



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

Both a ride and ammunition Zelensky's historic 9 and half hours in Washington



Volodymyr Zelensky received both a ride and ammunition. If, 300 days ago, he had accepted the offer for a ride and evacuation, he would now not have visited Washington, had a conversation with President Biden and the opportunity to speak in the US Congress. Along with his countrymen, he would not have had a chance to defend himself against the Russian invasion. He would have remained just one of the many historical losers, because in the "darkest hour" he had failed to make a good choice.

"I need ammunition, not a ride", said the Ukrainian leader on the second day of Russian aggression, February 26, according to the testimony of a senior American diplomat. That was the moment when the Russian offensive was moving towards Kyiv with the goal of overthrowing the Ukrainian government, including the president. Zelensky knew that he had to stop the aggressor's propaganda, which announced that he had fled the country and abandoned his people, so he made a video on the deserted streets of Kyiv, saying - " I am here. We are not putting down arms."

He accepted the American offer for a ride 300 days later and flew from Polish Rzeszów to Joint Base Andrews on a US military plane. But it was a round trip. What took place during the 9 and half hours between Zelensky's arrival in Washington and his return promises to have an important place in history. The analogy with Winston Churchill's stay in Washington during Christmas of 1941 is the first and clear association with Zelensky's visit. Like the British Prime Minister, Zelensky is the leader of a large European country that is in the middle of a war and is reaching out to the American President and Congress for support in its war efforts. Both received this, and their speeches in front of members of the Senate and the House of Representatives raised the emotions of the American public and, more importantly, gained political approval for sending American aid - 81 years ago to Britain, and today to Ukraine.

His arrival in the USA was important for both the guest and the host. They did each other a favour

Symbolism played an important role in the Ukrainian president's first trip from the country since the invasion. In the past 300 days of the war, Zelensky has spoken to the parliaments of almost all leading countries. He also spoke at the UN General Assembly, and at numerous international conferences - but exclusively via video link. His arrival in the USA was important for both the guest and the host. They did each other a favour. Zelensky, on a very risky trip, came to thank by far the biggest helper in his country's defence. He came to ask for more, and he will get it. Possibly even the entire 45 billion dollars, through the decision of the Congress. He will also receive the Patriot air defence system, which could prove to be a game changer. Zelensky's stay in Washington will bring even more billions of dollars and new weapons, not only from America, but also from other allies. The trip to Washington and the triumphant results will have the effect of reducing the reluctance of European allies to more decisively send Ukraine what it needs most: money for defence and weapons. After Zelensky's meetings in Washington, it is difficult to question whether the price of gas is more important than stopping Russia in its conquest campaign.

Zelensky left an image of a brave, determined military leader, who is not looking for shelter, but more weapons to defend his home

Zelensky's messages were largely addressed to conservative America and its representatives in Congress, which is of great service to President Biden and his policy of massive support for Kyiv. Zelensky was welcomed as a leader who defends his country against the country that the US considers the biggest threat to global and its own security. He left an image of a brave, determined military leader,

who is not looking for shelter, but more weapons to defend his home. This is similar to the American model, as it exists in the minds of Republican voters and politicians. After Zelensky's speech in Congress, there were still Republican representatives who claimed that they would still not vote for sending money to Kyiv, but the symbolism of Washington's 9 and half hours will have a strong effect on the Republican electorate, which was probably the idea that Zelensky and his host had. "I do think the speech makes it more likely that Republicans that are on the fence won't join the anti-Ukraine crowd. Right now, I think we have support in the House to keep Ukraine funding, and Zelensky's visit helps with that", said Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) who attended Zelensky's speech in Congress, according to the Washington Post.

Hosting the Green Warrior in Washington sends a message that America is not giving up its global security leadership

This was also a day when American leadership strongly reaffirmed its role in solving major world crises, and a "counter-blow" to conservatives' accusations that the democratic president had renounced his leadership role in world security, particularly after the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Hosting the Green Warrior in Washington sends a message that America is not giving up its global security leadership. Biden could hardly get a stronger argument that his administration is not "weak" when it comes to major world crises.

Precisely because of the symbolic power of Zelensky's visit to Washington, it would be politically ineffective if Volodymyr Zelensky had continued his tour of other Western capitals. The trip to Washington would thus remain only the first in a series, but not the only one, which would seriously weaken Ukraine's strategy to maintain and increase the flow of Western aid. If he were to travel to London soon, then to Paris, Berlin, Brussels or Rome, the Ukrainian president would dilute the effect of his sudden arrival in the US capital, which is now condensed into a very

strong message to all the allies that they should follow American determination. For 300 days, Zelensky and his military government have been skilfully communicating with the world public, and it would be a real surprise if they made the mistake of repeating Washington's 9 and half hours in European capitals. Their partnership will also be important in other aspects of Ukrainian defence, which were certainly discussed behind closed doors in the White House and in Congress, and for that, they did not need Zelensky to come. Especially when it concerns the future prosecution of war crimes committed by Russian troops and the reconstruction of Ukraine with the frozen money of Russian oligarchs and the state, for which a model is sought by many parliaments in the West, including Congress.

In the best possible scenario, Zelensky's next visit to a foreign capital should again be to Washington. As a sign of gratitude for the solidarity that led to victory.