

NATO Fractures: In U-Turn, Poland Announces It Will No Longer Arm Ukraine

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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The dam is breaking on unified Western support for Ukraine, and the timing couldn't be worse for Zelensky, given tomorrow he's expected to meet with President Biden at the White House. On Wednesday evening there is monumental news out of Poland which could potentially change the entire course of the war.

"Poland will no longer arm Ukraine to focus on its own defense," Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki [announced](#) just hours after Warsaw summoned Ukraine's ambassador related to a fresh war of words and spat over blocked grain, according to the AFP. Warsaw has throughout more than a year-and-a-half of the Ukraine-Russia war been Kiev's staunchest and most outspoken supporter.

Will this massive and hugely significant about-face mark the beginning of the end? Are peace negotiations and ceding of territory in the Donbas inevitable at this point?

Within the last 48 hours relations between Poland and Ukraine quickly spiraled to their lowest point since the Russian invasion, and it is directly related to Warsaw leading a handful of EU countries to extend a grain export ban on Ukraine, amid continuing anger and outrage from Polish farmers who are suffering due to their country being flooded with cheap Ukrainian wheat.

Crucially, Poland will hold parliamentary elections on Oct.15. The prior atmosphere of enthusiastic pro-Kiev rhetoric has drastically changed, now with comparisons likening Ukraine to a "drowning man". As *The Associated Press* [explains](#):

Polish leaders have compared Ukraine to a drowning person hurting his helper and threatened to expand a ban on food products from the war-torn country. Meanwhile, [Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy](#) suggested that EU allies that are prohibiting imports of his nation's grain are helping Russia.

Now, Polish officials, who are trying to [win parliamentary elections](#) next month with help from farmers' votes, are expressing dismay over some of Ukraine's latest moves, including a [World Trade Organization complaint](#) over bans on Ukrainian grain from Poland and two other EU countries.

Poland's elections are Oct. 15... <https://t.co/DRwG37xGut>

— Mark MacKinnon (@markmackinnon) [September 20, 2023](#)

In surprisingly blunt and terse words given to reporters on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Polish President Andrzej Duda [said](#) on Tuesday: "Ukraine is behaving like a drowning person clinging to anything available."

He then said, "A drowning person is extremely dangerous, capable of pulling you down to the depths... simply drown the rescuer." Given Ukraine's battlefield losses and as it's currently bogged down in a failing counteroffensive, the words no doubt stung. But as *The Hill* notes further of the domestic [political context in Poland](#):

Public sentiment around the issue, however, has started to deteriorate, putting the ruling party in a difficult position ahead of a close October election. The far-right Confederation party is hoping to capitalize on the waning support in the country.

[Reuters reported](#) that a recent poll showed support for Ukrainian refugees fell from 91 percent when the war started to just 69 percent recently. The same survey showed a quarter of Poles are against supporting refugees, compared to 4 percent in early 2022.

In response to the grain ban, Zelensky during his UN speech had condemned the "alarming" behavior of allies regarding the import ban, but without naming Poland specifically. Further, Kiev has announced plans to sue Warsaw in the World Trade Organization while also holding out the possibility of its own embargo on Polish foodstuffs, [including](#) onions, tomatoes, cabbage, and apples. Again, all of this amounts to a full-blown diplomatic crisis for Zelensky which couldn't come at a worse time, as he's in D.C.

To review, these are some of the major developments and setbacks in only the last few days:

- Zelensky fired at least 6 top-ranking defense officials over corruption, after recently firing longtime Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov amid a graft probe.
- American transgender spokesperson for Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces Sarah Ashton-Cirillo was suspended indefinitely by the Ukrainian military in an [embarrassing debacle](#).
- The New York Times ran an article which said a missile fired by Ukraine - [not Russia](#) - struck a busy civilian market ...marking an unexpected establishment media about-face.
- Biden has yet to pledge any new weapons for Ukraine as Zelensky is in the US, and there are reports that ATACMS long-range missiles [will not be approved](#).

And most importantly, there's this per Politico...

New: Senators are bracing to give Zelenskyy some tough news tomorrow

That in the face of GOP opposition to aid — and a gov shutdown — they might be sending him home empty handed

W/ [@burgessev](#) <https://t.co/tBolo3TcMX>

— Ursula Perano (@UrsulaPerano) [September 20, 2023](#)

According to the fresh Wednesday [report](#):

Delivering any new aid to help defend against Russia, even later this year, is looking tougher than ever.

The obstacles are piling up: House Republicans are skeptical of any new money at all. What's more, their dysfunction threatens to push the government into a shutdown — a move that certainly gets Zelenskyy no closer to getting the billions requested by the Biden administration. Senate Republicans, meanwhile, are divided over whether to continue providing humanitarian aid, arguing the rest of Europe needs to step up.

As if fully aware that the tap at the expense of the US taxpayer may run dry, Zelensky has been meeting in New York with a who's who of leading banks, hedge funds, and private investors. Fox Business, which broke the story, says the ongoing meetings are part of broader efforts to secure investment for rebuilding Ukraine and fixing [destroyed infrastructure](#):

The meeting was put together by JPMorgan, the big bank serving as Zelenskyy's financial adviser to attract private capital for a new investment fund to rebuild Ukraine's infrastructure destroyed in its war with Russia, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

Earlier in the afternoon, Zelenskyy met privately with BlackRock CEO Larry Fink, the sources say. BlackRock is the world's largest asset manager and has also been advising Zelenskyy on how to attract U.S. private sector money for the rebuilding effort.

The list of invitees, according to sources, includes William Ackman, the head of hedge fund Pershing Square Capital; Ken Griffin of the Citadel investment empire; Jonathan Gray, president and chief operating officer of private equity powerhouse Blackstone; Philipp Hildebrand, a vice chairman at BlackRock; Michael Bloomberg, former New York City mayor and founder of Bloomberg LP; and Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google and now head of the Schmidt Futures, a philanthropic organization.

Ken Griffin and Bill Ackman meeting with Zelensky to ensure they get first dibs on the juiciest deals in the rebuilding of [#Ukraine](#) post war.

— CEO Technician (@CEOTechnician) [September 20, 2023](#)

Tomorrow's White House visit, and Zelensky's planned meeting with Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy will surely be interesting.

Meanwhile, for a foretaste and indicator of how much the tide is turning – and the very different, subdued optics – especially compared to Zelensky’s last trip to Washington (in Dec. 2022) when he was received with rockstar status, there’s this...

Speaker Kevin McCarthy, facing a right-wing rebellion in his ranks and mounting GOP resistance to aiding Ukraine, has declined to convene a forum for President Volodymyr Zelensky to address members of the House on Thursday during a visit to Capitol Hill. <https://t.co/mDEH1yGpJS>

— The New York Times (@nytimes) [September 20, 2023](#)

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