



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on November 21, 2025

Does Trump's New Peace Plan in Ukraine Have a Chance?

Ukraine and Russia are mulling over a 28-point peace plan drafted by the Trump administration. The president's team has been working on the proposal, which reportedly favors Russian demands, behind the scenes.

The plan includes territorial concessions by the Ukrainians in return for some form of U.S. security guarantees. The view of the Trump administration is that Ukraine will lose territory anyway if the war keeps going, therefore it's in their interest to reach a deal sooner rather than later.



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Ukrainian head of state Volodymyr Zelensky issued a statement Thursday after meeting with U.S. Secretary of the Army Daniel Driscoll, referring to the plan as “the Americans’ vision” to end the war. He said Ukraine’s goal is lasting peace, one that will not be broken by a third invasion — a peace “with terms that respect our independence, our sovereignty, and the dignity of the Ukrainian people.” Zelensky added that they’ll “work on the proposals” and that he plans on talking with U.S. President Donald Trump soon.



Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський

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The American side presented points of a plan to end the war—their vision. I outlined our key principles. We agreed that our teams will work on the points to ensure it's all genuine.

We're geared up for clear and honest work—Ukraine, the U.S., our European and global partners.



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The Proposal

Axios published a [report](#) on Wednesday breaking the news about the proposal, which goes something like this:

The U.S. and other countries would recognize Crimea and the entire Donbas region as Russian territory—but Ukraine wouldn't be forced to. The Donbas is still about 14 percent under Ukrainian control, which means that Ukrainian forces would have to retreat from territory they currently hold. The plan would also make the part of the Donbas not controlled by Ukraine a demilitarized zone. Russia would not be allowed to put troops there, either.

In two other regions where there is intense fighting, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia (south of the Donbas), Russia would cede some land it has captured, while the lines would be frozen *close* to where they are now. Russia controls a majority of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. Some analysts believe the Russians have



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no appetite to retreat from any territory they've captured.

A Ukrainian official told Axios the plan also includes restrictions "on the size of the Ukrainian military and on its long-range weapons in return for U.S. security guarantees." This idea flies in the face of the postwar vision of some Ukrainian military commanders. Colonel Andriy Biletsky, a national hero and commander of Ukraine's 3rd Army Corps, [envisions](#) Ukraine as "a permanently militarized society, effectively becoming the army and the arsenal of Europe." Biletsky commands a lot of respect in Ukraine, and he's mulling over a career in politics.

Russia's Take on the Plan

[According](#) to Russian media, the proposal bars foreign troops from Ukraine. The plan also blocks any chance of Ukraine joining NATO, [according](#) to The Associated Press. The Russians have complained for decades about NATO's eastward expansion. They cited Ukraine's attempt to join the alliance as a primary reason for their 2022 invasion, and consider NATO an enemy alliance. Russian media recently [reiterated](#) that "any lasting settlement must address fundamental security demands, including that Ukraine maintain neutrality [and] stay out of NATO and other military blocs...."

Russian media also [say](#) the plan includes recognizing Russian as an official language in Ukraine. Most Ukrainians, up to 80 percent, speak Russian fluently; 20 percent of them consider it their first language. In May, Ukraine's language ombudsman announced that most public schools eliminated Russian language instruction. This component of the plan, should it be implemented, would likely reverse that.

Other reports say the proposal includes lifting sanctions against Russia and granting official status to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Ukrainian government has arrested several Orthodox priests since 2022 for allegedly siding with Russia.

Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev told Axios that, in addition to striking peace, the plan also includes a path to restoring U.S.-Russian ties.

Ukraine Not On Board

President Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff has been the point man talking to Russian, Ukrainian, and even Turkish and Qatari officials, who are all working on this deal. Zelensky met with the Turkish president on Wednesday.

Even before Zelensky issued his carefully worded statement on Thursday, Ukraine was, reportedly, not fond of the this plan. [According](#) to Ukrainian media citing Western sources, "Officials in Kyiv familiar with the plan said it fully complies with the Kremlin's maximalist demands, adding that without significant changes it will not be implemented in Ukraine."

But, as the Trump administration pointed out, Ukraine has already lost territory. Barring outside intervention, it has no chance of gaining it back, given its many challenges. Ukraine is being bombarded daily, taking heavy losses, and faces manpower shortages, whereas the Russians do not. Ukraine's manpower problem is so bad even pregnant [women are serving](#) in the military.

Scandal in Ukraine

All this is happening alongside a massive war-profiteering kickback scandal in Kyiv. ABC News [reported](#):



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Investigators raided the homes of top officials and a former business partner of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as part of an investigation into an alleged sprawling corruption scheme in the country's energy sector.

Ukraine's anti-corruption agencies uncovered a "high-level" scheme at state nuclear energy company Energoatom. According to reports, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) has proof that the scheme elicited \$100 million in kickbacks. NABU said it arrested five people and was looking at another seven, including "a businessman who is the head of the criminal organization," "a former advisor to the minister of energy," and "a former deputy prime minister."

