

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

**The President's News Conference With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine
in Palm Beach, Florida**

December 28, 2025

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. We had a terrific meeting. We discussed a lot of things.

As you know, I had an excellent phone call with President Putin that lasted for over 2 hours. We discussed a lot of points, and I do think we're getting a lot closer—maybe very close.

The President and I just spoke to the European leaders. They were President Emmanuel Macron of France, President Alexander Stubb of the Republic of Finland, President Karol Nawrocki of the Republic of Poland, Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of the Kingdom of Norway, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of the Italian Republic, Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland, Chancellor Friedrich Merz, the Federal Republic of Germany, Secretary General Mark Rutte, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—NATO, President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission.

We spoke to all of those great leaders. They're all great leaders, and we had a great talk with them. After we were completed, we thought it was appropriate to speak with them.

And our meeting was excellent. We covered—somebody would say 95 percent. I don't know what percent, but we have made a lot of progress on ending that war, which is really the—certainly the most deadly war since World War II, probably the biggest war since World War II.

And I want to thank Steve Witkoff, who's here. And I'd like to thank Jared, who's here someplace. Thank you, Jared. Thank you, Steve. What a great job you've done, Jared Kushner, Steve Witkoff.

And Marco Rubio is here. Thank you, Marco. And Pete Hegseth is here. Doing—those two people are doing an unbelievable job, and the four people on this one are doing—I don't think anybody could do it, and we'll see if it gets done, but it's very close. Certainly, nobody would even have a chance of getting it to where it is right now. Nobody would have thought that was possible.

So I just want to say we've done very well. We've had discussions on just about every subject, and that includes with President Putin before. And we—went into great detail, and we likewise went into great detail today.

And it was an honor to have you at Mar-a-Lago and have lunch.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you.

President Trump. I hope you enjoyed the food. *[Laughter]* Your people enjoyed the food, I can tell you that.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much.

President Trump. Your big, strong people. Your general over there looks like central casting.

I want to also—by the way, speaking of generals, we have a great general, General Razin Caine, who is here someplace. Thank you. General, thank you very much. He's great.

So, Mr. President, maybe you want to say a few words.

President Zelenskyy. Yes.

President Trump. And then we'll speak—over the next couple of weeks, we'll speak probably quite a bit, but we'll speak tomorrow. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you for everything.

Dear colleagues, first of all, I would like to thank President Trump for a great meeting at this amazing place, in his home in Mar-a-Lago. And we had really great discussions on all the topics, and we appreciate the progress that was made by American and Ukrainian teams in these recent weeks.

Special thanks to Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, and thank you to—for their engagement and full commitment. And also to our team and, first of all, to Rustem Umerov and General Hnatov, and to all our teams.

And we discussed all the aspects of the peace framework, which includes—and we have a great achievements: 20-point peace plan, 90 percent agreed, and U.S.-Ukraine security guarantees 100 percent agreed. U.S., Europe, Ukraine security guarantees almost agreed. Military dimension, 100 percent agreed. Prosperity plan being finalized. And we also discussed the sequencing of the following actions.

And we agree that security guarantees is a key milestone in achieving lasting peace. And our teams will continue working on all aspects.

We also had a joint productive call with European leaders, like President Trump said already and—a lot of leaders, including NATO and EU. And we agreed that our teams will meet in upcoming weeks to finalize all discussed matters. And we agreed with President Trump that he will host us—and maybe in Washington—European leaders and Ukrainian delegation, yes, in January.

And Ukraine is ready for peace. And, once again, we would like to thank President Trump for a warm welcome and substantial discussion.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you. Thank you very much.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

President Trump. Any questions, please?

Ukraine-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, we just heard some digits from President Zelenskyy: 90 percent, 100 percent. The U.S.-Ukraine security guarantees, what number are we at right now?

President Trump. Well, I think we're—look, you know, you can say 95 percent, but I don't like to say percentages. I just think we're doing very well. We're very—we could be very close. There are one or two very thorny issues, very tough issues, but I think we're doing very well.

We made a lot of progress today, but, really, we've made it over the last month. This is not a 1-day process deal. This is very complicated stuff.

But I think—when the President says 95, I think, you know, could be close to 95 percent.

Yes. Please, behind you.

Donbas Region/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, have you agreed on the so-called free trade zone on Donbas—how to separate the sides, how to make the separation line, who will be responsible on that territory?

President Trump. The word "agreed" is too strong. I would say not agreed, but we're getting closer to an agreement on that. And that's a big issue, certainly. That's one of the big issues. And I think we're closer than we're—probably one—it's unresolved, but it's getting a lot closer. That's a very tough issue but one that I think will get resolved.

Yes, please.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Mr. President, we are receiving some mixed signals coming from Moscow, even after you spoke with President Putin. Can you assure us that you have received written or an informal response from them to——

President Trump. Well, what was the issue? You have to tell me what did they say.

Donbas Region/Ukraine

Q. To—they are telling that Ukraine has to give up Donbas. Just very recent statement coming out of Moscow.

President Trump. Well, that's what they've been asking for. And you know, there's a dispute about that, so we—they're going to have to iron that out. That's an issue they have to iron out. It's—but I think it's moving in the right direction.

