



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 27, 2023

U.S. Government Tight on Cash for Ukraine Aid, Zelensky's Wife Doubts He Will Seek Reelection

Speaking to CNN for an interview published on September 25, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby posited that the Pentagon could only back Ukraine's war effort for a "few weeks" if Congress fails to pass a new funding bill, in response to questions regarding the ramifications of a government shutdown on U.S. aid to Kyiv.

"We've got a little bit more funding to go, so I think we'll be ok for the next few weeks or so. But without the supplemental request that we asked for, it will absolutely have an effect on our ability to support Ukraine well into the fall and into the winter months," the White House official declared, as U.S. lawmakers continue intense discussions over a budget bill that could contain up to \$25 billion in help to Ukraine.

"Not getting that supplemental request if there's a shutdown — that's gonna have a significant impact on their ability to succeed on the battlefield."

Negotiations over the new spending bill have largely focused on additional support for Kyiv, based on unidentified lawmakers quoted by *The New York Times*, who reported that some Republicans had dismissed a proposal for another \$25 billion in aid.

"Despite broad bipartisan support in the Senate for money for Ukraine, officials said, some Republicans were arguing that it would present an added complication in trying to provide [House] Speaker Kevin McCarthy with a way out of the spending logjam," the *Times* reported, pointing out that GOP opposition could stall the legislation with "little time to spare" before the September 30 shutdown deadline.

Nonetheless, although officials have cautioned that Washington's cash situation was tight, with deputy Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh recently declaring that a shutdown would be "the worst thing that could happen," the Defense Department maintained last week that present budget woes would have no consequence on U.S. aid to Ukraine.

In a statement to media outlets on September 22, Pentagon spokesperson Chris Sherwood said the military had deemed American aid to the Kyiv regime as "essential," regarding it "an expected activity under a government lapse in appropriations," despite [seemingly indicating otherwise](#) just days before.

Sherwood insisted that U.S. military operations linked to the Ukraine conflict, such as troops training and arms provisions, would not be impacted by a government shutdown.

Since the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in February 2022, Washington has authorized



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billions of dollars in direct military aid to the Kyiv regime, encompassing shipments of heavy weapons, vehicles, and munitions. The latest deliveries to Ukraine have featured the first series of U.S. M1 Abrams main battle tanks, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on September 25, verifying a *Times* report from earlier in the day. The same *Times* report quoted two U.S. defense officials as saying that the tanks arrived in Ukraine “months ahead of initial estimates.” The shipment, the article contended, could aid Kyiv in its “counteroffensive” against Russia, which has been going on for more than three months but has failed to make any considerable gains.

Posting on Telegram, Zelensky announced that the Abrams main battle tanks “are already in Ukraine and preparing to reinforce our brigades,” expressing gratitude to Kyiv’s backers for their support.

Sources in the *Times* and Zelensky did not confirm the number of Abrams tanks that Ukraine has obtained so far. In late August, Politico reported that the United States hoped to dispatch 10 of the 31 tanks promised by U.S. President Joe Biden by mid-September.

For its part, Moscow has constantly denounced foreign arms shipments to Ukraine, insisting that they would not deter its aims but only drag the conflict on. Regarding the Abrams shipments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Western countries were dramatically overestimating the impact the tanks would have, warning that the American weapons would “burn like all the rest of them.”

Meanwhile, regarding the topic of Ukrainian elections, Zelensky’s wife, Elena Zelenskaya, told CBS’ *Face the Nation* on September 24 that her husband might not seek reelection next year.

Zelenskaya said that her husband’s choice on whether to run again might depend on the challenges of organizing elections amid a military conflict, with millions of eligible voters living all around the world. However, she stated that she would “support him whatever decision he takes.”

“It will also depend whether our society would need him as a president, if he will feel that Ukrainian society would no longer wish him to be the president, he will probably not run,” she elaborated, declaring that she was unsure of her husband’s plans.

Although Zelenskaya claimed she “didn’t fully endorse” her husband’s first bid at the presidency, she admitted that a second try would be “not as scary” owing to the couple’s experience. She called the moderator’s question — about how she would feel if Zelensky launched a reelection bid — a “difficult” one.

The Ukrainian leader met with Biden and other leaders last week in the United States, returning with a pledge of “up to \$325 million” for “critical security and defense needs” from the White House, after purportedly cautioning American lawmakers that Kyiv might be defeated by Russia otherwise.

A survey released earlier this month disclosed that nearly eight in 10 Ukrainians blame Zelensky for the widespread corruption that plagues their country, sparking speculations that that could be a reason as to why Zelensky might be reluctant to run for reelection.

During an interview with *The Economist*, Zelensky has also lashed out at faltering Western support for Ukraine’s conflict with Russia, slamming his former benefactors as closet Russia supporters and threatening them with losses in their own elections if Kyiv loses militarily. The Ukrainian leader also warned of social problems, should the millions of Ukrainian refugees scattered throughout Europe get unmanageable.

In June, Zelensky proclaimed that an election could only happen after the conflict with Russia ends, only to go back on his words in August and declare that elections were possible insofar as he could obtain



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additional \$135 million.

Less than a month into the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, Zelensky prohibited all opposition political parties and gathered all media outlets into one state-backed platform. Thus far, no potential presidential challengers have stepped forward to challenge him in any upcoming elections.



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