Ukraine Unveiled

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Navigating the Crossroads of War in the Wake of the 2024 US Election

The world has taken a complete shift since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war. The conflict began on 24th February 2022, with Russia announcing a full-scale invasion initially targeting the Eastern territories of Ukraine. The aggression resulted in the announcement of martial law in Ukraine followed by the ceasing of all diplomatic ties with Moscow. Since that moment, the war has resulted in thousands of people losing their lives alongside widespread energy loss and infrastructure damage in both states. Russia has subsequently faced heavy sanctions backed by the US and the

EU, which included freezing Russian assets and imposing a ban on the purchase of Russian-produced energy within both the American and European regions. Today, a year and a half has passed since the war commenced, and the diplomatic ties remain strained between Russia and the Western world.

The US, being a dominant competitor of Russia, has always condemned Russian actions on Ukrainian soil. The Congress promised Kyiv to bring timely justice to Russia and hold the perpetrators of the Russian attack on Ukrainian soil accountable. The relations between Russia and the US have continued to deteriorate since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, but the course of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has further severed diplomatic relations between Moscow and Washington DC. Since then, using sanctions as an effective tool to curb Russian powers, President Biden and the US government have been urging the world to shift away from Russian energy and cease exports to the country as well.

What could the US presidential election mean for American support for Ukraine?

With the US being a staunch supporter of Ukraine amid the ongoing conflict, the world awaits the impact of the upcoming US presidential elections on the country's foreign policy stance towards Russia and Ukraine. The results of the elections remain a key factor in deciding what is at the end of the tunnel for the warring states. As the anticipated electoral contest intensifies between Joe Biden and the widely expected Republican nominee, Donald Trump, the future stance of America towards the war remains uncertain. The significant disparity in support for the war between the two candidates adds to the complexity of the situation. Therefore, with each candidate and party diverging on policy, America's stance towards Ukraine depends largely on the election results.

Indeed, in a recent impassioned address, President Biden reaffirmed unwavering support for President Zelensky and Ukraine's defence. He urged Republicans for a renewed commitment to military aid, underscoring the potential fallout of a victorious Russia on Ukraine's soil—notably that of an emboldened Moscow that will threaten NATO allies, potentially entangling US troops in a broader conflict.

Yet, across the political aisle, Republicans have taken a more cautious stance, prioritizing immigration over critical foreign policy issues, including aid to Ukraine and Israel. Former President Trump, echoing this sentiment, expressed reluctance to commit to sustained military assistance. His bold claim of resolving the conflict "in 24 hours" raises eyebrows, while his allies such as Congresswoman Majorie Taylor Green have amplified Russian propaganda against President Zelensky.

Beyond 2024: the fate of the Ukrainian front

The potential ramifications of a second Trump term are alarming. A withdrawal from NATO or the Ukraine Defense Contact Group—a coalition of over 50 states led by the US—could reshape the global chessboard, leaving Ukraine vulnerable and the conflict dynamics in flux. Concerns among NATO leaders about the abandonment of the Ukraine aid effort highlight the gravity of the situation.

For Ukraine, a nation that has resiliently resisted Russian occupation, the implications are profound. Its people's determination, coupled with military and financial aid from allies, has been a bulwark against aggression. However, the spectre of reduced support, should Trump secure a second term with a Republican-led Congress, poses a tangible threat. The discursive and practical backing for Ukraine could falter, potentially tipping the scales in favour of Russian interests and disrupting the stalemate that has characterized the conflict in the past year.

As the political pendulum swings in the United States, the fate of Ukraine hangs in the balance of a couple of thousand votes on November 5, 2024. The outcome of the US election becomes a critical variable influencing the trajectory of the war in Ukraine.

The choices made on Capitol Hill will not only shape the immediate future of this embattled nation but reverberate across the global security landscapes, influencing alliances and reshaping the delicate equilibrium of power. The question remains: will political expediency outweigh the imperative of standing firm against aggression, or will the international community rally behind Ukraine in its hour of need? The answer holds consequences that extend far beyond Eastern Europe—a geopolitical gamble with stakes too great to ignore.