

European leaders accuse US of “betrayal” over Ukraine

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It remains unclear what the outcome of the new US initiative to end the war in Ukraine will be. Negotiations are currently underway in various locations with different participants.

In Geneva, representatives from the US, Ukraine, and the European powers are haggling over a revision of the 28 points presented by Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Putin's confidant Kirill Dmitriev, under the supervision of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Ukraine is represented in Geneva by President Volodymyr Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak and the secretary of the National Security Council Rustem Umierov. Witkoff himself, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and Army Secretary Dan Driscoll were also in Geneva for a time.

Driscoll, 39, a college friend and confidant of Vice President JD Vance, is considered a rising star in the US Department of War and is playing a central role in US policy toward Ukraine. In Kiev, he demanded the acceptance of the 28-point plan with the words, “We are not negotiating details,” and, “We need to get this shit done.” According to the *Financial Times*, he has been holding secret talks with a Russian and a Ukrainian delegation in Abu Dhabi since Monday.

A visit by Ukrainian President Zelensky to the White House at the end of the week is also under discussion, during which an agreement could be signed.

Meanwhile, leading European heads of state and government are trying to prevent an agreement. They were surprised by the Witkoff-Dmitriev paper at the G20 summit in South Africa, which was boycotted by the US, and have since been working hard to dissuade Trump. They have presented their own plan, which is unacceptable to Russia, and German Chancellor Merz has spoken to Trump on the phone.

But what they succeeded in doing after Zelensky's expulsion from the White House in February and the Trump-Putin summit in Alaska in August, namely preventing an agreement, could fail this time around.

Ukraine has been bled dry. The army has lost hundreds of

thousands of soldiers and, due to mass desertions, can no longer recruit the necessary reinforcements. It also relies on intelligence, weapons, and ammunition from the US, the cessation of which would massively exacerbate the crisis on the front lines. Since the beginning of the war, the population has shrunk by about 10 million due to mass emigration, low birth rates, and war deaths, and Zelensky's popularity is at rock bottom. The latest corruption scandal has made it clear to everyone that his government is no less corrupt than its predecessors.

Zelensky may therefore feel compelled to sign an agreement that grants Russia virtually everything it demanded before the war began. Among other things, the 28-point plan stipulates that Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk become Russian, and that the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions remain under Russian military control. NATO membership and the stationing of NATO troops in Ukraine will be ruled out forever, and the Ukrainian army will be limited to a maximum of 600,000 troops. Further expansion of NATO will also be ruled out.

The proposal does include security guarantees from the US for Ukraine. However, the US is demanding “compensation” in return. The security guarantees will lapse if Ukraine attacks Russian territory or fires missiles toward Russia.

The US is also securing financial advantages. For example, \$100 billion from frozen Russian assets is to flow into a US-led reconstruction fund for Ukraine, to which the European powers will contribute another \$100 billion from its own sources. Fifty percent of the profits from this reconstruction fund will go to the US. The remaining portion of the frozen funds will be jointly managed by the US and Russia in an investment fund.

Negotiators for the European powers, blindsided by developments, have so far focused on amending these demands, especially on limits to the size of the Ukraine army and on the US use of seized Russian assets. Framed mostly in terms of friendly criticism designed to prevent a total US withdrawal of support, they include calls for the US to extend security guarantees to Ukraine rather than directly

opposing Trump's proposed provisions preventing European troops being stationed in Ukraine post war.

Though it is not yet clear whether an agreement will be reached or whether the war will drag on, one thing is certain: even an agreement would only be another step on the road to World War III. It would not lay the foundation for lasting peace, but would cement lines of conflict over the heads of the Ukrainian and Russian populations that could be reignited at any time.

Real peace can only be achieved through the independent intervention of the European, American, Ukrainian, and Russian working class, uniting and putting a stop to the warmongers.

Europe intensifies rearmament

The European powers in particular have made it clear that they will redouble their rearmament and war efforts if an agreement is reached between Russia and Ukraine.

Under the false pretext of defending "Western values," they have dragged Europe deeper and deeper into a war that has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers, swallowed up billions of euros, and raised the spectre of a Europe-wide escalation. Their goal was to control Ukraine with its valuable natural resources and to destroy Russia. They have also used the war as a pretext to rearm on a scale not seen since World War II.

Now they have been left empty-handed. They could have had a deal more favourable to their interests than the one the US is now seeking three years ago without the war. They feel betrayed. For years, they worked with the US to expand NATO eastward. In 2014, they collaborated with Washington to organise the overthrow of the then Ukrainian president, turned the country into a military outpost of NATO, provoking Russia's reactionary invasion, and largely severed economic ties with Russia, especially the import of cheap natural gas. But now the US is set on making a deal with Putin at Europe's expense and securing most of the Ukrainian spoils.

Europe's powers are responding by accelerating their military buildup in order to pursue their global economic and political interests independently of the US and, if necessary, against it. This is devouring enormous sums of money that can only be raised through a frontal attack on the working class and dictatorial forms of rule.

Most European commentary on Trump's Ukraine deal has been along these lines. Norbert Röttgen, the German Christian Democratic Union's foreign policy expert, who

was previously considered a staunch transatlanticist, has expressed this particularly clearly.

In an interview with *Die Zeit*, Röttgen explained that the US's actions are beyond his imagination. They would "side with Putin and sell out both Ukraine's sovereignty and Europe's security." The previous assumption of a transatlantic alliance with the US was no longer compatible with this, he said.

Röttgen spoke of a second new epoch: "The first new epoch was Russia's return to war in Europe. The second new epoch is the US's decision to side with the warmongering dictator on issues of European security."

He concluded that Europe must fundamentally reorient itself, stating, "In Europe, we must develop our own strength even more quickly, substantially, and decisively with those who are able and willing to do so. In all areas, in our economic and military capabilities. And we must now reduce our dependencies, especially in terms of security policy, much more quickly, including those on the US."

Security guarantees from the US cannot be relied upon, he continued. Ukraine must be "armed like a porcupine, giving it a deterrence so that any further attack seems hopeless for Russia," Röttgen emphasised, going on to advocate the delivery of German Taurus missiles to the country.

In an interview with RTL in Johannesburg, French President Macron insisted on the immediate deployment of French, British, and Turkish troops in Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire—which Russia categorically rejects. He ranted about the threat to Europe posed by Russian cyberattacks, attacks on hospitals, and manipulated news. He even blamed Russia for anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim attacks in France.

Macron called for a strengthening of the "pact between the nation and the army" and announced the strengthening of the military reserve and the reintroduction of a new form of national service. Conscription was abolished in France in 1997. The head of the French army, General Mandon, previously announced that France must prepare itself once again to "lose its children"—triggering a national outcry.

Europe is responding to Trump's rise in the US by "Trumpising" its own policies. This underscores that the slide into militarism and dictatorship is not an individual phenomenon, but the ruling class's response to the hopeless crisis of capitalism. Only the overthrow of capitalism by the international working class can stop this madness.



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