



By: TA | AP Insight

What will the changes in Ukraine's military leadership bring?



Ukraine pushed on with its fight against Russia's invasion under new military leadership Wednesday, after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy bowed to public pressure and fired his **commander-in-chief**.

Ukraine has made **significant progress** in the war this year, and a **rift** between the country's outgoing army chief and its defense minister threatened to derail its efforts.

Both men lost their jobs following Zelenskyy's major **government reshuffle** last week.

The top-level changes late Tuesday were intended to draw a line under an unwelcome spasm of **political turmoil** that lasted almost a week and prompted rejoicing in Russia. It was not clear whether Zelenskyy's measures would achieve that goal.

The new army chief, 43-year-old Maj. Gen. **Mykhailo Drapaty**, belongs to a new generation of Ukrainian generals who have come up through the ranks during the battle against Russian aggression.

He became known for his daring and courage in 2014, the year that Russia seized and illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula — eight years before Moscow's all-out invasion.

Zelenskyy said Drapaty and other commanders must present an updated defense strategy, including continued reform of the corps system, faster weapon and drone deliveries, stronger air defense against Russian strikes and a clearer mobilization plan.

Russia says the changes in Kyiv won't alter the front line

There is no sign that the two countries are any closer to a peace settlement, despite U.S.-led diplomatic efforts.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday that Moscow is sticking to its **previous demands**.

They include Kyiv withdrawing its forces from the four eastern regions that Russia has seized but doesn't fully control, renouncing any aspirations to NATO membership and sharply cutting the size of its army.

Dmitry Peskov told reporters that the Ukrainian political and military changes reflect strains in Kyiv

Peskov told reporters that the Ukrainian political and military changes reflect strains in Kyiv.

"Kyiv's regime is trembling from within. It can be seen with the naked eye," Peskov said.

Nor will the top-level alterations change the front line, he told reporters, claiming that Russian forces are on the offensive.

With the war's roughly 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line mostly off-limits to independent observers, Russia and Ukraine have also engaged in a propaganda battle.

Fedorov's future is still uncertain

Zelenskyy met separately Tuesday with outgoing defense minister Mykhailo Fedorov, a 35-year-old tech-savvy entrepreneur credited with swiftly developing **Ukraine's drone technology** that has given it a battlefield edge.

Fedorov locked horns with outgoing commander-in-chief Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy, a 60-year-old veteran trained in the Soviet Union before Ukraine's independence.

Street protests in Kyiv and other cities demanded Fedorov's return, viewing him as a key military modernizer, and urged Zelenskyy to fire Syrskiy, regarded as part of the old guard.

The demonstrations looked set to continue on Friday, despite Syrskiy's exit.

“It is good that the dialogue is working. At the same time, we should not forget the protesters’ second demand – to reinstate Mykhailo Fedorov as defense minister,” Dmytro Koziatynskyi, a veteran and former combat medic who has emerged as an informal voice of the protests, wrote on Threads.

Zelenskyy offered Fedorov what he called a respected position in the government that would unify the country’s technology sector

Zelenskyy offered Fedorov what he called a respected position in the government that would unify the country’s technology sector.

It wasn’t clear if Fedorov accepted the offer -- or whether the latest moves would satisfy protesters and calm the streets.

Fedorov said after his dismissal last week that he had been offered jobs by some global defense tech companies.

Fedorov supported Drapatyi’s appointment, calling it a “new hope in the fight of free people for freedom and justice” and “a voice for change that could not go unheard.”

Fedorov had criticized Syrskyi publicly before his dismissal, saying the general was blocking his reform efforts and needed to be replaced for Ukraine not to fail in its resistance against Russia.

Outgoing military chief points to recent battlefield achievements

Syrskyi defended his wartime record in a statement Wednesday.

Among other things, he claimed Ukrainian forces had clawed back 743 square kilometers (287 square miles) of Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory this year and said he was handing his successor an army that was not

only defending but also conducting offensive operations.

It was not possible to independently verify his claim.



Ukraine must move even faster and write new chapters, correcting all previous mistakes - Mykhailo Fedorov

Fedorov called Syrskyi to thank him for his military triumphs, including defending the Kyiv region at the time of Russia’s February 2022 full-scale invasion, the Kharkiv counteroffensive operation later that year and other battles, calling them “already an important part of Ukraine’s history.”

But he added that the country must “move even faster and write new chapters, correcting all previous mistakes.”

The political crisis began last Thursday, when Zelenskyy overhauled his wartime government, replacing his prime minister and firing Fedorov after just six months in the post.

The reshuffle immediately drew thousands of protesters into the streets of Kyiv and other cities, framing Fedorov’s removal as Zelenskyy siding with an entrenched military old guard over a reformer.

Zelenskyy said Wednesday that he’s also appointing Maj. Gen. Ihor Skybiuk as chief of the General Staff as part of the overhaul.

Russia and Ukraine keep up their long-range strikes

The political maneuvers took place against a backdrop of continued deadly strikes by Russia and Ukraine on each other's soil.

Ukrainian drones overnight struck two more sprawling warehouses of Russia's major online retailer, Wildberries, in Russia's southern regions of Krasnodar and Stavropol, Wildberries founder Tatyana Kim and Russian officials said Wednesday.

The strikes came four days after Ukraine's long-range drones hit massive Wildberries warehouses in the Moscow region and in the Tambov region, killing eight people and wounding dozens, according to officials.

Zelenskyy said, without naming the facilities, that they were used by Russia to supply sanctioned components for the production of drones and navigation equipment.

Russian attacks have struck several major Ukrainian logistics hubs and retail facilities over the past week

Russian attacks, meanwhile, have also struck several major Ukrainian logistics hubs and retail facilities over the past week.

Russia attacked Ukraine with four missiles of various types and 216 long-range strike drones overnight from Tuesday to Wednesday, according to the Ukrainian air force.

In the southern Odesa region, a Russian drone killed a woman when it struck a two-story apartment building, regional military administration head Oleh Kiper said.