

EU denounces Trump-Putin talks in Alaska over Ukraine

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Since Trump suddenly announced Friday that he would meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska for peace talks on the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine, European media have denounced the talks as European officials called for a continuing hard line against Russia.

European media are unrelentingly hostile to any talk of peace in Ukraine. This has “set off alarm bells in Ukraine and across Europe,” the *Financial Times* of London wrote, while *Le Monde* in Paris denounced it as “a trap.” Germany’s *Der Spiegel* raised the decisive question, writing, “In European capitals, people are now asking themselves: Can the impatient Trump still be persuaded not to neglect European interests?”

For now, however, the European governments are debating how to pursue their interests in Ukraine in response to Trump’s latest policy shift. Last year, French President Emmanuel Macron called for escalating social cuts to finance the deployment of French ground troops to Ukraine. This year, after Britain and France formed a “coalition of the willing” of European states ready supposedly to fight Russia in Ukraine without US help, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz urged sending his Taurus missiles to Ukraine for long-range bombings across Russia.

Since Trump’s latest announcement, European officials are hypocritically talking of peace and trans-Atlantic unity. After an informal videoconference of European Union (EU) foreign ministers yesterday evening, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas issued a brief statement, declaring:

On Ukraine, transatlantic unity, support to Ukraine and pressure on Russia is how we will end this war and prevent future Russian aggression in Europe. EU Foreign Ministers expressed support for US steps that will lead to a just peace.

Meanwhile, we work on more sanctions against Russia, more military support for Ukraine and more support for Ukraine’s budgetary needs and accession process to join the EU.

Kallas’ proposals echo those of powerful factions of the American ruling class for a temporary truce in Ukraine, to free up money and resources for other wars and more effectively prepare Ukraine as a military base for further action against Russia. Demands for such a hard-line policy come not only from the Democratic Party, which under Trump’s predecessor Biden led the war with Russia, but also from far-right Republicans, such as Senator Lindsey Graham.

Trump, Graham claimed on Sunday, “is going to go to meet Putin from a position of strength, that he’s going to look out for Europe and Ukrainian needs to end this war honorably.” Graham called, however, to keep arming the Ukrainian army, so that “Russia will be deterred by the most lethal army on the continent of Europe.” He also called for stationing NATO troops in Ukraine “as trip wires,” so that any future conflict in Ukraine would rapidly provoke total war between NATO and Russia.

These remarks reveal first of all the bankruptcy of the talks between the reactionary US and Russian presidents, which will resolve nothing. As Trump and Putin prepare to meet, NATO and Russia are teetering on the verge of a military escalation—a point underscored by US General Chris Donahue’s threat last month to conquer Russia’s Kaliningrad region. Even if Trump and Putin were to sign a shaky truce, the NATO imperialist powers would use it as an occasion to rearm for the next great-power war, in Ukraine or elsewhere.

As for the EU, it functions as a militarist cabal, desperate to rearm and flex its military muscle despite the opposition to war with Russia of the overwhelming

majority of Europe's population.

The EU powers' walking back of their promises to reconquer all Ukrainian territory held by the Kremlin exposes the lies they told to justify the war. They demanded European workers sacrifice hundreds of billions of euros for rearmament and risk total war with Russia, in the name of an uncompromising moral struggle for Ukrainian freedom.

In reality, they set out to plunder Ukraine. Unable to wage great-power wars independently of Washington until their rearmament has progressed further, they intervened in Ukraine via the problematic NATO "alliance" with Washington, which at each step threatens to collapse. They backed the corrupt, far-right regime of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who canceled elections and has ruled as a dictator based on repression by far-right intelligence and police services.

This has produced a disaster. Mass opposition to the war is growing in Ukraine, as casualties there continue to mount by the hundreds of thousands. Today, polls show over 65 percent of Ukrainians support a rapid peace with Russia to end the bloodshed, and mass protests have broken out across Ukraine against Zelensky's cancellation of corruption investigations targeting his own officials.

Moreover, even after the EU poured hundreds of billions of dollars into arming the Zelensky regime, it has failed to secure the critical economic and strategic interests driving NATO's intervention in Ukraine. Unfortunately for EU imperialist interests, these targets lay primarily in Russian-speaking areas of Ukraine that were taken by the Kremlin. Today, the naval base at Sevastopol in the Crimea and the main reserves of rare earth elements and other mining resources in the Donbas remain in Russian hands.

Washington-EU "unity" in Ukraine resembles the "unity" between a lion and a pack of hyenas, who have both come upon the same prey. Amid the rising global trade war unleashed by Washington, they are competing to plunder as much as they possibly can; this underlies *Der Spiegel's* concern that Trump might "neglect European interests" in Ukraine.

Both Washington and the EU powers slashed pensions, medical care and other key social programs in order to devote hundreds of billions of dollars to the war. While the EU claims to have spent at least \$212 billion on Ukraine since the NATO-Russia war began in 2022, Washington claims it has spent at least \$175 billion. As Ukraine's population is bled white and Ukraine's NATO

puppet regime goes down to defeat, Washington and the EU aim to grab as much as they can from Ukraine.

Trump has strong-armed Zelensky into giving Washington preferential access to Ukrainian mining revenues and demanded that it pay the United States \$500 billion as repayment for US wartime aid. This would, firstly, lock what is left of Ukraine into a debt trap. It has also caused consternation among the European imperialist powers. This is not because they are concerned with Ukraine's well-being but because it cuts across their own plans to exploit Ukraine's mineral resources.

As the US and major European governments plan tens or hundreds of billions in austerity measures targeting the working class and protests mount in Ukraine, conditions are emerging to build an international movement against imperialist war in the working class. This is the only way to prevent a further escalation of the war—either in Ukraine or, should a truce be established there, against another target of US or European imperialism, such as China, Iran or other powers they deem too close to Russia elsewhere in the world.

This depends on building the Trotskyist movement in the international working class. Over 30 years later, Stalinism's dissolution of the Soviet Union and its restoration of capitalism across Eastern Europe has ended in disaster. While the reactionary Russian and Ukrainian capitalist regimes sank into a fratricidal war incited by imperialism, Eastern Europe has been incorporated into the EU as an impoverished staging ground for NATO imperialist war.

Defending fundamental social and democratic rights and averting even more catastrophic wars depends on arming workers across Europe and internationally with a perspective to take power out of the hands of the capitalist oligarchy, end capitalist exploitation and build a socialist society.



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