

A Dirty Joke: Ukraine's Hero Comedian President Zelensky

The Western media refuses to approach Zelensky with a critical lense, and the world is paying for it

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Since the Ukraine War began in February, Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#) has achieved global popularity that has reached historic proportions.

The most frequent comparison is Winston Churchill, the British imperialist who squared off against Adolf Hitler during WWII. Yes, Churchill with a murderous track record, but adored by the Western propagandists who cover up his long history of atrocities. (See: [Winston Churchill: His Times, His Crimes](#) (London: Verso, 2022).

And Zelensky, worshiped by the West and trumped up as a hero, shares elements of lies and deceit that mirror the Churchill narrative.

Clown Show

Across the spectrum – from comedians, actors, Prostitutes, politicians and presidents – Zelensky has been praised as a world leader of the first degree.

[Former President George W. Bush](#) called him "the Winston Churchill" of our time. Ben Stiller, the "Tropic Thunder" actor, met Zelensky in June and gushed, "You're my hero!"

The Hollywood Reporter [said](#) Stiller was "beaming" during the visit.

But before Russia's 24 February invasion, Zelensky was perhaps best known in the U.S. as the little-known leader who was on the other line of former President Donald Trump's infamous phone call asking him to investigate Joe Biden and the former vice president's troubled son Hunter. The call resulted in an impeachment inquiry that eventually led to Trump's impeachment.

Zelensky, a law-degree-carrying comedian who played the Ukrainian president on a TV show, ran for office in 2019 and vowed to work to clean up the crony capitalism and corruption in Kyiv. The show was called “Servant of the People.”

Like Trump, who was a reality show champion, Zelensky used the momentum of a popular sitcom to kick-start a political career. This role was very specific: He was an outsider who would clean up Kyiv. And why not? His TV show was so popular; his political party took on the name. (Transparency International’s 2021 Corruption Perception Index ranked Ukraine 122nd out of 180 countries and is considered the second most corrupt in Europe. Russia comes in at 136th place.)

One of the platforms of Zelensky’s campaign was *peace with Russia*. As reported by [Radio Free Europe](#) “one of his two main promises was to bring the war to an end, a goal that polls have shown Ukrainians want to see accomplished more than anything.”

Before he met NATO pic.twitter.com/HQTyNOSjKT

— John Lennon! give Peace 🕊 a chance ☐ (@FortunaMinecra1) [July 3, 2022](#)

Playing the poll numbers which showed that the number two concern on the list of Ukrainians was to stamp out the corruption that ravaged the nation, Zelensky, promising “victory over corruption,” said he would be the candidate to wipe it out.

The act worked and Zelensky, who was 41 in the spring of 2019, carried 73 percent of the vote.

Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire

But Zelensky’s effort to negotiate for peace and clean up Kyiv’s corruption was seen by many to have failed, and it turned out that Zelensky was part of the problem all along.

Forbes [wrote](#) in 2021, “Life has become art. But for many Ukraine watchers and foreign investors – they want their money back. This Servant of the People real life movie version is not like the TV series. This is a flop.”

On the war front Zelensky saddled up with hardline Russophobes in the country who protested any concessions.

The president agreed that an election should be held in the Donbas region, but only under Ukrainian standards and with no Russian troops on the ground. At that time, Moscow denied any troop presence.

Zelensky previously agreed to the Steinmeier formula that would allow local elections to be held even before these troops leave the area. But he did not implement the provisions to end the deadly conflict. Instead, military battles between Kyiv and the separatist Donbas region escalated, with a reported 14,000 to 15,000 people killed.

There were some signs that tensions between the countries were easing – including prisoner exchanges – but in October 2021, Ukraine deployed an armed drone to the region that got

tensions high again.

However, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced Moscow's recognition of the separatist region just before Moscow's 24 February invasion.

[Putin said the purpose](#) of the operation was to protect people in Donbas who "have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime."

Days before the invasion, Putin met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and told reporters [after the meeting](#): "Naturally, the issue of European security was also discussed in the context of the situation around a settlement of the conflict in Ukraine."

"As you know, the Kyiv authorities are refusing to abide by the Minsk Agreements and the 2015 arrangements, as well as the agreements reached at later summits in the Normandy format...There is no progress on such important issues as constitutional reform, amnesty, local election or the special legal status of Donbas... Opportunities for restoring the country's territorial integrity via a direct dialogue with Donetsk and Lugansk continue to be ignored, like before. Ukraine is systematically violating human rights on a large scale and continues to endorse discrimination against Russian speakers at the legislative level."

Sources told The Kyiv Independent that France and Germany urged Ukraine to comply with the Russian "spin" of the agreement to prevent war. The report said French President Emmanuel Macron asked Zelensky to talk with the separatists in the region, and Zelensky said no. Scholz also urged Kyiv to offer occupied territories in the Donbass some autonomy.

Kyiv has been opposed to the deal because it claims that the agreement would grant these territories "full amnesty for all combatants, the right to appoint their own prosecutors and judges and to develop their own political and economic ties with Russia."

Corruption Club

On the corruption front, Zelensky's top objection was the billions that Ukrainian oligarchs kept in shell companies overseas to avoid taxes. Critics say these offshore businesses are intended to be vehicles to avoid paying taxes to Ukraine.

