

Trump and Putin Hold High-Stakes Talks in Alaska

By [Brawley Benson](#)

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Russian Foreign Ministry

Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. counterpart Donald Trump are holding a highly anticipated summit in Alaska aimed at ending the war in Ukraine.

The historic summit marks the first between Putin and a U.S. president since Russia's invasion of Ukraine made him a pariah in the West over three years ago — but comes as the two sides remain divided by stark differences.

Meeting at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, the two leaders first held a closed-door “three-on-three” session for nearly three hours.

Putin was joined by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov in the “three-on-three” talks, while Trump was accompanied by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and special envoy Steve Witkoff.

Trump and Putin are now delivering a joint press conference, expected to be followed by a “working lunch” with the two [delegations](#).

Embed:

Trump personally welcomes Putin and shakes his hand on the tarmac in Anchorage. pic.twitter.com/5V2IliFNR9

— The Moscow Times (@MoscowTimes) [August 15, 2025](#)

Speaking en route to Alaska, Trump [said](#) that he would push for a ceasefire and was willing to “head back home real fast” if the meeting goes poorly.

“I want to see a ceasefire rapidly,” Trump [told](#) reporters on board Air Force One. “I don’t know if it’s going to be today, but I’m not going to be happy if it’s not today.”

In choreographed drama, Trump and Putin each arrived in their presidential jets and walked under gray skies to greet each other on the tarmac, before walking a red carpet together to an honor guard salute.

As fighter jets circled overhead, a reporter shouted audibly to Putin, “Will you stop killing civilians?”

Related article: [As Putin Meets Trump in Alaska, Experts Say He’s Already Scored Big](#)

Trump had vowed to swiftly end the war upon assuming office in January, but multiple rounds of shuttle diplomacy failed to make progress and Russia continued to bombard Ukrainian cities and press forward on the front lines.

Growing increasingly frustrated with Putin, he threatened to hit Moscow with secondary sanctions if it did not agree to end the war by Aug. 8 — an ultimatum that the Kremlin did not heed.

Leading up to the talks, there appeared to be little wavering in Russia’s terms for ending the war. Putin has been uncompromising in his demand that Ukraine relinquish claim to four regions partially occupied by Russia since 2022, as well as Crimea.

Yet the Russian leader appeared open to striking a peace deal without Ukraine in Alaska, [calling](#) Trump’s efforts to end the war “rather energetic and sincere.”

The Ukrainians, meanwhile, categorically reject the proposal of territorial concessions.

President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was not invited to the Alaska summit, has repeatedly said in the lead-up to the meeting that there could be no peace without Ukraine’s input.

“Russia must end the war that it itself started and dragged on for years,” Zelensky [said](#) in an

address on Friday. “The killings need to stop. A meeting of leaders is needed. At the very least — Ukraine, America, the Russian side, and it is in this format that effective solutions are possible.”

European leaders also urged Trump to respect Ukraine’s interests when negotiating with the Russians.

But by sidelining Zelensky, the leaders have signaled the broader scope of these talks, which were expected to encompass not just the war but also bilateral relations and economic cooperation.

Speaking aboard Air Force One, Trump [said](#) that he would be willing to discuss business opportunities — but added that no deals would be agreed upon “until we get the war solved.”

Trump and Putin last met in 2019 during the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, for a discussion the American leader [called](#) “tremendous.”

He famously voiced admiration for Putin during his first term, breaking with the U.S. intelligence community's assessments that Russia worked to sway the 2016 U.S. presidential election in his favor.

AFP contributed reporting.

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