

Trump's Ukraine plan destroys alliance with Europe

Peter Schwarz
4 December 2025

Until a few years ago, the US and European powers worked closely together to encircle Russia and bring Eastern Europe and large parts of the former Soviet Union under their control.

Between 1999 and 2004, NATO swallowed up all former members of the Warsaw Pact, as well as the former Baltic Soviet republics. This was followed by the successor states of Yugoslavia and “partnerships” with the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. In 2014, the US and Europe jointly organised a coup in Kiev to bring Ukraine under their influence, thereby provoking the current war.

But now the axis of conflict is shifting. The rivalry between the US and Europe is increasingly coming to the fore. The robbers are fighting over the spoils. Trump's effort to strike a deal with Putin over the heads of the Europeans and Ukraine is meeting with bitter hostility in European capitals.

“The Europeans now are paying the price for not having invested in military capabilities over the last years,” explains Claudia Major of the German Marshall Fund, an authoritative voice on European foreign policy. “The Europeans are not at the table, because, to quote Trump, they don't have the cards.”

The European powers are doing everything they can to sabotage Trump's plans for Ukraine. So far, with some success. The five-hour meeting between Trump's emissary Steve Witkoff and Putin, which took place in Moscow on Tuesday, produced no results. The European powers changed Witkoff's original 28-point plan in tough negotiations to such an extent that it is unacceptable to Moscow.

But, in Major's words, they lack “the cards” to continue the war without US support. The US is scaling back its funding for Ukraine and making Europe pay for weapons deliveries. The Zelensky regime, on which the Europeans rely, is sinking into a swamp of corruption scandals and, due to growing opposition to the war, is increasingly unable to recruit the necessary cannon fodder.

General Freuding, the new head of the German army, who was previously responsible for coordinating aid to Ukraine, complained in *The Atlantic* that communication with the American military had completely broken down. He said he used to be able to contact them “day and night.” “You have an enemy knocking at your door and at the same time you are losing a good friend,” he said. By enemy, he meant Russia, and by friend, he meant the US.

The unexplained absence of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio from yesterday's long-planned NATO meeting in Brussels is also an expression of the growing tensions between Europe and the US. In an effort to strengthen Ukraine militarily and appease the US, the foreign ministers there decided to increase military aid to Ukraine and to purchase at least \$1 billion worth of US-made military equipment for Ukraine each month.

The transatlantic conflict has intensified, particularly during Donald Trump's second term as president. Trump and many Republicans have long considered the confrontation with Russia to be the wrong war and want to focus American military power even more strongly than before on China.

But the tensions within NATO have even more fundamental causes. The alliance between the US and Europe, the two largest imperialist power blocs, has always been a historical anomaly. First, it was forged by the Cold War against the Soviet Union, and after the latter's dissolution, it was based on joint expansion into Eastern Europe.

Now, the global crisis of capitalism and the accompanying bitter struggle for raw materials, markets and profits are tearing apart the alliance between the two largest imperialist power blocs, which together account for 45 percent of global economic output. Trump's punitive tariffs against the EU are another expression of this development.

Thirty years ago, American geostrategist Zbigniew Brzezinski explained in his bestseller *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* that maintaining American world domination

depended on preventing the emergence of an economically equal power in Europe and Asia. This referred not only to China and Japan but also to Germany and the European Union.

With his Ukraine plan, Trump has destroyed the myth that this war was ever about freedom, democracy, international law or other noble values. He links an end to the war so openly with economic blackmail and the business interests of his own family clan that even in the corruption-rich history of capitalism, it is difficult to find a comparable precedent.

Trump is not interested in peace. Even if the war in Ukraine were to end, it would only be the prelude to a new round in the violent struggle for the imperialist redivision of the world. Venezuela is already in the crosshairs of the US military, and China is being systematically encircled.

The *Wall Street Journal*, which criticises Trump's Ukraine policy from a right-wing perspective, has published a detailed article entitled "Make Money Not War: Trump's Real Plan for Peace in Ukraine" about the profitable plans that Trump's business friend and chief negotiator Steve Witkoff and his Russian counterpart Kirill Dmitriev have been discussing for months. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who has already raked in billions for his companies as a "peace negotiator" in the Middle East, is also involved.

The plans range from joint extraction of gas, oil and rare earths in the Arctic to the use of \$300 billion in frozen Russian central bank funds for US-Russian investment projects, the return of ExxonMobil and other US corporations to Russia, and the recommissioning of the damaged Nord Stream Baltic Sea pipeline and its sale to Stephen P. Lynch, an investor close to Trump.

Germany, which only gave up purchasing inexpensive Russian natural gas after the pipeline was blown up by saboteurs, could then buy Russian natural gas again—at a hefty markup to a US middleman. No wonder European stakeholders are up in arms. The only reason they are not doing so more vocally is because they have "no cards to play" and do not want to further provoke Trump.

The proposed deal also sheds light on the class character of Putin's regime. The representative of the Russian oligarchs, who owe their wealth to the plundering of the Soviet Union's social property, is sitting on a social powder keg and can only hold onto power through desperate manoeuvres. His pandering to Trump, the gangster and wannabe dictator in the White House, is like a pact with the devil that will inevitably backfire on Russia.

Putin's chief negotiator, Kirill Dmitriev, is the prototype of the ruthless oligarch who makes money from war and conflict and changes sides when necessary. Born in Kiev in

1975, the investment banker has a personal connection to the Russian president through a close family friendship with Putin's daughter, Katerina Tikhonova.

Dmitriev went to the US as a student, studied economics at Stanford and Harvard and then worked for Goldman Sachs and McKinsey. In 2000, he returned to Russia and worked for a long time for Ukrainian oligarch Viktor Pinchuk, the second richest man in the country, who became the most important financier of the anti-Russian Orange Revolution and the Maidan movement. Pinchuk also had close ties to oligarch Igor Kolomoysky, the patron of current President Zelensky. Dmitriev owes his current position as head of the Russian state investment fund RDIF to Pinchuk's recommendation in 2011.

The European powers feel cheated by Trump and are therefore angry with him. They have invested €178 billion in the war in Ukraine to control the country and subjugate Russia. And now they are in danger of coming away empty-handed and facing a stronger Russia.

Renowned economic journalist Wolfgang Münchau sees himself "On the eve of modern Europe's most humiliating defeat." He mocks the helpless European powers who "think they can safeguard their welfare and their influence through regulation, procedure, the rule of law, and international institutions. The Europeans dream of a world in which no one acts strategically," he writes. "Like no US president before him, Trump exposes Europe's delusions, its lack of strategic thinking and action. This is why the Europeans hate him so much. And to no avail."

Similar thoughts can be heard and read everywhere in Europe's ruling circles: "We must do as Trump does. Away with the welfare state, regulations, the rule of law and international institutions. We must think and act strategically—in other words, wage war!" European governments are rearming, doubling and tripling military spending, and passing the costs on to the working class. In doing so, they are also undermining the basis for any social compromise and putting fierce class struggles on the agenda.

Herein lies the answer to war and dictatorship. Only an independent movement of the international working class, fighting against capitalism and for the construction of a socialist society, can prevent society from sliding into catastrophe.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact