

We Need Unity More Than Ever, So That There Can Be a Dignified Peace in Our Home – Address by the President

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Ukrainians!

There comes a moment in the life of every nation when everyone needs to talk things through. Honestly. Calmly. Without speculation, rumors, gossip, without anything extra. Just as things are. Just as I've always tried to speak to you.

Right now is one of the hardest moments in our history. Right now, Ukraine is under some of the heaviest pressure yet. Right now, Ukraine may find itself facing a very tough choice. Either the loss of our dignity or the risk of losing a key partner. Either the difficult 28 points, or an extremely hard winter – the hardest yet – and the dangers that follow. A life without freedom, without dignity, without justice. And that we trust someone who has already attacked us twice.

They will expect an answer from us. Though the truth is, I already gave that answer. On May 20, 2019, when taking an oath of loyalty to Ukraine, I notably said: “I, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, elected by the will of the people as President of Ukraine, pledge with all my actions to defend the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, to uphold the rights and freedoms of its citizens, to abide by the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine, to fulfil my duties in the interests of all my compatriots, and to strengthen Ukraine’s standing in the world.” For me, this is not a protocol formality to check off – it is an oath. And every day, I remain true to every word of it. And I will never betray it. Ukraine’s national interest must be respected.

We’re not making loud statements. We will work calmly with the United States and with all our partners. There will be a constructive search for solutions with our main partner.

I will lay out the arguments. I will persuade. I will offer alternatives. But one thing is certain: we will not give the enemy reasons to claim that Ukraine doesn’t want peace, that it is sabotaging the process, and that it is Ukraine that is not ready for diplomacy. That will not happen.

Ukraine will work fast. Today, on Saturday and Sunday, all next week, and for as long as it takes – 24/7 – I will fight to ensure that, among all the points of the plan, at least two are not overlooked: these are the dignity and freedom of Ukrainians. Because everything else rests on this – our sovereignty, our independence, our land, our people. And Ukraine’s future.

We will – and must – do everything so that, as a result, the war ends, but Ukraine does not end, Europe does not end, nor does global peace.

I’ve just spoken with Europeans. We count on our European friends who fully understand that Russia is not somewhere far away – it’s right next to the EU’s

borders, that Ukraine today is the only shield separating comfortable European life from Putin's plans. We remember: Europe stood with us. We believe: Europe will stand with us.

Ukraine must not live through a *déjà vu* of February 24, when we felt alone, when no one could stop Russia except our heroic people, who stood like a wall against Putin's army.

And of course it was nice to hear the world say: Ukrainians are incredible; God, how they, Ukrainians, fight; how Ukrainians stand; what titans they are. And it's true. Absolutely. But Europe and the whole world must also understand another truth: Ukrainians are, first of all, human beings. And for almost four years of full-scale invasion, we have been holding back one of the largest armies on Earth. And we are holding a frontline stretching thousands of kilometers. And our people endure nightly shelling, missile attacks, ballistic missile strikes, and "shahed" strikes. And every day, our people lose their loved ones. And our people desperately want this war to end. Yes, we are made of steel. But any metal, even the strongest, can give way.

Remember this. Stay with Ukraine. Stay with our people – and that means stay with dignity and freedom.

Dear Ukrainians!

Remember that first day of the war. Most of us made our choice. The choice for Ukraine. Recall our feelings back then. What was it like? Dark, loud, heavy, painful. For many – terrifying. But the enemy did not see our backs running away. They saw our eyes – full of resolve to fight for what is ours. That is dignity. That is freedom. And this is truly the most terrifying thing for Russia: seeing the Ukrainians' unity.

Back then, our unity was focused on defending our home from the enemy.

And now, we also need unity more than ever, so that there can be a dignified peace in our home.

I am addressing all Ukrainians now. Our people, citizens, politicians – everyone. We need to pull ourselves together. Regain our senses. Quit the squabbling. Stop the political games. The state must function. The parliament of a country at war must work in unity. The government of a country at war must work effectively. And all of us together must not forget – and must not confuse – who exactly is the enemy of Ukraine today.

I remember how, on the first day of the war, various "messengers" brought me different plans, points; there were ultimatums for ending the war. They said: either this way, or no way. Either you sign it, or you will simply be eliminated and an "acting President of Ukraine" will sign it instead of you.

We all know how that ended. Many of those "messengers" later became part of our exchange fund and were sent, together with their proposals and points, back home to their "native harbor."

I did not betray Ukraine then. I truly felt your support behind me – of every single one of you. Of every Ukrainian, every soldier, every volunteer, every medic, diplomat, journalist, our entire nation.

We did not betray Ukraine then. We will not betray it now. And I know for certain that in this truly one of the most difficult moments in our history, I am not alone.

I know that Ukrainians believe in their state, that we are united. And in every future format of meetings, discussions, negotiations with partners, it will be far easier for me to secure a dignified peace for us and to persuade them, knowing with absolute certainty: the people of Ukraine stand behind me. Millions of our people, people of dignity, people fighting for freedom, and those who have earned peace.

All our fallen heroes, who gave their lives for Ukraine, who are now in heaven, and deserve to see from above that their children and grandchildren will live in a dignified peace. And that peace will come. Dignified, effective, long-lasting.

Dear Ukrainians!

The coming week will be very difficult, full of events.

You are a mature, wise, conscious nation that has proven this many times. And you understand there will be enormous pressure this time – political pressure, informational, all kinds. Designed to weaken us. To drive a wedge between us. The enemy never sleeps – and will do everything to make us fail.

Will we let them do this? We have no right to. And we won't. Because those who seek to destroy us don't know us well. They don't understand who we truly are, what we're about, what we stand for, what kind of people we are. There is a reason we mark the Day of Dignity and Freedom as a national holiday. It shows who we are. It shows our values.

We will work in the diplomatic arena for our peace. We must act in unity within the country for the sake of our peace. For our dignity.

For our freedom. And I believe – and I know – that I am not alone. With me is our nation, our society, our warriors, our partners, our allies, all our people. Dignified. Free. United.

Happy Day of Dignity and Freedom.

Glory to Ukraine!