

EXCLUSIVE

WAR IN UKRAINE

Trump wants to see more than just a minerals deal to restart aid and intel to Ukraine

U.S. and Ukrainian officials are set to meet in Saudi Arabia this week, with Trump focused on Zelensky's willingness to make concessions in negotiations.



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By Courtney Kube, Kristen Welker and Carol E. Lee

WASHINGTON – As U.S. and Ukrainian officials prepare to meet in Saudi Arabia this week,

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Trump wants the deal, which would give the United States a stake in [Ukraine's mineral resources](#), signed. But he also wants to see a change in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's attitude toward peace talks, the officials said, including a willingness to make concessions such as giving up territory to Russia. Trump also wants Zelenskyy to make some movement toward elections in Ukraine and possibly toward stepping down as his country's leader, the officials said.

Elections in Ukraine have been paused under the country's constitutional provision for martial law, which has been in effect since Russia invaded in 2022.

"As President Trump demonstrated by reading President Zelenskyy's message at the joint session, the Ukrainians have made positive movement. With meetings in Saudi this coming week, we look forward to hearing more positive movement that will hopefully ultimately end this brutal war and bloodshed," White House National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said when asked about Trump's requirements.

Trump defends handling of Russia-Ukraine war in speech to Congress

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Russia has [stepped up attacks on Ukraine](#) in the aftermath of the U.S. pause in equipment and intelligence sharing this week, making Friday one of the deadliest days for civilians this year, according to the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Most of the casualties occurred in the Donetsk region, in territory controlled by Ukraine. Casualty numbers have been higher so far in 2025 than in 2024, the monitoring agency said.

The U.S. does not have any indication that the pause in intelligence sharing had a direct impact on the Russian attacks, according to the U.S. official and the administration official. They said these large attacks were likely planned before the intelligence and aid stopped.

Congressional Republicans are applying pressure on the White House to restart both aid and intelligence, and the two officials said they are optimistic the flow of weapons and equipment and sharing of intelligence could be restored as early as next week, especially after Zelenskyy said that Ukraine is “ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible.” The Ukrainian president also said he and his team “stand ready to work under President Trump’s strong leadership to get a peace that lasts.”

The officials said the U.S. is still sharing defensive intelligence with Ukraine – that is, information that helps Ukraine’s self-defense against attacks – explaining that they still have a duty to warn. But they are not providing targeting information against Russian targets. That means the U.S. can warn Ukraine when intelligence shows that Russians are preparing an attack, but they can no longer provide the targeting coordinates for Ukraine to strike first.

The U.S. has provided Ukraine with targeting information, satellite imagery and signals intelligence for most of the past three years. European allies are now working to bridge some of the gaps, but the lack of U.S. intelligence is already having an impact on Ukraine every day, according to a Western official.

“Every day hurts Ukraine, and every day gives Russia a more favorable position,” the official said.



Courtney Kube

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