



## Zelensky Calls Putin's Nuclear Threats A "Bluff" & "Show Of Weakness"

### Description

**(Update 16:35ET):** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has made a number of statements to German media on Wednesday sure to get noticed in Moscow. First, he reiterated that he stands ready to make compromises with Russia in order to end the fighting, but still emphasized he's not willing to concede anything that would be seen as a "betrayal" by Ukrainians, though without explaining exactly what this would look like in terms of the Kremlin's specific proposals on the table.

He said to *Bild TV*, however, that **"the other side must also be willing to make compromises – that's why they are called compromises."** He added when pressed further, "We can't talk about the details yet." So far there's been three rounds of meetings between the Ukraine-Russia delegations over a possible ceasefire.

And perhaps more provocatively Zelensky made comments on Russia's previous raising of its nuclear readiness level, calling Putin's threat of putting nuclear weapons use on the table but **a mere "bluff"**. The response to Moscow's raised nuclear posture was given to German newspaper *Die Zeit*, and included [the following](#):

Zelensky went on to say that Putin's nuclear threat **"shows a weakness."**

**"You only threaten the use of nuclear weapons when nothing else is working,"** Zelensky said. "Every use of nuclear weapons means the end for all sides, not just for the person using them."

Meanwhile, on the inter-NATO side of things, the Polish MiG transfer saga continues and confusion, after Wednesday reports that Washington and Warsaw were still mulling the possibility...

Pentagon officially shoots down plan to send Polish MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine calling

move a “high risk” maneuver that would likely escalate tensions with Russia

— Lucas Tomlinson (@LucasFoxNews) [March 9, 2022](#)

The Wall Street Journal cited the Pentagon as explaining that it’s now officially [rejected the plan](#):

***The U.S. formally rejected a Polish proposal to take possession of Soviet-era fighter jets and transport them to Ukraine to help that nation fend off Russia’s invasion, a Pentagon spokesman said Wednesday.***

*Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke to his Polish counterpart and “stressed we do not support the transfer of additional fighter aircraft to the Ukrainian Air Force at this time,” Pentagon press secretary John Kirby told reporters.*

It’s being deemed “high risk” while simultaneously likely to not “significantly change the effectiveness of the Ukrainian Air Force relative to Russian capabilities,” according to Kirby. Further it would obviously bring NATO and Russia more directly into conflict, given the United States would have to fly the MiG fighters into Ukraine to get them in the hands of national forces there.

Meanwhile, concerning revelations and confirmation from yesterday’s US Intelligence briefing before the Senate...

Biological weapons discovered in Ukraine in the middle of a war. What’s the worst that could happen?

— George Papadopoulos (@GeorgePapa19) [March 9, 2022](#)

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**(Update 9:10am ET):** In what may be a repeat of yesterday’s “*buy the Ukraine ceasefire speculation, sell the lack of follow through*”, moments ago futures spiked to session highs when Ukraine president Zelensky’s deputy chief of staff Ihor Zhovkva echoed what the president told ABC in the Monday night interview, saying that Ukraine is ready for a diplomatic solution and will discuss neutrality, but need a security guarantee...

- **\*AIDE TO ZELENSKIY SAYS UKRAINE READY FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION**
- **\*UKRAINIAN AIDE: CAN DISCUSS NEUTRALITY, NEED SECURITY GUARANTEE**

“Surely, we are ready for a diplomatic solution,” Ihor Zhovkva, Zelenskiy’s deputy chief of staff, told Bloomberg Television on Wednesday. Guarantees should come from Ukraine’s neighbors, he said, without specifying further.

But just as quick as the initial euphoria arrived, it fizzled after a Bloomberg headline indicated that Ukraine isn’t willing to go with two of Putin’s three demands, namely relinquishing Crimea and accepting Donetsk and Lugansk as independent republics:

- **\*UKRAINE'S ZHOVKVA: WON'T TRADE `SINGLE INCH' OF TERRITORIES**

And finally:

- **\*UKRAINIAN AIDE: SEEK CLEAR RESPONSE TO EU APPLICATION**

Which also seems like a dead end, because as JPMorgan said last night, ***"Ukraine is no longer insisting on NATO membership, though EU membership would give similar protections."***

So on net, looks like another non-starter, but at least some negotiating back and forth, now that Ukraine's core demand for membership in NATO appears to no longer be on the table.

