

Can Washington Simultaneously Handle Two War Theaters? Zelensky's Failed Bid to Meet Netanyahu Signals Ending of Western Interest?

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Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky wanted to visit Israel on October 16 to express his support for the country, but Israeli authorities made it clear to him that "the time is not right," reported Israeli outlet Ynet. This was a humiliating rejection for Zelensky, a Jew, considering other world leaders are expected to visit the Jewish State in the coming days.

As Israeli media wrote on October 16, the Ukrainian leader had planned to travel with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. At the same time, [Ynet](#) sources stressed that Zelensky could travel to Israel later.

By wanting to meet immediately, Zelensky exposes that he is petrified of Ukraine now being ignored and sidelined as the globe's attention shifts to the Middle East, and for this reason, he wants to link the conflict in Eastern Europe as a common struggle – something Israel is evidently not tolerating at this moment in time.

Israel appears determined to eradicate Hamas and other extremist elements from Gaza, even if it comes at a horrific civilian cost. Due to this apparent commitment, Israel faces a multi-front war because Hezbollah threatens to intervene if a ground assault on Gaza is launched. As the Jewish state faces a potentially long and bloody war, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not have time to entertain Zelensky or deal with the consequences of the inevitably anti-Russia statements the Ukrainian president will make.

For this reason, it is more practical for Netanyahu to reject the solidarity meeting request rather than reassure Moscow that Israel does not connect its war against Hamas to the war in Eastern Europe as Zelensky does.

Compounding Zelensky's humiliation is the recent news that US President Joe Biden and likely Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis are expected to visit Israel in the coming days, raising the question of why "the time is not right" for Zelensky to visit.

In addition to Netanyahu not wanting to be distracted with other foreign policy matters, especially regarding Russia, Israel does not want to share the world's focus with Ukraine as there is now competition for foreign aid. Ukraine has dominated the world's attention since February 2022, even to the detriment of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, and has absolutely nothing to show for it all. Meanwhile, Israel has been a major non-NATO Ally since even before Ukraine became an independent country and was always going to be an immediate priority over Ukraine.

At the same time, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv on October 16 to promise support before the ground operation in the Gaza Strip and to inform Israeli authorities about his meetings with leaders of Arab states. It would be imagined that if Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba had requested an official visit to Israel, the request would be declined, again demonstrating that Israel prioritises countries.

The US is obviously the world's current greatest superpower, even in its declining state, while Greece is one of the few countries in the region that is friendly to Israel. Ukraine has no value to Israel, especially during this crisis. Therefore, Netanyahu identifies that Zelensky's visit would only waste his time and would only bring benefit to Ukraine and not to Israel.

It is recalled that Zelensky said on October 11, when speaking of the Israel-Gaza conflict potentially affecting weapons being supplied to Ukraine, that "of course, everybody's afraid, and I think also Russia's counting on it, on dividing support." For this reason, he attempted to meet with Netanyahu only days after his statement to try and link the two conflicts as inseparable – an unashamed lie and a desperate bid to ensure that Western interests, weapons, and funds continue flowing into Ukraine.

Ukraine is seeking more weapons for its troops to regain ground from Russian forces before the winter weather sets in, an unlikely task since the Ukrainian military has barely captured any territory when it launched its long-awaited "spring offensive" at the beginning of summer. However, Israel's own ammunition concerns and the US' previous steps to transfer ammunition from the Middle Eastern country to Kiev are fuelling growing opposition in Washington, where calls for weapons transfers to Israel instead of Ukraine are already being heard.

Such a shift of attention from the Ukrainian crisis to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis threatens to seriously undermine the ability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to continue its military campaign against Russia. This comes when Ukrainian forces recover from months of failed offensives and recent casualties in the tens of thousands. Therefore, Israel rejecting Zelensky's request to meet Netanyahu is not only humiliating but could signify the beginning of the end of Western interest in Ukraine.

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