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U.S. Opposes Ukraine Territorial Integrity in UN Vote

By Amelie Bottollier-Depois for AFP

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Dmitry Yagodkin/TASS

UN members backed a resolution supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity Monday in the face of staunch opposition from Washington which pushed its own language that declined to blame Russia for the war or mention Kyiv's borders.

As US President Donald Trump stakes out a new position on the Ukraine war, a European-backed text marking the conflict's third anniversary won 93 votes for and 18 votes against, with 65 abstentions.

Washington sided with Moscow, as well as Russian allies Belarus, North Korea and Sudan, to vote against.

The text — which won far less support compared to previous resolution on the war — strongly criticizes Russia, and emphasizes Ukraine's territorial integrity and inviolability of

its borders.

Washington drafted a rival resolution amid an intensifying feud between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Russian ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia had called the U.S. text "a step in the right direction" amid a sudden thaw between Russia and the U.S. under Trump.

But Washington's ally France put forward amendments to the U.S. text telling the General Assembly that Paris, along with European countries and Britain, would "not be able to support in its current form."

The countries, all backers of Ukraine, pushed to reword the US text to say that the "full-scale invasion of Ukraine" has been undertaken by Russia.

Hungary, whose prime minister Viktor Orban is seen as the most pro-Putin leader in Europe, voted against the amendments.

The amendments also reaffirmed a commitment to Ukraine's "territorial integrity" — which had been omitted from the US text.

The US proposal was so heavily amended that Washington ultimately abstained on its own text.

The inviolability of Ukrainian territorial integrity was a cornerstone of previous resolutions passed by the Assembly, with the United States under former president Joe Biden among its strongest supporters.

"The attempt to add this language detracts from what we are trying to achieve with this forward-looking resolution," said Washington's envoy to the UN Dorothy Shea ahead of the vote.

Security Council in spotlight

Following the General Assembly vote, Washington is expected to bring its text to a vote at the Security Council later Monday, with a State Department official warning the U.S. would veto any amendments by Russia or the Europeans.

The mechanics of the UN mean that Washington could not veto the amendments brought at the General Assembly.

To be adopted by the UNSC, a resolution needs the votes of at least nine of the 15 Security Council members — while not being vetoed by any of the five permanent members — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China.

Even if the EU members of the council France, Slovenia, Denmark and Greece, along with Britain, were to abstain, the U.S. resolution could still pass.

That would raise the question of whether France or Britain would be prepared to wield their first vetoes in more than 30 years.

Their respective leaders, Emmanuel Macron and Keir Starmer, are visiting the White House this week for key talks on Ukraine.

"I do not see how Paris and London can support a text that is so far from their stated positions on Ukraine, but I also do not see how they can veto it," Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group told AFP.

For the Europeans, the competing votes will be "a test of their standing in the multilateral system." At the same time, Kyiv could be left "increasingly isolated" if it draws too little support, Gowan said.

With core principles of international law at stake, UN chief Antonio Guterres on Sunday called for a peace that "fully upholds Ukraine's territorial integrity" and respects the UN Charter.

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