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Analysis

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Zelensky - Zaluzhny Rift Shows There is 'No Center of Power' in Kiev

5 hours ago



© Photo : Ukrainian president's office

Ian DeMartino

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Over the past week, there have been reports in Western media outlets that Volodymyr Zelensky asked Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valery Zaluzhny to resign, but



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replacement or his potential replacements refused to take the post. Some

reports say that Zelensky still **plans to fire Zaluzhny** , while others imply Western leaders ordered him not to.

Mark Sleboda, an international relations and security analyst **told Sputnik's Fault Lines** on Thursday that the kerfuffle shows that **"if [US President] Joe Biden is the 'emperor with no clothes', then that kind of makes Zelensky the 'butt-naked king.'**

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“The president has failed to fire his own commander-in-chief. That means there is no center of power within the regime at the moment, or perhaps Zaluzhny has more power than Zelensky. Or, the West is just running the show and Zelensky [has] been revealed as nothing but a puppet middle manager with no agency or control in his own country.”

Sleboda suggested that **"either [Zelensky has] to correct the situation and get rid of Zaluzhny, or the center of power in the country [will continue] spiraling out of control."**

The actions taken by people ostensibly serving under Zelensky showcased the tenuousness of his power. “That the entire military apparatus, the generals, even those viewed as close to Zelensky, have shown defiance. I mean, you can't really count this as anything but defiance, a refusal to follow the wishes of the president, certainly in the way that most countries regard the relationship between the executive and the military branches of the country,” Sleboda explained.

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“So Zelensky faced a challenge to his presidential authority, one from the West, which is dictating what happens from above, and two, from his own military establishment united against him. ...

The situation reminded Sleboda of Zelensky's argument with a soldier in the Azov battalion in 2019, implying that Zelensky has always had a shaky grasp on his own military.

"Right after he became president. 'I'm not some loser off the street,' he said. And [the] Azov commander is like, 'Yeah, okay, whatever, dude.' And it was after that that he gave up on any attempts to complete the Minsk protocols, which initially he made some gestures, some small gestures towards [that]. That's what he was there to do to get Azov to stop firing artillery shells into Donetsk and they refused."

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Sleboda also discussed the situation on the ground in Ukraine and the growing prospect of war between Iran and the US.

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Volodymyr Zelensky

Valery Zaluzhny

Mark Sleboda

Kiev

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Ukraine

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Russia's Special Operation in Ukraine

On February 24, 2022 Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine, aiming to liberate the Donbass region where the people's republics of Donetsk and Lugansk had been living under regular attacks from Kiev's forces.

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On January 20, the head of the office of the Ukrainian president, Andriy Yermak, said in an interview that the Ukrainian military was complacent about its inability to

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The Kiev regime must begin to provide real figures of casualties among the manpower, a Ukrainian serviceman said in an interview with a local TV channel.

He said that the Ukrainian authorities are hiding the truth about real losses on the battlefield from society to avoid shocking it. However, he urged that fainthearted citizens be allowed to face the real numbers and "suffer a bit."

Analysis

Russian Strikes 'Dampen Enthusiasm' of Ukraine's Mercs Amid Massive Losses

18 January, 10:38 GMT

Earlier, on January 29, Ukrainian politician George Tuka called on the Ukrainian government to tell the population the truth about the [situation on the front](#) instead of endless lies about the successes of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

In January, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that Ukraine's Armed Forces had lost over 215,000 men and 28,000 weapons in 2023. Russian forces retain the strategic initiative along the entire line of contact, Shoigu said.

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