



## Zelensky: D.C. Knows We Lose Without U.S. Help, Public Will Push Me to Make Peace if Bakhmut Falls

### Description

**UKRAINE: President Volodymyr Zelensky has claimed that defeat in Bakhmut, despite the narrative that it is strategically unimportant, would result in the international community and a “tired” Ukrainian public pressuring him to compromise with Russia – which he does not want to do.**

In an interview with Associated Press executive Julie Pace, Zelensky made not only a frank admission that the Joe Biden administration in the United States “really understands that if they stop helping us, we will not win,” but warned that defeat in Bakhmut could be a bigger blow to the Ukrainian war effort than some analysts believe — likely intended to put pressure on America not to slacken the pace of its financial and military aid.

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, he argued, “will sell this victory to [the] West, to his society, to China, to Iran, to all the countries, to Brazil, to Latin America[n] countries,” with the implication being that some of Ukraine’s backers and the international community at large may be put off supporting Kyiv’s war effort if Bakhmut’s defenders are vanquished, or emboldened to lobby for Kyiv to come to terms with Moscow.

With Ukraine increasingly incurring heavy losses defending Bakhmut, U.S. officials began offering public criticism of Kyiv’s determination to hold the eastern city by the beginning of 2023, urging Kyiv to focus on preparing for a Spring counter-offensive rather than fixating on the city’s defence.

That advice has not been taken, however, with a British intelligence update on Wednesday indicating that Ukrainian forces are actually putting more resources into counter-attacks in the city in order to reopen key supply routes.

Zelensky’s claims to the AP that if Putin “will feel some blood — smell that we are weak — he will push, push, push,” may be an attempt to justify this defiance, along with his warning that, with defeat in Bakhmut: “Our society will feel tired? Our society will push me to have compromise with [Russia].”

Zelenskyy predicted that the pressure from a defeat in Bakhmut would come quickly — both from the international community and within his own country. [pic.twitter.com/mLmTaecI3D](https://pic.twitter.com/mLmTaecI3D)

— The Associated Press (@AP) [March 29, 2023](#)

The narrative on Bakhmut has shifted several times over the course of the long battle for the city.

Early on, Western media outlets including the AP suggested that Russia taking Bakhmut “would rupture Ukraine’s supply lines and open a route for Russian forces to press on toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, key Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk province.”

Later, the consensus seemed to be that Bakhmut was “strategically irrelevant”, with Western officials telling the likes of the AFP that Russia’s determination to capture it despite heavy losses had left them “scratching [their] heads”.

Zelensky’s comments to the AP that defeat in Bakhmut may make it difficult to sustain public support for a no-compromise stance may offer some explanation as to why this advice has not been taken — and they also suggest that it is not only Western governments in the likes of the United States and the United Kingdom which derailed ceasefire negotiations in 2022, as former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett has suggested, with Zelensky himself seemingly reluctant to consider a compromise peace.

How long Western powers can continue to support the Ukrainian war machine at current levels is in some doubt, however, with the likes of Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary-General of the NATO alliance, [warning](#) that Ukraine is expending ammunition faster than the West’s hollowed-out manufacturing base can produce it.

“The current rate of Ukraine’s ammunition expenditure is many times higher than our current rate of production. This puts our defence industries under strain,” he lamented.

Even the British government, one of Kyiv’s most strident backers, has signalled it may not be up to the task of arming Ukraine over the long term, with the Defence Select Committee of the House of Commons concerned that “the UK and its NATO Allies have allowed ammunition stockpiles to dwindle to [dangerously low levels](#)” and warning that the national arsenal could take “over a decade” to be replenished.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warns in an exclusive [@AP](#) interview that Russia would use a victory in the eastern city of Bakhmut to start building international support for a deal that would require Ukrainian compromises. <https://t.co/qxaot2iQ7i>  
[pic.twitter.com/WCPDDpkGsB](https://pic.twitter.com/WCPDDpkGsB)

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**Date Created**

03/31/2023