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# What We Know About the U.S.-Ukraine Minerals Deal

By AFP

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

Kyiv and Washington have agreed on a deal to give the United States access to Ukrainian mineral resources following a spat between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky.

Here's what we know about the agreement that could be signed by Trump and Zelensky in Washington this week, which the Ukrainian president on Wednesday called just a "framework agreement" to be tightened up in future discussions.

Ukrainian and international media have published what they report is the full text of the agreement, which lacks any security guarantee for Ukraine.

## A joint fund

Trump had demanded compensation for U.S. aid paid out under the administration of former U.S. President Joe Biden in the three years since Russia invaded in February 2022.

The U.S. leader had sought $500 billion in compensation — around four times the amount that Washington has paid out to Ukraine, which currently stands at $120 billion, according to the Kiel Institute, a German economic research body.

Zelensky rejected this draft saying he would not sign off on an accord that "10 generations" of Ukrainians would be liable to pay off.

"The main thing for me was that we are not a debtor," Zelensky told journalists Wednesday.

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The deal's wording, as published by The Financial Times, The Kyiv Independent and other media, does however indicate that the United States and Ukraine should develop mineral resources together with revenues diverted to a joint U.S.-Ukrainian fund.

The fund will earn from future monetization of all relevant Ukraine government-owned natural resource assets, the terms say.

Ukraine would contribute 50% of all revenues to a fund jointly managed by the two countries' governments, to be reinvested in projects in Ukraine at least once a year.

The terms leave unclear exactly what share of the fund the U.S. would own.

"It's too early to talk about money," Zelensky said Wednesday, with details to be thrashed out later.

## Vague on security

Ukraine had been adamant that any deal must include long-term and robust security guarantees that would help deter Russia from ever attacking again.

Zelensky first floated the idea of exchanging access to Ukrainian natural resources for security commitments in October last year as part of his five-point Victory Plan.

Ukraine ultimately wants NATO membership. But that option — a red line for the Kremlin — has been shelved by Washington.

Ukraine has also advocated for foreign peacekeeping troops to be deployed in the event of a ceasefire. But the United States has rejected this option while European countries are divided on the issue.

According to the text published by media, the only clause on security puts the U.S. under no obligation. The deal also does not mention weapons.

It simply says that the U.S. "supports Ukraine's efforts to obtain the security assurances necessary to build a lasting peace."

Zelensky told journalists he had wanted "at least a phrase about security guarantees," adding: "This sentence appeared."

The text does say the U.S. wants a "sovereign and secure Ukraine" and will maintain a long-term commitment to a "stable and economically prosperous Ukraine."

## What minerals?

The text of the agreement says it concerns natural resources including deposits of minerals, hydrocarbons and natural gas, but not ones that are currently sources of revenue for Ukraine.

Ukraine holds some 5% of the world's mineral resources, which Trump wants to secure, but not all of them are yet exploited — or easily exploitable — and some lie in territory occupied by Russia.

The country is a notable producer of manganese (the world's eighth largest producer, according to World Mining Data), titanium (11th) and graphite (14th), which is essential for electric batteries.

Ukraine has 20% of the world's estimated resources of graphite, according to France's Bureau of Geological and Mining Research (BRGM).

Ukraine has also said it "possesses one of the largest lithium deposits in Europe." The government added that the soft metal is not yet extracted.

Kyiv has said that "rare earth metals are known to exist in six deposits" and that an investment of $300 million would be needed to develop a deposit at Novopoltavske, which it claimed was one of the world's largest.

The site is however controlled by Russian forces and the Kremlin has ruled out ceding territories it has captured since 2022 or the Crimean peninsula annexed in 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he supports U.S. investment in Russian-occupied regions.

The Shevchenko deposit of lithium, tantalum, niobium and beryllium lies less than 10 kilometers from the front line near Pokrovsk, where the Russian army is gaining ground against outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian forces.

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