

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With European Leaders**

*August 18, 2025*

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to have you here. Special place. The White House is special, no matter where you're from. Represents so much, and it's—really is beautiful.

And thank you for all of the wonderful things that took place today. We've had a very successful day thus far and important discussions as we work to end the killing and stop the war in Ukraine. We're all working for the same goal. A very simple goal: We want to stop the killing, get this settled.

I've just had the honor of being with President Zelenskyy. In all of the discussions that we've had, we covered a lot of territory. And I spoke indirectly with President Putin today. We're going to call President Putin right after this meeting. I'm sure we're going to have a solid meeting, good meeting—maybe a great meeting. And we're going to try and work out a trilateral after that and see if we can get it finished, put this to sleep, because this is—not since the Second World War has there been anything like this.

So I'm honored to welcome NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who's a great gentleman; a great, great political leader in Europe, generally. But now he's the NATO Secretary General, and you're doing a fantastic job. Thank you very much, Mark.

Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom, our friend and my friend and doing really well. And people like him a lot. We all like him.

Everyone knows President Macron of France, who's been with me from the beginning, one of the first people I met as a foreign dignitary. And I liked him from day one, and I like him even more now. That's pretty good. That's unusual. *[Laughter]* That's a pretty unusual thing.

Prime Minister Meloni of Italy, who's a really great leader and an inspiration over there. She's served now—even though she's a very young person, she's served there for a long period of time, relative to others. *[Laughter]*

*Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy.* Yes.

*President Trump.* They don't last very long.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Yes.

*President Trump.* You've lasted a long time. You're going to be there a long time.

Chancellor Merz of Germany, who is a very strong person and a very strong leader and very highly respected in Germany. And he's my friend, and it's an honor to have him as my friend. Thank you very much. Very good.

You look great with your tan. Where did you get that tan? *[Laughter]*

*Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany.* Yes.

*President Trump.* I want to get a tan like that.

*Chancellor Merz.* *[Inaudible]*—holidays.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* That's true.

*President Trump.* President Stubb of Finland, and he's somebody that—where are we here? Huh? Where—where—

*President Alexander Stubb of Finland.* I'm right here.

*President Trump.* Oh. [Laughter] You look better than I've ever seen you look.

*President Stubb.* [Inaudible]

*President Trump.* But you've done a great job, and we wanted to have you here because you're somebody that we all respect. And you've had a lot to do with the success, I think, and the potential success. And thank you very much for being here. We appreciate it.

And the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, who is somebody that we just made a big deal with. With all of those countries, I don't know, I think you might be more powerful than all these guys at this table. I don't know.

But you—we had a great negotiation, and you're respected all over the world. So, I want to thank you very much for being here. It's a great honor to have you.

The Alaska summit reinforced my belief that, while difficult, peace is within reach, and I believe that. In a very significant step, President Putin agreed that Russia would accept security guarantees for Ukraine. And this is one of the key points that we need to consider, and we're going to be considering that at the table also—like who will do what, essentially.

I'm optimistic that, collectively, we can reach an agreement that would deter any future aggression against Ukraine. And I actually think there won't be. I think that's even overrated, largely overrated, but we're going to find out. And I think that the European nations are going to take a lot of the burden. We're going to help them, and we're going to make it very secure.

We also need to discuss the possible exchanges of territory, taking into consideration the current line of contact—that means the war zone, the war lines that are pretty obvious—very sad, actually, to look at them—and negotiating positions.

President Putin—also, you have President of Ukraine, who is—who you just met a little while ago, and we're going to try and get a three-party meeting, maybe, as soon as we can. And I have a feeling you and President Putin are going to work something out.

Ultimately, this is a decision that can only be made by President Zelenskyy and by the people of Ukraine working also together in agreement with President Putin. And I just think that's—very good things are going to come of it.

So I hope we have a good meeting. And if we can have a good meeting, I'll set up a meeting with President Putin. And if you'd like, I'll go to that meeting, and not that I want to do that, but I will do that because we want to save a lot of people from dying. A lot of people are dying, and we got to save them. Got to save it. Five thousand, six thousand, seven thousand people, sometimes, a week.

All of us would obviously prefer an immediate cease-fire while we work on a lasting peace, and maybe something like that could happen. As of this moment, it's not happening, but President Zelenskyy and President Putin can talk a little bit more about that.

You know, in the six or so wars that we stopped, we haven't had a cease-fire, and so I don't know that it's necessary. You can do it through the war, but it would be—I like the cease-fire from another standpoint: You immediately stop the killing. But I believe a peace agreement at the end of all of this is something that's very attainable, and it can be done in the near future.

With all of the wars that I got involved in, we only have this one left. Of course, as I walk out the door, there'll probably be a new one starting, and I'll get that stopped too. But I thought

this was going to be one of the easier ones. It's actually one of the most difficult. They're very complex.

