”

During the meeting, Burns presented Zelensky with a list of 35 generals and senior government officials whose corruption was known to the CIA. Zelensky responded by dismissing 10 officials who were engaged in flagrant corruption. “The ten he got rid of were brazenly bragging about the money they had—driving around Kiev in their new Mercedes,” the intelligence official said.

Hersh said Zelensky’s “half-hearted response” and the “lack of concern” in the White House angered some US intelligence officials. The intelligence official speaking to Hersh criticized President Biden’s two main foreign policy advisors, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

“They have no experience, judgment, and moral integrity. They just tell lies, make up stories.

Diplomatic deniability is something else,” the official said. The official said there was a “total breakdown between the White House leadership and the intelligence community.”

The report said the rift started in the fall when the Nord Stream natural gas pipelines were blown up. According to Hersh’s earlier reporting, President Biden ordered the operation that took out the pipelines. “Destroying the Nord Stream pipelines was never discussed, or even known in advance, by the community,” the official said.

The official said there is “no strategy for ending the war” within the Biden administration and offered more scathing criticism of Blinken and Sullivan.

“Burns is not the problem,” the official said. “The problem is Biden and his principal lieutenants—Blinken and Sullivan and their court of worshippers—who see those who criticize Zelensky as being pro-Putin. ‘We are against evil. Ukraine will fight ’til the last military shell is gone, and still fight.’ And here’s Biden who is telling America that we’re going to fight as long as it takes.”

Hersh’s story comes after a series of leaked top-secret documents from the Pentagon and other government agencies surfaced online. Some of the documents show US war planning for Ukraine and reveal the US doubts Kyiv’s ability to launch a successful counter-offensive, offering a starkly different view of Ukraine’s abilities than what Biden officials have been saying publicly.

by Dave DeCamp

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