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Trump Demands $500Bln in Rare Earth Metals From Kyiv, Says Ukraine 'May Be Russian Someday'

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U.S. President Donald Trump. **Gage Skidmore (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that he wants to secure half a trillion dollars in rare earth metals from Ukraine, which he suggested "may be Russian someday," as part of negotiations over continued U.S. support for Kyiv in its defense against invading Russian forces.

"I want to have our money secured because we're spending hundreds of billions of dollars," Trump said in an interview with Fox News host Bret Baier. "They may make a deal, they may not make a deal. They may be Russian someday, or they may not be Russian someday."

To date, Washington has provided $65.9 billion in military assistance to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, according to the U.S. State Department. Another $69.2 billion in military assistance was provided following Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

Trump said last week Monday that he wanted to negotiate an agreement with Ukraine in which Kyiv guarantees supplies of rare earth metals, key elements used in electronics, in exchange for U.S. military support. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had floated the idea in October as part of his "victory plan" for ending the war with Russia.

"We are going to have all this money in there, and I say: 'I want it back.' And I told them that I want the equivalent, like $500 billion worth of rare earth," Trump said during the Fox News interview. "And they have essentially agreed to do that, so at least we don't feel stupid."

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When asked Tuesday to comment on Trump's interview, the Kremlin said that the situation in Ukraine "largely corresponds to President Trump's words."

"The fact that a significant part of Ukraine wants to become Russia, and has already, is a fact," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, referring to Moscow's 2022 annexation of four Ukrainian regions.

Also on Monday, Trump said he would soon send his Ukraine envoy Keith Kellogg to Kyiv to draft a proposal for ending the war. While the U.S. president has repeatedly said he wants a quick end to the fighting, Zelensky has called for strong security guarantees from Washington in any agreement with Moscow.

Meanwhile, Zelensky's spokesman told AFP that the Ukrainian leader will meet with U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance on Friday on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

In a video address on Monday, Zelensky called for "real peace and effective security guarantees" for Ukraine.

"Security of people, security of our state, security of economic relations and, of course, our resource sustainability — not only for Ukraine but for the entire free world," the Ukrainian leader said. "All of this is being decided now."

AFP contributed reporting.

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