

Zelensky Faces Difficult Time in Washington D.C.

By [Countercurrents.org](https://countercurrents.org)

Global Research, September 24, 2023

[Countercurrents](https://countercurrents.org) 22 September 2023

Region: [Europe](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

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Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky had to face a time in Washington D.C. that may be told as difficult as the political situation in the U.S. Capitol Hill is different than his first visit to the Capitol.

A CNN report (Zelensky faces a more splintered GOP as he returns to Capitol Hill looking for aid, Sept. 21, 2023) said:

Ukraine President Zelensky was on Capitol Hill Thursday [for his second visit](#), as [fresh attacks by Russia overnight](#) underscore the urgency facing his country for more US aid.

Only this time, the political landscape has shifted.

A year ago, Zelensky faced a much different reception in Congress. Democrats controlled the House and [public support for funding the war effort](#) in Ukraine was higher. As he stood to ask for more money and weapons before a joint meeting of Congress Zelensky was met with a packed House, members adorned in yellow and blue standing in support with Ukraine. Now, the Ukrainian president will return to Congress to a new speaker – facing a rebellion on his right – who has yet to promise future aid to Ukraine and will have to balance his own political future against the future Zelensky is hoping for his country.

'Is He Our President?'

The report said:

"Was Zelensky elected to Congress? Is he our president? I do not think so. I have questions for where is the accountability on the money we have already spent? What is the plan for victory?" House Speaker Kevin McCarthy asked Tuesday.

Zelensky Arrives Amid Shutdown Fight

The report said:

Zelensky's visit is coming as House Republicans [are engaged in a bitter fight](#) over government funding on the domestic front and as the prospects for more money for Ukraine – while very much alive in the Senate – are far less clear in the House even as the Biden administration has [sent over a request for \\$24 billion in support](#).

No Money For Ukraine Now

It said:

“The first thing I will tell you is there is no money in the House right now for Ukraine,” Rep. Byron Donalds, a conservative member of the House Freedom Caucus from Florida, told CNN. “It is not a good time for him to be here, quite frankly. That is just the reality.”

Stop Ukraine Game

Texas Rep. Chip Roy, another conservative, told CNN, “When was the last time Zelensky came here? Right before money. You think that is a coincidence? I do not. That is why this Ukraine game needs to stop.”

It added:

Despite a slip in public support, there is still strong bipartisan backing for Ukraine funding on Capitol Hill, but it will be up to McCarthy to decide if legislation will even be put on the floor. The speaker has said he does not want funding attached to a short-term spending bill and he has also said it should be a standalone issue. But time is of the essence, with aides close to the matter telling CNN the expectation is that current U.S. funding accounts for Ukraine could be depleted as soon as by the end of the year.

“This becomes an issue that time and time again, minute to minute, every question is: Is Speaker McCarthy going to do the responsible thing of putting the bill on the floor that we know will pass with broad bipartisan support?” Democratic Rep. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia said. “If he lives in this constant fear that one member on his far right is going to take the action of motion to vacate the chair, therefore removing him from the speakership, then we are making day-to-day decisions or not making day-to-day decisions because one guy wants to keep his job. “

‘Our People Cannot Afford Their Food Bills’

The CNN report said:

Inside McCarthy's conference, the question of helping Ukraine is being framed by isolationists as a choice between helping Americans or helping Ukraine.

“I think every single person in this Congress, Democrat, Republican or in between is appalled, shocked and disagrees with what Russia and Vladimir Putin has done and is doing. That having been said, our borders are wide open. Our people cannot afford their electric bills, their gas bills and their food bills and before we send blank checks to some

other country, we need to take care of our own people,” said Rep. Scott Perry, a conservative Republican from Pennsylvania.

Majority of Americans Oppose Funding Ukraine

[A CNN poll in August](#) found now a majority of Americans are opposed to authorizing more funding for Ukraine, and among Republicans, the number opposed soars to 71%.

‘Average Congress Member Does Not Understand Happenings In Ukraine’

The CNN report said:

“Do you know who is winning the war in Ukraine right now? I do not think the average member of Congress understands what is going on in Ukraine,” said Rep. Mike Garcia, a Republican from California. “I do not think the executive branch knows what is going on in Ukraine right now. Look, we have invested \$100 billion of American taxpayer dollars in Ukraine, we owe it to the American taxpayers to get an accountability of that money, the accountability of the weapons, to get a current status of what’s going on in Ukraine ... and what is needed to win and how we are going to be involved in it before we invest.”

Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican from Louisiana, blamed the administration for a slide in support even as he argued it was still essential.

