



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on August 8, 2025

US & Russia Negotiating Deal to Surrender Ukrainian Territory: Report

Now that former Cold War rivals Russia and the United States have stopped lobbing threats at each other, they're back to wrangling over a deal to end the war in Ukraine. A recent report suggests the working deal would cede Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory to Moscow.

The word is that U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, may meet as early as next week. Ideas for an in-person venue are being kicked around. Some reports say Trump has suggested Italy, while Putin has proposed the United Arab Emirates. Since the International Criminal Court (ICC) has an arrest warrant out for Putin, the Italian government would supposedly be compelled to arrest him, which would make for an interesting scenario. The world would learn if anyone takes the ICC seriously.



Ruma Aktar/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has offered to host the two leaders as well, [according](#) to Russian state-controlled media. Belarus is considered one of Russia's closest allies and perceived in the West as an unofficial vassal state. During the Soviet era, the country was officially a Soviet republic.

An "Acceptable Offer"

All this news follows a visit between a trusted Trump aide and Putin. Russian media organ RT [reported](#) Thursday that the U.S. has made an "acceptable offer." This was based on a statement from Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov following a visit by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff to Moscow. Ushakov gave no further details on the terms of this potentially acceptable offer. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "We still have a ways to go, but we're certainly closer [to peace] today than we were yesterday — when we weren't close at all."

A [Bloomberg article](#) suggests the deal Washington and Moscow are ironing out allows Russia to keep the Ukrainian territory it has ground out over the last three years, in addition to Crimea:

Putin is demanding that Ukraine cede its entire eastern Donbas area to Russia as well as Crimea, which his forces illegally annexed in 2014. That would require Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to order a withdrawal of troops from parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions still held by Kyiv. ... Russia would halt its offensive in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine along the current battlelines.



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The Bloomberg article cites “people familiar with the matter,” and several international outlets have cited the article. Russia’s demands have consistently included Crimea, which it has controlled since 2014, as well as the entire eastern border region now under Kremlin control.

The other essential demand is that Ukraine scrap all dreams of becoming a member of NATO. After the 2014 Maidan Revolution, the government makeup of Ukraine changed significantly. One of the most notable shifts was that it became very pro-Western and made European Union and NATO membership a strategic goal. The Russians have made clear that Ukrainian membership in NATO is a nonstarter. Russia has cited it as the primary reason for its invasion.

Support Needed

The Americans are trying to create support among Ukraine and its European allies for this deal, “which is far from certain,” according to Bloomberg. Ukraine has so far refused to accept even the loss of Crimea.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk made some interesting comments on Friday after talking to Zelensky. [According](#) to reports, Tusk said, “There are certain signals, and we also have an intuition, that perhaps a freeze in the conflict — I don’t want to say the end, but a freeze in the conflict — is closer than it is further away. There are hopes for this.”

When asked if Putin needed to meet with Zelensky before meeting with him, Trump said no. As for Putin, he said he wasn’t completely opposed to meeting with Zelensky, but with the caveat that “certain conditions need to be created” for that to happen. This could be a Putin-esque way of saying that he won’t meet with his nemesis. The loathing between these two neighbors is intense.

The Tariff Angle

Should it happen, the meeting between the American and Russian heads would come about after the U.S. just doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 percent over India’s refusal to acquiesce to U.S. demands that it stop buying Russian oil. Trump signed an [executive order](#) triggering the tariff on Wednesday. White House trade advisor Peter Navarro was asked about this shortly afterward during a press conference, and said:

This was a pure national security issue associated with India’s abject refusal to stop buying Russian oil. ... India ... has the highest tariffs in the world charged on American products, and it has high non-tariff barriers. So we can’t get our products in. We send a lot of dollars overseas to India to buy their products in an unfair trade environment. India then uses American dollars to buy Russian oil. Russia then uses those American dollars that come from India to finance its armaments to kill Ukrainians. And then American taxpayers are then called upon to pay for the weapons that have to defend Ukraine against Russian armaments paid for by American dollars that came from India. That’s gotta stop. That math doesn’t work.

The reporter asked why Russia’s largest energy importer, China, wasn’t getting hit with new tariffs. Navarro said:

As the boss says, “let’s see what happens.” Keep in mind we have over 50-percent tariffs on China already.... We don’t want to get to a point where we actually hurt ourselves.



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White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro on Trump raising tariffs on India: "This was a pure national security issue associated with India's abject refusal to stop buying Russian oil." pic.twitter.com/5ncMDkHGpy

— CSPAN (@cspan) [August 6, 2025](#)

Back in mid-July, Trump threatened to level 100-percent tariffs against countries doing business with Russia as part of his frustrated effort to get the Kremlin to agree to a peace deal. At first, he gave Russia [50 days](#) to agree, but after a few days he reduced the deadline to "10 or 12" days. That deadline has passed.

Ukrainians Ready for the War to End

All this is happening as a new Gallup poll reveals what has likely been true for a long time: Ukrainians overwhelmingly want the war to end — now.

"More than three years into the war, Ukrainians' support for continuing to fight until victory has hit a new low," Gallup [reported](#) Thursday. The poll found that 69 percent of Ukrainians "favor a negotiated end to the war as soon as possible, compared with 24% who support continuing to fight until victory." This is the prevailing sentiment among "all segments of the Ukrainian population, regardless of region or demographic group." It is also completely the opposite of Ukrainians' views in 2022, "when 73% favored Ukraine fighting until victory."

At the same time, Ukrainians have soured on U.S. leadership. Whereas 66 percent approved in 2022, only 16 percent approve of U.S. leadership now, the poll says. The obvious difference is that in 2022 and throughout the entire Biden reign, the U.S. was doling out billions of dollars and piles of weapons to Ukraine with no strings attached and no attempt to engage with Russia to end the war. Trump changed most of that. The U.S. stopped handing out money, started charging Europe for the weapons, and began talking with Russia.

The poll doesn't provide any insights into *why* Ukrainians want to end the war, but it's not difficult to ascertain. As Owen Matthews summarized in a July 24 piece for [The Spectator](#):

Ukraine is running out of fighting men, its frontline soldiers are exhausted and US military support has narrowed to focus on air defense. The Kyiv government is racked by corruption scandals and purges, public faith in their future and in their leaders is tanking and pressure to make peace at almost any price is growing. In many ways the most remarkable thing about the conflict is that Ukraine still fights on despite the merciless and titanic punishment that Russia has meted out on its soldiers, civilians and infrastructure.

A former Zelensky official told Matthews, "If the war continues soon there will be no Ukraine left to fight for."

Is there finally enough pressure in Ukraine on the Zelensky government to take what it can get?



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