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# Rubio Expects Deal on Ukraine Minerals to 'Pay Back U.S. Taxpayer'

By AFP

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U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio **Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images/AFP**

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday he expected to reach a deal for Ukraine's mineral wealth that will in part compensate the United States for money that went to weapons to defend against Russia.

Speaking a day after President Donald Trump spoke by telephone to Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and the U.S. administration said Ukraine would have to cede territory, Rubio said the United States had a "stake in Ukraine's long-term independence."

"That should be anchored in an ongoing economic interest," Rubio told the radio show of conservative hosts Clay Travis and Buck Sexton.

"Hopefully, we'll have some news here soon on that: the ability to partner with Ukraine — a joint venture, or something like that — for their mineral rights, all the natural resources they

have," he said.

"Some of that money will go back to pay back the U.S. taxpayer for the billions of dollars that's been spent there," Rubio added.

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"Part of it is going to be reinvested back into Ukraine to rebuild [from] all the destruction that's happened there."

Trump, long critical of the money sent to Ukraine since it was invaded by Russia, earlier this month suggested that he wanted an agreement to access Ukraine's rare earth material as a condition to sustain support.

Ukraine has major resources of lithium and titanium that are critical to high-tech technologies, including aerospace and electric vehicles.

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