The next step would be for a trilateral meeting, and that will be worked out. And I just look forward to working and having a great result. We're going to spend a lot of time today talking about—and we're really honored you guys came over. I mean, these are the heads of major countries and respected all over Europe. And they speak for—largely, I think I should say—but pretty much for the other countries of Europe. And we will come to a resolution today, I think, on almost everything, including probably the security. And that's pretty much the story.

I'd like to say—Mr. President, would you like to say something? You have the media. If you want, you could come over and you could stand—you could use mine, or you could just turn around, whichever you feel comfortable with.

*President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine.* Thank you so much. I can speak without microphone. Thank you so much.

I think that we had very good conversation with President Trump.

*President Trump.* Very good.

*President Zelenskyy.* And it really was the best one—or sorry, maybe the best one will be in the future, but it was really good. And we spoke about very sensitive points. The first one is security guarantees. And we are very happy with President that all the leaders are here, and the security in Ukraine depends on the United States and on you and on those leaders who are with us in our hearts. They have been online before yesterday and et cetera. So a lot of countries on the side of Ukraine, our people.

And all of us want to finish this war, stop Russia, and stop this war. We spoke about it, and we will speak more about security guarantees. This is very important that United States gives such strong signal and is ready for security guarantees.

The second point—or maybe the first—humanitarian direction, very important to exchange all the prisoners, and I think that President will help. And I was very thankful to your wife, again, Mr. President, for the letter about our abducted children. And I hope that, really, it can be historic role for the people to bring kids back to the families and be happy—

*President Trump.* Get their people back, yes.

*President Zelenskyy.* —in their families. Yes, this is so, so important, and I'm happy that we discussed it, this track with the President Trump. And I hope that we will find decisions.

And then what is very important, that all the sensitive things—territorial and et cetera—we will discuss on the level of leaders during trilateral meeting, and President Trump will try to organize such meeting. And he said that he will come or not come. Ukraine will be happy if you will be able to participate.

*President Trump.* If you both want me there, I will be there. Yes. You know that.

*President Zelenskyy.* Yes, thank you. And I think this is very important. Yes.

So security guarantees, bringing kids back, and all our people, not only warriors. First of all, warriors, and all the civilians, journalists—a lot of people in prison. So we need them back.

And guarantees which will work for the years. We spoke about it, and I showed the President a lot of details on the battlefield, on the map. Thank you so much. Thank you for the map, by the way.

*President Trump.* Good map.

*President Zelenskyy.* It was great, yes. [Laughter] I'm thinking how to take it back.  
[Laughter]

*President Trump.* We'll get you one.

*President Zelenskyy.* No, no, no. I think that we had constructive, specific meeting. And I'm very thankful to all the leaders who are here, and you help a lot. And so we are happy that we have such big unity today.

Thank you, Mr. President——

*President Trump.* Thank you very much——

*President Zelenskyy.* ——for hosting us. Thank you.

*President Trump.* ——Mr. President. And I think you'll see that President Putin really would like to do something else. I think when we set that up—when we do—I think it's going to be "when," not "if"—I think you're going to see some very, really positive moves.

I know there's over a thousand prisoners, and I know they're going to release them. Maybe they're going to release them very soon—like, immediately—which I think is great. But we will—we're going to set that up today, after these—after this meeting.

So, very good. And great remarks. I appreciate it.

Mark, as head of NATO, maybe you could say a few words, please.

*Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.* Yes, I will be very brief. I really want to thank you, President of the United States, dear Donald, for the fact that you, as I said before, broke the deadlock, basically, with President Putin by starting that dialogue. And I think it was in February that you had first——

*President Trump.* Right.

*Secretary General Rutte.* ——phone call. And from there, we are now where we are today. And that is—I think if we play this well, we could end this. And we have to end it. We have to stop the killing. We have to stop the destruction of Ukraine's infrastructure. It is a terrible war.

So I'm really excited. And let's make the best out of today and make sure that from today onwards, we get this thing to an end as soon as possible.

I really want to thank you for your leadership, what you are doing, Volodymyr, but, of course, also, all the European colleagues. It is really crucial.

And the fact that you have said, "I'm willing to participate in security guarantees" is a big step. It's really a breakthrough, and it makes all the difference. So, also, thank you for that.

*President Trump.* Well, NATO also has agreed from 2 percent to 5 percent, which is something that is a massive amount of money. And it's 2 percent that wasn't always paid to 5 percent that is paid. That's a big difference, and so we appreciate that. That was—great move. Thank you very much.

Ursula, maybe on behalf of the Commission, you could say a couple of words.

*President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission.* Yes. Thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here, and it's a very important moment.

Indeed, we are here, Europeans, as friends and allies. We had a fantastic NATO summit. Together as the two largest and biggest economies in the world, we had the largest trade deal ever——

*President Trump.* That's right.

