



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 15, 2024

Report: Trump Floats Cutting Ukraine Funding to Force Peace Talks

Could a Trump presidency see a swift end to the drawn-out Ukraine conflict?

According to a report by [Bloomberg](#), Donald Trump has talked with his close associates about pressuring Ukraine to the negotiating table in order to bring about a speedy resolution to the war with Russia should he be elected in November.

Per the outlet, one of Trump's advisors said an idea that has been floated within the 45th president's circle is to threaten a massive cut of military assistance to Ukraine to cajole Kiev into negotiation, or to conversely promise them a massive hike in assistance in order to get Moscow to come around.



AP Images

The sources who spoke with Bloomberg emphasized that Trump has not talked about these matters with Russian officials, which would be illegal — federal law forbids private citizens from negotiating with foreign governments on the nation's behalf.

While Russian officials say they are willing to engage in talks with Ukraine, they also say they will only do so if Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky walks back his declaration refusing to negotiate with Russia's current government. Zelensky enacted the ban after four former regions of Ukraine held referendums resulting in an overwhelming vote — according to the Russian government — to become part of Russia.

Another aspect of what is presumed to be Trump's foreign policy involves the notion of a "two-tiered NATO alliance." This concept suggests that a shared defense clause would only be applied to nations that have met a specific defense-spending threshold, as reported by Bloomberg. This has sparked alarm among the Western establishment, who are painting the news as evidence that Trump wants to upend NATO.

As covered by [Politico](#):

Donald Trump on Wednesday night underscored his controversial position that the U.S. would not defend any NATO ally country that does not spend at least 2 percent of its gross domestic product on defense.

"I've been saying, 'Look, if they're not going to pay, we're not going to protect, okay? And Biden who said, 'Oh, this is so bad. This is so terrible that he would say that.' No," said Trump at a rally in South Carolina, adding that he looked at the defense budgets of each country and said "nobody's paying their bills."

Trump did not repeat the most eyebrow-raising part of his anecdote from over the weekend, that he would encourage Russia to "do whatever the hell they want" to a country that does



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not live up to its promise to spend on its defense budget.

Among Trump's detractors is Joe Biden, who reprimanded his election opponent, accusing Trump of "bow[ing] down to a Russian dictator."

Even Barack Obama reacted to the news, [writing on X](#) that "The last thing we need right now is a world that is more chaotic and less secure; where dictators feel emboldened and our allies wonder if they can count on us. Let's keep moving forward."

Trump has consistently criticized NATO and European nations that have fallen short of their obligations to allocate funds for defense and military budgets. However, NATO's Article 5 collective defense clause stipulates that in the event of an attack on any member state, it is deemed "an armed attack against all members," and NATO will take necessary actions to assist the ally that has been attacked.

Both over the weekend and at his Wednesday night rally, Trump argued that foreign aid to Ukraine should be made as a loan and not as a grant.

This idea is gaining support from some influential voices on Capitol Hill. For example, on Monday, the 45th president spoke about his idea with a group of senators that included Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who released a statement that read, "A loan on friendly terms allows America, who is deeply in debt, a chance to get our money back and changes the paradigm of how we help others. President Trump is right to insist that we think outside the box."

Another prominent South Carolinian, former Governor Nikki Haley — Trump's opponent in the GOP primary — lashed out at Trump for his remarks on NATO: When Donald Trump leaves the teleprompter, he is unhinged," she told CNN. "The idea that he would suggest to not defend our allies in NATO, but to go a step further and encourage Putin to invade our allies, the same that stood with us at 9/11? Is unthinkable."

But is Trump's insistence that America look after its own interests while defending other countries as outrageous as the establishment would have us believe? After all, government officials swear an oath to protect America — not other countries. If any protection is given to foreign nations, it should be because doing so defends America and its interests. The U.S. Treasury and military are not international charities.

It must also be noted that China is already doing what Trump is proposing America do — giving aid to other nations in the form of loans, not grants. This method has brought Beijing enormous influence on the world stage in recent decades.

If America is going to be assisting other countries, we might as well get something out of the deal.



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