

In a recent broadcast, [Vladimir Solovyov](#), a Russian state TV host and known ally of Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#), cheered on President [Donald Trump](#)'s criticism of Ukrainian President [Volodymyr Zelensky](#), and said his call for new elections in Kyiv is "the cherry on the cake."

Newsweek reached out to the White House and Ukraine's foreign affairs ministry via email and the Russian government via online form for comment on Thursday.

Why It Matters

Trump has greatly shifted U.S. policy on Ukraine in its ongoing war with Russia. Last week, Trump had a phone call with Putin, setting the stage for peace negotiations. But Zelensky was not present for the call, sparking concerns that Ukraine and its European allies will not have an adequate say in how these peace talks play out.

Earlier this week, U.S. and Russian officials met in Saudi Arabia to officially [start peace talks](#) to end the war in Ukraine. Again, Kyiv was absent. These past two weeks have signaled a change in the U.S.-led effort to isolate the Russian president over his invasion of Ukraine and the approach by former President [Joe Biden](#)'s administration of "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine."

Trump has even gone as far as to [suggest that Ukraine started the war](#)—when in fact it was Putin who launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022—and to claim Zelensky [has a 4 percent approval rating](#). Critics of Trump

have accused him of repeating Putin's propaganda and now, Putin's top propagandist, Solovyov, is praising Trump's comments.

What To Know

Hours after U.S. and Russian officials met in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, Trump held a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, in which he questioned Zelensky's public support, pointing to what he said were rock-bottom approval ratings and suggesting that Ukraine should hold elections. The current state of martial law in Ukraine, in effect since Putin invaded the country in 2022, prevents Kyiv from holding elections per the country's constitution.

On a recent broadcast, Solovyov played a clip of Trump's press conference, in which the president said, "We have a situation where we haven't had elections in Ukraine, where we have martial law, essentially martial law in Ukraine, where the leader in Ukraine, I hate to say it, but he's down at 4 percent approval rating, and where a country has been blown to smithereens."

Solovyov said in reaction to Trump's comments, according to an English translation from the watchdog project Russian Media Monitor: "The phrases he is saying are so deep and so correct. They are in total alignment with the way we see things. Of course, the cherry on the cake, an absolute cherry on the cake is this phrase—"

He then played a video of Trump saying at Tuesday's press conference, "When they want a seat at the table...wouldn't the people of Ukraine have to say like, 'You know, it's been a long time since we've had an election.'"

"So, Ukraine has to have elections if it wants to sit at the negotiating table. That's it. Zelensky has nowhere to run. Trump reacted. He said that he is outdated and unpopular. Let me add from myself, he's also very, very weak. He is worthless, to put it correctly, he's worthless," Solovyov added.

Does Zelensky Have a 4 Percent Approval Rating?

According to a recent survey by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) published in early February, 57 percent of Ukrainians said they trust Zelensky.

The rating marks a slight increase from the KIIS's December 2024 polls, conducted before Trump's return to the presidency, that showed 52 percent trust in Zelensky.

In addition, 69 percent of Ukrainians approve of Zelensky's actions, according to an October 2024 poll published by the International [Republican](#) Institute.

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