

Zelensky 'Not Ready' to Sign Minerals Deal With U.S. – Source

By [AFP](#)

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky **Sergei Supinsky / AFP**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is "not ready" to sign a minerals deal with the United States, a source told AFP on Saturday, raising questions about Washington's demands as a rift between the two countries deepened.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has been pressuring Zelensky into giving American companies preferential access to Ukraine's vast mineral resources as compensation for the tens of billions of dollars of aid Kyiv received under Joe Biden.

Trump's national security adviser predicted Friday that Zelensky would sign the deal soon, but its contours have not been made public and Zelensky has pushed back at any arrangement that would mean "selling" his country.

"In the form in which the draft is now, the president is not ready to accept, we are still trying

to make changes and add constructiveness," a Ukrainian source close to the matter told AFP. Kyiv wants any agreement signed with the U.S. to include security guarantees, as it battles Russia's nearly three-year invasion.

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The row over the agreement comes amid a deepening rift between Washington and Kyiv, as Trump upends Biden's policy of unconditional support for Ukraine while making diplomatic overtures towards the Kremlin.

On Wednesday, the Republican branded Zelensky a "dictator" and called for him to "move fast" to end the war, a day after Russian and U.S. officials held talks in Saudi Arabia without Kyiv.

'What kind of partnership is this?'

The United States had been Ukraine's most important financial, military and political backer since Russia invaded in February 2022, in what the West's top powers had condemned as an unprovoked and illegal war of aggression.

A senior Ukrainian official told AFP Friday that despite the tensions, talks on a possible agreement were "ongoing," with Trump envoy Keith Kellogg praising Zelensky as "courageous" after visiting Kyiv earlier this week.

But Trump's demands and war of words with Zelensky have rattled Ukraine, which still faces daily Russian bombardment and is slowly ceding ground to Moscow on the frontline.

Trump said in a Fox News interview aired last week: "I want to have our money secured because we're spending hundreds of billions of dollars."

"I want it back. And I told them that I want the equivalent: like, \$500 billion worth of rare earth."

Ukraine has balked at this price tag, which analysts say does not correspond with published U.S. aid figures.

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The U.S. State Department said on January 20 that since Russia's invasion, the United States had provided Ukraine with \$65.9 billion in military aid.

The Kiel Institute, a German economic research body, said that from 2022 until the end of 2024, the United States gave 114.2 billion euros (\$119.8 billion) in financial, humanitarian and military aid — with 64 billion euros in military help.

"There are no American obligations in the agreement regarding guarantees or investments,

everything about them is very vague, and they want to extract \$500 billion from us," a Ukrainian source told AFP of the proposed minerals deal.

"What kind of partnership is this? And why do we have to give \$500 billion, there is no answer," the source added.

The source said that Ukraine had offered amendments.

The row comes at a critical juncture in the conflict, with the three-year anniversary of Russia's invasion fast approaching.

Moscow's Defense Ministry earlier on Saturday claimed the capture of Novolyubivka in Ukraine's eastern Luhansk region, which is now largely under Russian control.

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