Q. If they reject or delay the solution or peace agreement that you try to achieve, what kind of——

President Trump. If it—if something doesn't happen?

Q. Well, what next——

President Trump. You mean if something doesn't happen?

Yes, go ahead.

Q. May I ask to——

President Trump. No.

Q. Sorry.

President Trump. Go ahead. You were going to finish your question.

Q. Yes. Will there be any step that United States will be prepared to take?

President Trump. Well, we'll see. Look, we'll see. But I don't want to talk about that because I think we're getting pretty close.

Yes, please.

Q. May I ask the President of Ukraine about——

President Trump. Please.

Q. Yes. About territorial question. Mr. President, what is your take on Donbas status? Are you prepared to see it as a free economic or a demilitarized zone?

President Zelenskyy. No, we spoke about 20-points plan, and I'm happy that really our team is very close to results. And I agree with President Trump that they—our teams work not 1 day

and not one—not 1 week, more than 1 month, beginning from Geneva, then two meetings in Miami. Then we had Berlin, and now we have Mar-a-Lago.

So this is a very difficult question. You know our position, so it's—I mean, this—we have to respect our law and our people. We respect the territory which we control.

And of course, there are—our attitude is very clear. That's why President Trump said this is a very tough question. And of course, we have, with Russia, different positions on it.

Q. And have you discussed referenda about—

President Zelenskyy. No, when we speak about referendum, we spoke that it's one of the key. We can have referendum on any kind of points of this plan. I said that we can use referendum, like, for the plan, or we can not use referendum. It's one of the key.

We can use—I mean, there is possibility of Parliament to vote, according to the law, or to have referendum. It doesn't matter. It's—I mean this referendum. If the plan will be very difficult for our society—very difficult—of course, our society has to choose on who has to vote, because it's their land—the land not of one person. It's the land of our nation for a lot of generations.

President Trump. They'll probably have to get their plan approved by parliament or by referendum of the people. You would think that they want—I know they had a poll that it's 91 percent in favor of ending this war, so they want to end it, like everybody want. Russia wants it ended. Everybody wants it ended. So—and we want it ended. I want it ended because I don't want to see so many people dying. We're losing, you know, massive numbers of people—the biggest, by far, since World War II.

So we want to see it ended, absolutely.

U.S. Diplomatic Efforts

Q. President Trump, you said at the top that you were—you plan to speak again tomorrow. Is that correct?

President Trump. I might. I mean, it depends on what happens tomorrow, if there's an additional something to add. Otherwise, there's no reason to.

We're in the process. Jared and Steve are working very hard to get something done, and if there's something that comes up, I'd speak. But otherwise, I don't think there's any reason to.
[Inaudible]

Russia/Ukraine

Q. And in your mind, sir, what are the thorniest issues still unresolved after the—after today?

President Trump. Well, I think the land you're talking about, some of that land has been taken. Some of that land is maybe up for grabs. But it may be taken over the next period of a number of months, and you're better off making a deal now.

Look, let me tell you, the—they have been very brave. They fought very hard and continue to fight very hard and do tremendous damage. But Russia would like to see it end, and Ukraine would like to see it, and I think it's time to end. And a lot of very brave people—a lot of people are dead right now, unfortunately.

Because I've said, and nobody's disputed it, that if the election weren't rigged and stolen, 2020, you wouldn't have had this war. It would have never happened. And it didn't happen for 4 years. Never was even thought to happen.

And I spoke with President Putin. I got along with him very well, despite the "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax, which was a total hoax. He used to say, "What is going on over there?" But it was a total hoax, as he knew and as I knew.

But I spoke to him, and we'd talk about Ukraine. I've said it before: It was the apple of his eye, but he wasn't going to do anything about it. He didn't do anything about it until I was gone, and then a lot of really bad statements were made by people—by a lot of people, I guess, but by a certain President that we had, who was a disaster.

Yes.

U.S. Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Mr. President, do you anticipate going to Ukraine if you can get to an agreement? And I know you said earlier——

President Trump. I'd have no problem with doing it. You know, I have no problem with doing it. And we don't anticipate it. Would like to get the deal done and not necessarily have to go.

I've offered to go and speak to their Parliament and—you know, if that would help. I don't know if that would help. I think it would probably help. But I don't even know if that's——

President Zelenskyy. You are welcome, Mr. President.

President Trump. Yes. No, I know. And they——

President Zelenskyy. Always.

President Trump. So I'm not sure that it would be really necessary. But if it would help save 25,000 lives a month, or whatever it may be, I would certainly be willing to do that.

Yes, please.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. No. Behind you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. And how about as a condition——

President Trump. Are you—where are you from?

Q. From Ukraine. My name is—[inaudible]——

President Trump. Good. I had a feeling.

Q. ——Public Broadcast——[inaudible].

President Trump. Good.

Ukraine/Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant

Q. And how about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant? Have you discussed this question?

President Trump. When what?

