

Trump Says Ukraine Deal Closer But No Breakthrough in Talks

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Volodymyr Zelensky and Donald Trump ahead of their talks at Mar-a-Lago. **Jim Watson / AFP**

U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday that a deal was closer than ever to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine but reported no apparent breakthrough on the flashpoint issue of territory after new talks with the warring countries' leaders.

Trump, who had promised a peace deal on day one of his nearly year-old presidency, said it would become clear within weeks whether it was possible to end the war that has killed tens of thousands of people since February 2022.

In a pre-New Year's diplomatic sprint, Trump brought Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to Florida, where the two met with top aides over lunch, a day after Russia unleashed major new attacks on residential areas of the capital Kyiv.

Much like when Zelensky last met Trump in October, Russian President Vladimir Putin also

spoke shortly beforehand by telephone with the U.S. leader, who immediately insisted that Moscow was "serious" about peace despite the assault.

"I really believe we're, Mr. President, probably closer than — far closer than — ever before with both parties," Trump said with Zelensky at his side in the tea room of his Mar-a-Lago estate.

"Everybody wants it ended," Trump said.

After their talks, Zelensky and Trump spoke jointly by telephone with key European leaders, who have been particularly alarmed about any decisions that would embolden Russia.

Zelensky said that he and European leaders could return jointly for talks with Trump in Washington in January.

The Ukrainian president stayed studiously polite throughout his visit, mindful of his disastrous White House meeting on Feb. 28 where Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance publicly berated him for not being sufficiently grateful.

Territory impasse

Trump, for all his stated optimism, gave few details on the progress he cited, instead digressing into familiar grievances about his predecessor Joe Biden, who committed billions of dollars for Ukraine's defense, and speaking of his own friendly rapport with Putin.

Trump acknowledged continued disagreement between Kyiv and Moscow on territory. The current plan, revised after weeks of intense U.S.-Ukrainian negotiations, would stop the war at the current front lines in the eastern Donbas region and set up a demilitarized area, while Russia has long demanded territorial concessions.

"It's unresolved, but it's getting a lot closer. That's a very tough issue, but one that I think will get resolved," Trump said.

Embed:

Trump greets Zelenskyy at Mar-a-Lago and says, "I've settled 8 wars and this is the most difficult one. I thought it would be in the middle of the pack."

pic.twitter.com/ma9KTq9xp0

— Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) [December 28, 2025](#)

Trump offered to address the Ukrainian parliament to promote the plan — an idea, however unlikely, that Zelensky was quick to welcome.

Zelensky has voiced an openness to the revised U.S. plan, marking Kyiv's most explicit acknowledgement yet of possible territorial concessions, although Ukrainians voters would need to approve it in a referendum.

By contrast, Russia has shown no signs of compromise, as it sees hope in the grinding gains it has made over four years against tough Ukrainian defenses.

The Kremlin in its readout of talks between Putin and Trump called on Kyiv to make a "brave decision" and immediately withdraw troops from Donbas, casting European leaders as the impediment to peace.

"Russia and the United States share the same position which is that the Ukrainian and European proposal for a temporary ceasefire ... would only prolong the conflict and lead to a resumption of hostilities," the Kremlin's diplomatic adviser Yury Ushakov told reporters.

'90%' agreed by Ukraine

Trump's advisers have previously floated the idea of offering NATO-like security guarantees to Ukraine, meaning in theory that the alliance's members would respond militarily if Russia attacks again.

Zelensky said that the peace framework laid out by Trump was "90% agreed" and that "U.S.-Ukraine security guarantees: 100% agreed."

Zelensky said the two sides were still finalizing a "prosperity plan" for Ukraine as well as the sequencing of the various actions.

Russia had adamantly rejected any entrance of the former Soviet republic into NATO.

In its latest assault with drones and missiles, Russia knocked out power and heating to hundreds of thousands of residents during freezing temperatures.

"If the authorities in Kyiv don't want to settle this business peacefully, we'll resolve all the problems before us by military means," Putin said on Saturday.

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