

Trump and European Leaders Back Security Guarantees for Ukraine in White House Talks

By [Brawley Benson](#)

August 18, 2025



Zelensky arrives at the White House. **Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP**

In a high-stakes White House meeting on Monday, European leaders rallied behind U.S. President Donald Trump as he said Ukraine might receive security guarantees as part of a potential peace deal with Russia, a step they said would reshape the continent's security landscape and one that could put pressure on both Kyiv and Moscow to agree on terms for ending the war.

"President Putin agreed that Russia would accept security guarantees for Ukraine. And this is one of the key points that we need to consider, and we're going to be considering that at the table," Trump, who met with the Kremlin leader in Alaska late last week, said as he opened multilateral talks with European leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“I think the European nations are going to take a lot of the burden. We’re going to help them. And we’re going to make it very secure,” the American president continued, surrounded by EU Commission head Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, as well as the leaders of Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Finland.

Each of the participants in the hastily organized meeting praised Trump for his role in trying to mediate an end to the war in Ukraine, while also driving home the importance of security guarantees as the foundation of any settlement between Moscow and Kyiv.

“When we speak about security guarantees, we speak about the whole security of the European continent, and this is why we are all united here with Ukraine on this matter,” French President Emmanuel Macron said, adding that European countries are “lucid” about contributing their fair share to maintaining such guarantees.

After each leader delivered opening remarks, the talks continued behind closed doors. During that session, multiple news outlets reported that Trump paused the meeting to take a phone call with Putin. The Kremlin later [confirmed](#) the call, saying it lasted about 40 minutes, though it was not immediately clear whether the phone call took place in the middle or after the multilateral talks.

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Earlier on Monday, Zelensky, wearing a black suit jacket and dress shirt, was greeted at the White House by a smiling Trump, who pumped his fist in the air before shaking hands with the Ukrainian leader. Asked by reporters if he had anything to say ahead of the talks, Trump said: “We love them.”

Before the multilateral meeting with European leaders, Zelensky and Trump held one-on-one talks and spoke to the press in the Oval Office. During that sit-down, Trump threw cold water on one of Ukraine’s main demands — that current negotiations on ending the war should be focused on achieving an immediate ceasefire.

“I don’t think you need a ceasefire,” Trump told reporters. “I know that it might be good to have, but I can also understand, strategically, why one country or the other wouldn’t want it. You have a ceasefire, and they rebuild, and rebuild, and rebuild. And maybe they don’t want that.”

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Pursuing Peace. pic.twitter.com/lU5KfaYzyI

— The White House (@WhiteHouse) [August 18, 2025](#)

The talks between Trump, Zelensky and European officials come just days after the American

president held a short summit with Putin in Alaska, during which the Kremlin leader was said to have outlined his conditions for signing a peace deal with Ukraine.

While the exact details of those demands have not been made public, a flurry of reports over the weekend suggest they [hinge](#) on Kyiv ceding claim to the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, including territory not currently occupied by Russian forces.

Trump himself had [said](#) last week that “There’ll be some land swapping going on.” And on Sunday, he [urged](#) Ukraine to give up the annexed Crimean peninsula, as well as abandon its ambitions to join NATO, both key demands from Putin.

Ukraine has repeatedly rejected handing over its territory to Russia as a precondition for peace, but White House officials are likely hoping that new Russian concessions will nudge Kyiv toward some kind of settlement with Moscow.

Trump’s short-term goal now appears to be organizing a trilateral meeting between him, Putin and Zelensky, something both the U.S. and Ukrainian presidents have previously called for without any success. Absent any immediate concessions from Ukraine, Putin is likely to reject that kind of meeting again.

In the Oval Office on Monday, Trump said he was planning to call Putin immediately after the multilateral talks with Zelensky and European officials, adding that he would urge the leaders of Russia and Ukraine to hold a trilateral peace summit with the United States.

“If we don’t have a ‘trilat,’ then the fighting continues,” Trump told reporters. “I think if we have a ‘trilat’ there’s a good chance of maybe ending [the war].”

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In an interview with CNN on Sunday, U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff said that the United States and Russia had agreed on a security guarantee framework for Ukraine that would represent a major shift in Moscow’s acceptable conditions for ending the war.

“We got to an agreement that the United States and other European nations could effectively offer ‘Article 5-like language’ to cover a security guarantee,” Witkoff [said](#), referring to NATO’s collective defense clause.

Trump had briefed Zelensky on his meeting with Putin in an hour-long phone call aboard Air Force One after leaving the Alaska summit. Facing what is likely to be intense pressure to accede to Moscow’s demands, Zelensky met privately with European allies dubbed the “coalition of the willing” over the weekend to prepare for his meeting with Trump.

On Monday, Zelensky said that he was determined to achieve “a reliable and lasting peace for Ukraine and for the whole of Europe.”

“We understand that we shouldn't expect Putin to voluntarily abandon aggression and new attempts at conquest. That is why pressure must work,” he [wrote](#) in a post on X shortly before arriving at the White House. “Ukraine is ready for a real truce and for establishing a new security architecture. We need peace.”

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