*President von der Leyen.* —agreed. And now we are here to work together with you on a just and lasting peace for Ukraine. Stop the killing. This is really our common interest: Stop the killing. And indeed, it's very good to hear that we're working on the security guarantees, article 5–like security guarantees. So important.

But I want to thank you also that you mentioned the thousands of Ukrainian children that have been abducted. And as a mother and grandmother, every single child has to go back to its family. This should be one of our main priorities also, in these negotiations, to make sure that the children come back to Ukraine to their families.

*President Trump.* Thank you. And we did. I was just thinking—we're here for a different reason, but we just, a couple of weeks ago, made the largest trade deal in history. So, that's a big—that's a big thing. And congratulations. That's great.

Thank you very much, Ursula.

Mr. Chancellor, from Germany——

*Chancellor Merz.* Yes.

*President Trump.* ——a very great leader.

*Chancellor Merz.* Mr. President——

*President Trump.* Please.

*Chancellor Merz.* ——dear Donald, many thanks for having us today. I think this is extremely helpful that we are meeting and hearing that the two of you are having such a good meeting today here in Washington. The next steps ahead are the more complicated ones now. The path is open.

*President Trump.* Yes.

*Chancellor Merz.* You opened it last Friday. But now the way is open for complicated negotiations.

And, to be honest, we all would like to see a cease-fire, the latest from the next meeting on. I can't imagine that the next meeting would take place without a cease-fire. So let's work on that, and let's try to put pressure on Russia, because the credibility of these efforts—these efforts we are undertaking today are depending on at least a cease-fire from the beginning of the serious negotiations, from next step on.

So I would like to emphasize this aspect and would like to see a cease-fire from the next meeting, which should be a trilateral meeting, wherever it takes place.

*President Trump.* Well, we're going to let the President go over and talk to the President. And we'll see how that works out. And if we can do that, I will say—and, again, I say it—in the six wars that I've settled, I haven't had a cease-fire. We just got into negotiations, and they—one of the wars was—as you know, in the Congo, was 30 years, 31 years long. Another one that we settled last week with two great countries was 35 years going on, and we had no cease-fire.

So, if we can do the cease-fire, great. And if we don't do a cease-fire—because many other points were given to us. Many, many points were given to us. Great points.

Please, Giorgia, go ahead.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Well, thank you very much, Donald, Mr. President, for hosting us today in this important meeting. And I think it is an important day, a new phase, after 3 years and

a half, that we didn't see any kind of sign from the Russian side that there was a willing for dialogue. So something is changing. Something has changed, thanks to you; thanks also to the stalling in the battlefield, which was achieved with the bravery of Ukrainians and with the unity that we all provided to Ukraine.

And the reason why I mention it is that we also have to remind that if we want to reach peace and if we want to guarantee justice, we have to do it united. So that's why it's a very good day, the one we are in. You can obviously count on Italy. As it was from the beginning, we are on the side of Ukraine, and we do absolutely support your efforts towards peace.

We will talk about many important topics. The first one is security guarantees, how to be sure that it won't happen again, which is the precondition of every kind of peace. I'm happy that we will discuss about that. I'm happy that we will begin from a proposal which is the, let's say, article 5 model, which was Italian at the beginning. So we are always ready to bring our proposals for peace, for dialogue. It's something we have to build together to guarantee peace and to defend the security of our Nation.

So thank you——

*President Trump.* Thank you.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* ——Mr. President——

*President Trump.* Thank you.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* ——for hosting us.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much.

Emmanuel.

*President Emmanuel Macron of France.* Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting and for your commitment. And everything was said, but I have to—I just have to say here: Everybody around this table is in favor of peace. And we work very hard, and we've worked very hard during the past few years to have a peace which is a robust and longstanding peace.

This is why the idea of a trilateral meeting is very important, because this is the only way to fix it. And by the way, I think in—as a follow-up, we would need probably a quadrilateral meeting because, when we speak about security guarantees, we speak about the whole security of the European continent. And this is why we are all united here with Ukraine on this matter.

In order to organize such a trilateral meeting, your idea to ask for a truce or a cease-fire—at least to stop the killings, as we discussed—is a necessity. And we all support this idea.

And in order to have such a longstanding peace for Ukraine and for the whole continent, we do need the security guarantees. And the first one is clearly a credible Ukrainian army for the years and decades to come. And the second one is our own commitment, all of us—and we worked very hard during the past few months amongst the "coalition of the willings," with the support of NATO—to build the different pillars of security guarantees and our commitments.

And you can be sure that Europeans are very lucid about the fact that they have their fair share in the security guarantees for Ukraine, but their own security is clearly at stake in this situation.

So you can count on us, as we can count on you, in order to deliver this robust peace for both Ukraine and Europe.