Zelensky suffered a major political blow when the Pandora Papers leak occurred in 2021 to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. The documents showed Zelensky had off-shore shell companies and is "rather similar to his predecessors," The Guardian [reported](#) at the time.

It turns out that Zelensky and his close associates maintained their own network of these offshore companies, according to the papers.

These companies were set up in 2012, long before he ran for president. Zelensky's offshore companies were in the British Virgin Islands, Cyprus, and Belize. His partners were given plumb jobs in the executive branch of his government.

Zelensky's office said at the time that the use of these companies was intended to protect him from pro-Russian forces, Al Jazeera [reported](#).

The report said two of the offshore companies belonged to Zelensky's partners and used to

purchase “three lavish properties in central London.” These papers said Zelensky transferred his stake in one of his offshore companies to a top aide and former business partner, Sergiy Shefir, just before he was elected.

Zelensky’s office said these companies were created to protect the group’s incomes from former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who was considered pro-Russian.

The Al Jazeera report said that Zelensky’s office did not respond to evidence that his wife has continued to receive dividends from an offshore company.

Ukraine, by far, had the most politicians named in the Pandora Papers leak at 38. Russia came in second with 19.

Iryna Gerashchenko, a lawmaker from ex-president Petro Poroshenko’s party, claimed Zelensky committed tax evasion.

“He and his accomplices took funds offshore without paying any taxes to the Ukrainian budget,” she tweeted.

Zelensky defeated the billionaire in 2019.

Ihor Kolomoysky

Zelensky’s relationship with Ihor Kolomoysky, the Ukrainian oligarch, has also been scrutinized after reports emerged of a secret payment of \$41 million to Zelensky’s off-shore media company called Kvartal 95.

Iryna Venediktova, Ukraine’s head prosecutor, told reporters in 2021 that the revelations came as “no surprise” for law-enforcement agencies in the country, bykvu.com reported. She questioned the veracity of the report.

Kolomoysky was a major supporter of Zelensky’s bid for president.

On 20 July, Ukrainska Pravda first reported that Kolomoysky’s citizenship had been revoked over his dual citizenship. Kolomoysky holds citizenships in Israel, Cyprus, and Ukraine.

The Kyiv Independent reported that Kolomoysky has holdings in oil, metallurgy, mass media, and banking companies. He once reportedly joked that Ukrainian law bars dual citizenship, “but doesn’t say anything about triple citizenship.”

The Pandora Papers suggested that Zelensky was involved with money laundering from Kolomoysky’s PrivatBank that helped the comedian buy an apartment in London.

Zelensky also has a 15-room villa in Italy that he failed to disclose in his public asset declaration while running for office in 2019.

The Italian newspaper Il Tirreno recently reported that the villa, which is still owned by Zelensky, was rented out to a woman from the former USSR who now lives in London. The report noted that the woman likely rented the villa through a third party, but it is notable because Kyiv is calling on the EU to ban Russian tourists.

Zelensky’s office referred The Trends Journal to a statement from the Italian property management company, San Tommaso SRL. The company denied the report that the

property was rented out to a woman from the Russian Federation.

Zelensky The Draft-Dodger

During the 2019 campaign, Zelensky's history of draft-dodging became a focal point that former President Petro Poroshenko tried to scrutinize. On April 13, 2019, Ukraine's Defense Ministry took to Facebook to confirm that Zelensky ignored four draft notices on 15 April 2015, 23 June 2014, 15 August 2014, and 10 October 2015. "Citizen Zelensky V.O. did not arrive at the military commissariat at his call," the post read.

Reminder:

President [#Zelensky](#) is a draft dodger. [#Ukraine](#)'s Ministry of Defence sent him FOUR conscription summons in 2014-2015. All were ignored. He never served in the army, even when his country called upon him to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. pic.twitter.com/zmoS5IF5K1

— ArianaGic/АріянаГіць (@GicAriana) [January 22, 2022](#)

The Defense Ministry and Zelensky's office did not respond to emails seeking comment from The Trends Journal. Zelensky has been criticized since the start of the invasion for not allowing fighting-aged men to leave the country and using the strategy of issuing military summonses at gas stations and other public areas.

The New York Times [reported](#) that young men in Ukraine are required to do military service "unless they fall into an exempt category, like being enrolled in a university, having a disability or having at least three children."

Corruption Rampant

The European Court of Auditors released a special report in September that found "grand corruption and state capture" were still widespread in the country despite 20 years of European Union efforts to intervene and help in its reform agenda.

"The EU has long been aware of the connections between oligarchs, high-level officials, politicians, the judiciary and state-owned enterprises. However, it has not developed a real strategy for targeting grand corruption," the auditors said in a statement.

Up until the Russian invasion, the EU has been the largest donor to Ukraine. The European Commission has committed around €5.6 billion to macro-financial assistance programs and €2.2 billion to assistance programs since 2014, the statement said. The Commission also guarantees European Investment Bank loans of €4.4 billion.

Juhan Parts, the member of the European Courts of Auditors responsible for the report "despite varied support the EU has offered to Ukraine, oligarchs and vested interests continue to undermine the rule of law in Ukraine and to threaten the country's development."

Freedom House's 2022 report lists Ukraine as "partly free," with a score of 61 out of a possible 100.

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Featured image: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky seen earlier this year. (Ukrainian Presidential Press Service)

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