A main individual at the center of this scandal is a former business partner and associate of Zelensky's, Tymur Mindich, who co-owned Kvartal 95, the production company owned by Zelensky when he was an actor. "There is now enough evidence that the illegal cash was used to build luxury country houses — including for Mindich's family and Deputy Prime Minister [Oleksii] Chernyshov," ABC News reported. Even before this, Mindich faced allegations that he exploited his connections to Zelensky. The FBI is also investigating him, according to reports.

The agencies that uncovered this scandal are the same ones that were at the center of the massive protests that [erupted in July](#), when Zelensky announced moves to essentially take control over NABU and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office. Ukrainians became outraged and took to the streets to protest. Even the Eurocrats criticized the move, prompting Zelensky to backtrack days later. Along with Russia, Ukraine has been consistently among the top five most-corrupt nations in Europe. You can read our report on that [here](#).

An obvious question is whether Zelensky knew of the kickback schemes and wanted to prevent his associates from getting caught. It's also likely the Americans knew what was happening, raising the question of whether the U.S. is using that to pressure him to agree to this plan.

Severe Manpower Problems

And, as if pilfering your own people while losing a war is not enough, Ukraine's manpower has only been getting worse. As former CIA analyst Larry C. Johnson [points out](#):

Russia is inflicting an average of 1,335 casualties a day on the Ukrainian forces, which translates into 456,695 losses in 2025 as of November 17. That is almost 40,000 per month. Add to that an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 desertions each month.... That means Ukraine must recruit a minimum of 60,000 new conscripts each month just to maintain its current troop strength. That ain't happening.

Essentially, Ukraine is operating at 50-percent manpower. The problem is so serious that, astoundingly and as mentioned above, [even pregnant women are serving in Ukraine's military](#).

Ukraine Hopes for European Backup

Nevertheless, despite all these problems, Ukraine is still resisting a deal. Its leaders refuse to accept that, as Trump said early this year, they don't have the cards. What gives?

For one thing, the Ukrainians likely harbor hope that they'll get some backup. They continue to suggest that they're holding back the Russians from invading the rest of Europe, a rather preposterous notion.



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They would obviously love for the Americans to send them long-range Tomahawk missiles and soldiers, but they think they have a better chance of drawing in the Europeans. Zelensky travels around Europe regularly, soliciting money, weapons, and perhaps more.

Whenever Russian hardware veers off into the airspace of a NATO member nation, Zelensky immediately issues subtle collective calls to action. This is what happened when Poland and Romania went on high alert Thursday, after a Russian drone that was part of the bombardment on Ternopil reportedly swerved five miles into Romanian airspace. "Every brazen attack against normal life indicates that the pressure on Russia is insufficient," Zelensky said in a post on Telegram. "Russia must be held accountable for its actions, and we must focus on everything that strengthens us and allows us to shoot down Russian missiles, neutralize Russian drones and stop assaults."

Ukraine also continues to call for more sanctions, hoping that will eventually result in the weakening of the Russian army. The Trump administration recently leveled sanctions against Russia's two biggest oil and gas companies, Rosneft Oil Company and Lukoil OAO, intending to cripple its ability to pay for the war. [Reports suggest](#) this has already led to a fall in the price of Russian crude oil.

Pressure From Within

Another reason Zelensky may be reluctant to acquiesce is pressure from within. Even if a ceasefire is signed, "it is far from clear" that Ukraine's army will lay down their arms, Anatoly Grablevsky pointed out in *The Spectator*. Ukraine's strongest formations are led by neo-Nazi absolutists Denys Prokopenko and Biletsky, mentioned earlier, who have become very popular since 2022. Grablevsky [added](#):

There's a reason Zelensky is so resistant to signing an armistice, especially one involving territorial losses. In promoting such men as Prokopenko and Biletsky, the President has potentially created a monster. ... If a ceasefire is signed, it is far from clear whether Prokopenko and Biletsky, who believe in victory at any cost, will lay down their arms. Between them, they command tens of thousands of Ukraine's best troops. Well-equipped, well-trained and ideologically motivated, these units have the potential to be Ukraine's very own Freikorps, and Prokopenko and Biletsky may well lead their own Kapp Putsch or march on Kyiv in the event of an American-mediated diktat.

Some hardliners have even said that if Zelensky were to concede any territory, he would end up dead. Serhii Sternenko of the political coalition Right Sector [said](#), "If ... Zelensky were to give any unconquered land away, he would be a corpse — politically, and then for real. It would be a bomb under our sovereignty. People would never accept it."

Sternenko said in a YouTube video published Friday that the Trump administration's plan has no chance. "None of this will happen," he [said](#). "Ukraine will not agree to this version, which is currently published, and the so-called Russian Federation will not agree to anything at all, not even the end of the Russian-Ukrainian war, or even a ceasefire. Therefore, all this has nothing to do with reality now." He then urged viewers to donate to the Ukrainian army.



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