Thank you.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much, Emmanuel.

Mr. Prime Minister.

*Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom.* Thank you very much, Mr. President. And thank you for hosting us here.

Can I start where Emmanuel started, which is we all want peace. The war in Ukraine has had a huge impact, particularly on the Ukrainians who have borne the brunt of it, but it's also had an impact on Europe and on the United Kingdom. There's not a family or community that hasn't been affected.

And when we talk about security, we're talking about the security not just of Ukraine. We're talking about the security of Europe and the United Kingdom as well, which is why this is such an important issue. I think this is such an important meeting. As a group, I think we've had a discussion on the phone a number of times, Mr. President, but be able now to be around the table to take it forward.

And I really feel that we can, I think, with the right approach this afternoon, make real progress, particularly on the security guarantees. And your indication of security guarantees, of some sort of article 5-style guarantees, fits with what we've been doing with the "coalition of the willing," which we started some months ago, bringing countries together and showing that we were prepared to step up to the plate when it came to security.

With you coming alongside, the U.S. alongside what we've already developed, I think we can take a really important step forward today. A historic step, actually, could come out of this meeting in terms of security for Ukraine and security in Europe.

I also feel that we can make real progress towards a just and lasting outcome. Obviously, that has to involve Ukraine, and a trilateral meeting seems the sensible next step.

So thank you for being prepared to take that forward, because I think if we can ensure that that is the progress out of this meeting—both security guarantees and some sort of progress on trilateral meeting of some sort to bring some of the difficult issues to a head—then I think today will be seen as a very important day in recent years, in relation to a conflict which has gone on for three-and-a-bit years. And so far, nobody—nobody—has been able to bring it to this point. So, I thank you for that.

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much. And, you know, it's very interesting, because this is the first for the White House. You can't say that very often. It's seen a lot over the years, over the—since 1800—1799, to be almost exact. But this is a first, where we've had so many Prime Ministers, Presidents, the heads of European nations.

And by the way, Alex, I'd like you to say a couple of words too. You're a young, powerful man. Before I finish up, I want you to say a couple of words. Go ahead.

*President Zelenskyy.* [Inaudible]

*President Stubb.* [Laughter] I'll take the notion of youth back to my wife and try to convince her. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I think in the past 2 weeks, we've probably had more progress in ending this war than we have in the past 3½ years. And I think the fact that we're around this table today is very much symbolic in the sense that it's team Europe and team United States helping Ukraine.

And the progress that we are looking out of this meeting is about the security guarantees, which are a big part of this, and then, of course, moving towards a process with a trilateral meeting with you and President Putin and President Zelenskyy.

Some of the international media might wonder, you know, "Why is the President of Finland here?" I think the reason is probably that we might come from a small country, but we have a long border with Russia, over 800 miles. And we, of course, have our own historical experience with Russia from World War II, the Winter War, and the War of Continuation. And if I look at the silver lining of where we stand right now, we found a solution in 1944, and I am sure that we'll be able to find a solution in 2025 to end Russia's war of aggression and find and get a lasting and just peace.

The situation is very difficult, but that's why we're here.

*President Trump.* Thank you, Alex, very much.

*President Stubb.* Thank you.

*President Trump.* Good job.

So we're going to be meeting for a while, and we're going to discuss some of the issues. And I don't think there's any issue that's overly complex. It's at a point now where people want to do things. I do—I really do believe—I've known him for a long time. I've always had a great relationship with him. I think that President Putin wants to find an answer too.

And we'll see. In—at a—in a certain period of time, not very far from now—a week or 2 weeks—we're going to know whether or not we're going to solve this or is this horrible fighting going to continue. We'll do the best to get it ended.

And I believe you have two willing parties, and usually that's good news, but two willing parties that want to make a deal. And we'll journey together, and we'll go over, and we'll see if it can be done. And it might—it's possible it might not be able to be done. On the other hand, it's possible it will, and we're going to save thousands and thousands of lives a week. And so it's something we really have to do, and—or at least we have to give it our best. It's all you can do. You can give it your best, but I think we may have a very good outcome.

So I want to thank you all. And the media, I want to thank you.

*President Zelenskyy.* Thank you so much.

*President Trump.* We're going to be staying here for a little while, then we're going to walk over to the Oval Office, and we're going to have another little discussion about similar matters. And then they're going to go home to their great countries and report, and I'm going to remain here and work, and you're going to go and work. [*Laughter*] We're all going to be working one—we may be in a different location, but that's what we know how to do, is work.

But I want to thank—the media has been, actually, very fair. Generally speaking, very fair. I think it's important that they're fair because this is a very important subject. We have to get it ended. And so that's all we ask for is fairness with the media.

Thank you all very much. We appreciate it.

[*At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, President Stubb referred to his wife Suzanne E. Innes-Stubb. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on August 19.

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