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### **Earlier:**

Here is a summary of the relentless firehose of all Ukraine war news to hit in the past few hours, courtesy of Newsquawk.

### **Discussions/Negotiations:**

- Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov will travel to Turkey today to meet with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, according to Ria citing the Russian Foreign Ministry.
- Russian Foreign Ministry says aims of its operation do not include the overthrowing of the Ukraine government.
- Russia says "some progress" has been made in discussions with Ukraine, according to AFP.
- Russia's Kremlin says Russia has made no decision on nationalizing foreign assets; interested in continuing talks with Ukraine. On possible compromise with Ukraine: Crimea is Russian region, must be recognised as such and Donetsk/ Luhansk are sovereign republics, must be recognised as such.
- Ukraine Foreign Minister Kuleba says he has limited expectations from discussions with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov.

### **Energy/Economic Updates**

- US House is planning to vote on the Russian oil ban today, according to Bloomberg's Wasson.
- President Vladimir Putin signed an order restricting trade in unspecified goods and raw materials.
- US State Department Envoy Hochstein said about 3mln bbls of oil is now stranded because there is such outrage in Europe regarding what is happening in Ukraine, while Hochstein added the US is in a dramatically different place than Europe as it imports less oil from Russia.
- Saudi and Emirati leaders declined calls with US President Biden during the Ukraine crisis, according to WSJ.
- British Energy Minister Hands said Russian sanctions are beginning to bite and that they are ready to work internationally on reducing dependence on Russian gas, while he added the country is in a good position on natgas supply but vulnerable on the price side.
- Russia's ruble was quoted lower versus the dollar in the offshore market before foreign-exchange

trading resumes in Moscow after an extended break.

- EU Commission President von der Leyen says they have purchases so much LNG that it will be independent of Russian gas until end-winter.
- Dutch PM Rutte, when asked about a potential joint EU fund to respond to the war, says the existing instruments should be used to the max first.
- Russian Foreign Ministry says their reaction to Western sanctions will be sensitive and precise, working on measures in all directions, via Reuters citing Ria.
- Ukraine state power grid operator says Russian forces have disconnected Chernobyl nuclear power plants from grid; Ukrainian Energy Minister says we do not know what is happening at Chernobyl nuclear plant, via Reuters.
- CBR said clients with foreign currency accounts can withdraw a maximum of USD 10k and withdrawals above this must be taken in RUB with the rule will stay in place until September 9th.
- Fitch downgraded Russia from B to C due to its view that a sovereign default is imminent.
- MSCI announced to discontinue MSCI Russia IMI Select GDR Index.
- Wheat futures slumped by almost 5% as traders assessed the global supply outlook with war ravaging one of the world's top grain-growing regions.

### Third Party Remarks

- US President Biden tweeted that “This much is already clear: Ukraine will never be a victory for Putin. Putin may be able to take a city — but he will never be able to hold the country”.
- UK Transport Secretary Shapps tweeted they have made it a ‘criminal offence’ for any Russian aircraft to enter UK airspace.
- A source close to the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna told Iran's state media on Wednesday that a “good” deal was on the table, but that the **delay in the political decision making in Washington is hindering the process, according to Rudaw News.**

### Defense/Military

- Russian forces intensified their bombardment of Ukraine's capital Kyiv, the U.S. said. That's even as Moscow announced a pause in fighting for Wednesday to open humanitarian corridors from cities including Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Sumy and Mariupol, according to Interfax.

### Other

- Iranian Chief Nuclear Negotiator/Deputy Foreign Minister Kani has arrived in Vienna, according to journalist Aslani.

by Tyler Durden

### Category

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