The Moscow Times
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Ukraine Risks Losing Dignity or U.S. Support, Zelensky Says

By AFP

November 21, 2025



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. **president.gov.ua**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky vowed Friday that he would not "betray" his country as he publicly pushed back against a U.S. plan that would end the war on terms widely seen as favorable to Russia, even at the risk, he said, of alienating Washington.

In an address, Zelensky said he would present "arguments" and "alternatives" to the 28-point proposal drafted by the Trump administration, which stunned Kyiv and its European partners when details leaked earlier this week.

That draft plan, seen by AFP, would reportedly require Ukraine to cede territory, drastically reduce the size of its military, pledge never to join NATO and hold snap elections. Russia, meanwhile, would not only be allowed to keep the land its forces have seized but also receive sanctions relief and rejoin the G8.

Zelensky warned that Ukraine faced one of the "most difficult moments" in its history and was being pressed to choose between "the loss of dignity" or "the risk of losing a key partner." He recalled February 2022, saying: "We did not betray Ukraine then, and we will not do so now."

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Zelensky's office said he spoke with U.S. Vice President JD Vance on Friday and plans to speak directly with President Donald Trump in the coming days.

He also held an emergency call with the leaders of Britain, France and Germany, who have been largely shut out of the U.S.-driven process and have voiced unease about any settlement that cedes Ukrainian territory.

The Trump administration denied working on the plan with Russian officials, as several news outlets have reported, and the Kremlin said Friday that it had not yet received the new ceasefire proposal.

The White House defended the framework agreement as a "good plan" for both sides.

But some of Ukraine's European allies have pushed back. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Ukraine's military "must remain capable of defending itself," while Berlin stressed that the current front line, not the one envisioned in the U.S. draft, should be the basis for any future negotiations.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters during a daily briefing that Zelensky should "negotiate now" or risk losing more territory, adding that his "freedom to make decisions is shrinking in proportion to the territory lost" to Russian forces.

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