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Zelenskiy tells Davos chiefs: ‘Strengthen our economy, we will strengthen your security’

Зеленський заявив керівникам Давосу: «Зміцнюйте нашу економіку, ми зміцнимо вашу безпеку»

Англійський журналіст і письменник, економічний редактор «The Guardian» Ларрі Елліотт коментує промову Президента України Володимира Зеленського на Всесвітньому економічному форумі в Давосі, яку зустріли оваціями на тлі потужної підтримки з боку лідерів ЄС та бізнесу. Л. Елліотт зазначає, що у попередні роки В. Зеленський виступав у Давосі по відеозв'язку, і його рішення з'явитися особисто відображає занепокоєння Києва тим, що Захід втомився від війни. Президент України в промові наголосив на необхідності посилення економічних санкцій щодо росії, щоб утруднити її збройову промисловість, а також звернувся до керівників компаній із пропозицією надати інвестиції, необхідні для відновлення зруйнованої війною економіки України.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/jan/16/zelenskiy-tells-davos-chiefs-strengthen-our-economy-we-will-strengthen-your-security>

Standing ovation greets Ukrainian president's speech amid strong support from EU and business leaders

Business live: Davos day 1 – Zelenskiy rallies support

Geopolitical tensions and AI dominate start of World Economic Forum

Volodymyr Zelenskiy has made an impassioned plea for international support for his country's war against Russia, insisting that Vladimir Putin must live to regret starting the conflict almost two years ago.

In a speech that received a standing ovation from the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Ukrainian president said the Putin had stolen 13 years of peace and would only respond to military defeat.

“If anybody thinks this is just about Ukraine they are fundamentally mistaken,” Zelenskiy said, after a meeting in Davos with 70 chief executives and the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen.

Dressed in his trademark black jumper, Zelenskiy said the Russian leader was spurred on to take military action by warnings to Ukraine not to escalate a conflict that began with the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

“Every ‘do not escalate’ sounded like ‘you will prevail’ to Putin. Because of ‘don't escalate’, lives were lost,” Zelenskiy said.

“One man has stolen at least 13 years of peace, replacing them with pain, pain, pain and crisis that impact the entire world.”

Zelenskiy had earlier received strong support from von der Leyen, who said Putin had failed militarily, economically and diplomatically.

“Ukraine can prevail in this war but we must continue to empower their resistance,” von der Leyen said in her keynote address. “Ukrainians need predictable financing throughout 2024 and beyond. They need a sufficient and sustained supply of weapons to defend Ukraine and regain its rightful territory.”

Ukraine has begun accession talks to join the European Union, a move supported in Brussels. “EU membership will be Ukraine’s historic achievement,” she said.

In previous years, Zelenskiy has spoken at Davos by video link and his decision to appear in person this year reflects concern in Kyiv that the west has grown weary of the war. He challenged the idea that peace was possible were the conflict to be frozen with Russia still occupying large chunks of eastern Ukraine.

Zelenskiy said he doubted that “freezing the war in Ukraine” would actually end the conflict. After 2014, there were attempts to freeze the war in Donbas, but that did not sate Russia’s appetite.

“Putin is a predator who is not satisfied by frozen products,” he said. “We have to defend ourselves. We can beat him on the ground, in the air and at sea – and we have proved it,” he added.

“Putin must regret it [the war]. We need him to lose. Global unity is stronger than one man’s hatred,” he said.

Ukraine’s president also stressed the need to tighten economic sanctions on Russia to hobble its arms industry. “In every Russian missile there are critical components from western countries.”

Zelenskiy made a pitch for the chief executives in Davos to provide the investment necessary to rebuild Ukraine’s war ravaged economy. “Strengthen our economy and we will strengthen your security,” he said.

“The more money Putin and his allies lose, the more he will regret this war,” Zelenskiy added. “We need to finally dispel the illusion that global unity is weaker than one man’s hatred.”

Attempts by the US president, Joe Biden, to provide \$60bn of additional aid to Ukraine has so far been frustrated by Republicans in the Senate but Zelenskiy said he was confident the impasse would end within weeks and that he would receive fresh supplies of military hardware.

Chris Coons, US senator for Delaware, attended Zelenskiy’s meeting with CEOs at the World Economic Forum, and said the mood was “upbeat, determined, positive”.

“He [Zelenskiy] urged that we remain as determined as the Ukrainian people and that we see this through,” said Coons, who was wearing a badge showing the US and Ukrainian flags.

There were “a number” of bankers in attendance, including Bank of America’s Brian Moynihan, as well as the CEOs of fertiliser producer Yara and of YouTube, who talked about efforts to take down Russian disinformation and malign content, Coons said.