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Ukraine Prepared to Offer Territory Swap With Russia – Zelensky

By AFP

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Ukraine will offer to swap territory with Russia in any potential peace negotiations, President Volodymyr Zelensky said in an interview published Tuesday, adding that Europe alone would not be able to shoulder Kyiv's war effort.

Zelensky will meet U.S. Vice President JD Vance on Friday at the Munich Security Conference, the Ukrainian leader's spokesman told AFP, as Washington pushes for an end to the nearly three-year war with Russia.

Vance has been a frequent critic of U.S. support that has been vital to Ukraine's war effort.

"There are voices which say that Europe could offer security guarantees without the Americans, and I always say no," Zelensky told the Guardian newspaper in an interview published on the U.K. newspaper's website on Tuesday.

"Security guarantees without America are not real security guarantees," he said.

Trump is keen for both sides to reach a deal, the terms of which are a source of concern in Ukraine.

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Zelensky told the Guardian he would offer Russian President Vladimir Putin territory that Ukraine seized in Russia's Kursk region six months ago.

"We will swap one territory for another," he said, adding that he did not know which territories he would ask for in return.

"I don't know, we will see. But all our territories are important, there is no priority," he said.

Russia says it has annexed five regions of Ukraine — Crimea in 2014 and then Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia in 2022 — though it does not have full control over them.

Contracts for U.S. firms

Trump confirmed Monday that he would soon dispatch his special envoy Keith Kellogg, who is tasked with drawing up a proposal to halt the fighting, to Ukraine.

The U.S. president is pressing for a swift end to the conflict, while Zelensky is calling for tough security guarantees from Washington as part of any deal.

Kyiv fears that any settlement that does not include hard military commitments, such as NATO membership or the deployment of peacekeeping troops, will allow the Kremlin time to regroup and rearm for a fresh attack.

Zelensky has said he would offer U.S. companies lucrative reconstruction contracts in a bid to win over Trump.

"Those who are helping us to save Ukraine will renovate it, with their businesses together with Ukrainian businesses. All these things we are ready to speak about in detail," he told the Guardian.

Ukraine has some of the biggest mineral reserves in Europe and it is "not in the interests of the United States" for those to fall into Russian hands, he said.

"Valuable natural resources where we can offer our partners possibilities that didn't exist before to invest in them. For us it will create jobs, for American companies it will create profits," he added.

The Munich meeting comes with Russia advancing across Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, where over the past year it has captured several settlements, most completely flattened by months of Russian bombardments.

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