

# Trump Official Tells Ukraine to 'Tone Down' Criticism

By [AFP](#)

February 20, 2025



AP / TASS

Ukraine's criticism of the United States is "unacceptable," Donald Trump's top security advisor said Thursday, urging Kyiv to cool its rhetoric and quickly sign a minerals deal pushed by the White House.

"We're getting all this pushback... they need to tone it down and take a hard look and sign that deal," National Security Advisor Mike Waltz told Fox News shortly before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was to meet Trump's special envoy Keith Kellogg in Kyiv.

Waltz was referring to a proposed agreement that would give the U.S. access to vast amounts of Ukrainian natural resources as the new president insists on getting a return on American aid sent to Kyiv as it fights off a Russian invasion.

Zelensky rejected that deal over the weekend, arguing that it does not offer his country

security guarantees three years into the war.

Waltz described the minerals deal as "the best security guarantee they could ever hope for, much more than another pallet of ammunition," arguing it would see the United States invested in the country.

**Related article:** [Rubio Expects Deal on Ukraine Minerals to 'Pay Back U.S. Taxpayer'](#)

The U.S. president has rattled Kyiv and its European backers by opening talks with Moscow that they fear could force Ukraine to capitulate to Russia.

Kyiv was not invited to talks in Riyadh earlier this month between Moscow and Washington as they moved to sideline both Ukraine and Europe.

In the days since Zelensky rejected the minerals deal, Trump has savaged him as a "dictator" while the Ukrainian leader has warned the U.S. president is living in a Russian "disinformation" bubble, in a bitter break between the one-time allies.

"There's obviously a lot of frustration here," Waltz said on Fox.

When asked if he thought the dispute was "reconcilable," Waltz responded: "I think so... to say that we're going to change the nature of our aid going forward is, I don't think should offend anyone."

He also denied that Ukraine has been cut out of Trump's talks with Russia over ending the war, insisting that there was "plenty of engagement and dialogue" with Kyiv as well as European allies.

"This is a common-sense plan. They may not like it but we're going to drive it forward and everybody will stop squawking when the fighting ends," Waltz said.

He said Washington and Moscow's interests were "aligned in stopping the war... We're going to move forward full speed ahead to drive this war to an end and then we can talk about broader geo-strategic relationships."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/02/20/trump-official-tells-ukraine-to-tone-down-criticism-a88101>