“The fiscally responsible thing to do here is to stop this in Ukraine. This crosses over into NATO countries and you trigger article five, you are not going to be talking about tens of billions of dollars, you are going to be talking about trillions of dollars and you are going to be talking about American service men and women on the front lines. That is not an option,” Graves said. “This administration has both accountability and transparency issues they have got to address before they deserve another penny.”

There is still a strong coalition of GOP support for Ukraine funding on Capitol Hill, such as McConnell, but Republicans have at times been critical of how the president has engaged in the war and how he has sold the U.S. aid. Those GOP lawmakers argue Biden could do more to both sell the importance of the war effort to the public and to ensure members of Congress are kept in the loop on where and what impact the funding they are appropriating is having.

‘More War’

“The consequences of pulling the plug on Ukraine are enormous,” said Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. “It will lead to more war, not less. It will destroy a world order that has existed that has benefited the world. So I could not disagree more with my colleagues who say Ukraine does not matter to us. It matters a lot.”

‘We Oppose The Additional Expenditure For War In Ukraine’

A report by The Hill (‘We’ll get it done,’ Mccaul says of Ukraine aid after Zelensky meeting, Sept 21, 2023) said:

The top House Republican overseeing U.S. foreign affairs said Congress will provide more funding for Ukraine to fight off the Russian invasion despite GOP pushback, after a meeting

with Ukraine's President Zelensky in Washington on Thursday.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also proposed legislating that the U.S. provide F-16 fighter jets for Ukraine and long-range missiles that the Biden administration has held back on providing.

It said:

The president has submitted to Congress a request for \$24 billion in additional funding that would go towards military, economic and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. It is opposed by a minority group of Republicans with the power to frustrate efforts to pass additional assistance quickly, given tight margins in the House and Senate rules.

Sen. Rand Paul

The report said:

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), a staunch critic of foreign assistance for Ukraine, has [vowed to hold up](#) any government funding bill that includes Ukrainian assistance.

Paul was also signatory to a letter led by Sen. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) this week laying out specific asks of the Biden administration before greenlighting additional assistance to Ukraine, signed by 28 members of the House and Senate.

"Certainly until we receive answers to the questions above and others forthcoming—we oppose the additional expenditure for war in Ukraine included in your request," the lawmakers wrote in [the letter](#).

The letter was published ahead of Zelensky's arrival on Capitol Hill for meetings Thursday morning.

Chillier Reception

It said:

It is the Ukrainian president's second visit to the capitol in a year, but he is receiving a [chillier reception](#) under the Republican-controlled House. In Dec. 2022, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) invited Zelensky to address a joint session of Congress, an invitation that was not extended by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.)

'Where Is the Accountability on the Money?'

Another report by The Hill (McCarthy on Ukraine funding: 'I have questions' for Zelensky, Sept. 20, 2023) said:

When asked about renewed funding for Ukraine in its war against Russia, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said Tuesday he has "questions" for Ukrainian President Zelensky.

"Where is the accountability on the money we already spent?" McCarthy said, listing off questions he said he will ask the Ukrainian leader when he meets with him later this week. "What is the plan for victory?"

"Look, what Russia has done — invade — is wrong," McCarthy said. "It is an atrocity.

We want to make sure that ends. I also have always said from the beginning, no matter what the issue is, I want accountability for whatever the hardworking taxpayers spend their money on, and I want a plan for victory.”

McCarthy’s statements come as a government shutdown looms if Congress does not agree on a deal by the end of the month. House Republicans’ [proposed stopgap bill](#) does not provide funding for Ukraine, which Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) heavily criticized Monday on the Senate floor.

“And with no Ukraine funding, the proposal is an insult to Ukraine and a gift to Putin. I cannot think of a worse welcome for Zelensky, who visits us this week than this House proposal, which ignores Ukraine entirely,” Schumer said.

The U.S. Is Broke

A report by The Telegraph (Ukraine-Russia war latest: ‘We’ve got no money’, Republicans tell Zelensky, Sept 21, 2023) said:

The U.S. is “broke” and cannot provide further support to Ukraine, Republican legislators will tell Zelensky as he visits the Capitol.

The Ukrainian president signalled ahead of his visit to Washington that he wanted to secure more air defenses after a “massive” missile attack by Russia last night.

However, he faces a difficult hearing from Congress, where Joe Biden is struggling to pass a \$24bn aid package in the face of Republican skepticism.

‘We Do Not Have Any Money’

The report said:

Tim Burchett, who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said: “I appreciate [Zelensky’s] bravado and everything, but we do not have any money. We are broke, and we are giving our money away.”

Matt Gaetz, a Florida representative, has said all he wants to hear from Zelensky is that “he is sending our money back.”

Retiring Utah senator Mitt Romney has urged his party to unite behind Ukraine, declaring its war effort is an “extraordinarily wise investment”.

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