Q. The Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant.

President Trump. Yes. We discussed that at length today. As you know, it's in pretty good shape. It can start up immediately, almost immediately, and it's one of the things I discussed with President Putin. And they were talking about the nuclear plant that's probably the biggest in the world. Just about the biggest anywhere in the world. Can you believe that?

And President Putin is actually working with Ukraine on getting it open. He's been very good in that sense. He wants to see that open. And he hasn't hit it with missiles, hasn't hit it with anything. It's a big danger to do that for everybody. But they're working together to try and get it out. It can open very quickly. It's in pretty good shape.

And the people there have been there for years—the people there running it. You know they have 5,000 people in that plant. Can you believe it? I learned that today. Five thousand people. It's the biggest plant of its kind in the world, and they're working together to get it open. They could maybe get it open quickly. That's a big step—when he's not bombing that plant. It's a big step.

Ukraine/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Mr. President, in the readout from the—from Moscow, they talked about the creation of some working groups——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. —that would be set. Can you tell us about what those working groups would entail?

President Trump. Sure.

Q. And also, if you wouldn't mind, what is the message that you will give to Putin when you speak to him after your meeting here?

President Trump. So the working group is going to be composed of Steve, Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, General "Razin" Caine, Marco Rubio, and a few other people that we're going to be putting onto it. I think Pete Hegseth should be in that working group. He knows the territory very well. He's been fantastic at what he's doing. And they may add one or two people. And likewise, Ukraine is going to have some very good people that were at lunch today, that enjoyed the lunch today a lot—[laughter]—more than they thought, right?

But do you want to say who may be on your working group?

President Zelenskyy. Yes, we—now, as I said, that we work with Steve and Jared. We worked and worked our Rustem Umerov and also Deputy Minister Kyslytsya and also General Hnatov. And they will continue work in this group.

And of course, if we will go further—and I hope that, really, we will have decisions in January, as I said, about all these documents—six documents. And of course, we will continue work on this, so they know what to do.

Q. But would the Russians be——

President Trump. And that working group, by the way, importantly, will also then be working with Russia. Okay? Because to work with ourselves doesn't really solve much of a problem. So they'll be working with Russia.

Yes, please.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, you said this morning you weren't a deadline guy. How long do you think it will take to get this last little bit, as you say, finished? What are we talking about? Days or weeks?

President Trump. So, if it went really well, you know, maybe a few weeks. And if it went poorly, longer. And if it went really poorly, it's not going to happen. That would be a shame. There's that chance also. You know, it's possible it doesn't happen.

But you know, in a few weeks, we will know one way or the other, I think.

President Zelenskyy. [Inaudible]—2, 3 weeks. I think so.

President Trump. But if it went—if it went really well, but it could also go poorly. I mean, you know, we could have something where one item that you're not thinking about is a big item and breaks it up. Look, it's been a very difficult negotiation, very detailed.

It's funny, I settled eight wars. Some were going on for 35 years, and we got them settled in a couple of days. Some of them—one was going on for 37 years. I settled it in one day. But this is a very complex one.

Timeline for Further Negotiations

Q. Do you want to put odds on it, what the—[inaudible]—outcome might be?

President Trump. I think we'll get it done. I don't want to say when, but I think we're going to get it done.

Yes, ma'am.

Potential Trilateral Meeting With President Zelenskyy and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, you in the past have suggested a trilateral meeting between both Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy.

President Trump. Right.

Q. Is that something that is also on the docket?

President Trump. I see that happening, sure—at the right time. I saw a very interesting President Putin today. I mean, he wants to see it happen. He wants to see it. He told me very strongly. I believe him. Don't forget, we went through the "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax together. And he'd call me, I'd call him. I'd say, "Can you believe the stuff that they're making up?" And it turned out we were right. They made it all up.

And despite that, we didn't get into wars or we didn't get into problems, but we weren't able to trade very much or any of that, which was a shame, because, you know, a lot of success could have been had by trading with Russia. They have great land, great minerals and other things, and we have things that they want very badly.

But the "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax, which was a terrible, made-up, fictional thing by crooked Hillary and by Adam "shifty" Schiff and bad people, sick people. They made it up. It was all a made-up hoax. But it kept us, really, from dealing with Russia. It kept Russia dealing—you know, from dealing with us.

So—but despite that, we got along, and, I don't know, I think we're going to get there. I know—I know him very well, and I think we're going to get there.

Q. Did you discuss any time, location, meeting place for a potential trilateral?

President Trump. Yes, we discussed a lot of things. No, we—look, I was on the phone with him for almost, I guess, 2½ hours they're just telling me now. That's a long time. We discussed a lot of things. We didn't talk about the weather. We weren't talking about how—what a beautiful day it is in Palm Beach, Florida.

Yes.

Upcoming Meeting With European Leaders/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts/Ukraine/Critical Minerals Supply

Q. President Trump, President Zelenskyy mentioned maybe a meeting with European leaders back in Washington. Would that be in the next few weeks before——

President Trump. Well, in Washington or someplace, yes. These leaders that I just read, these are great people. You know, they've spent a lot of money on helping Ukraine. And look, they're doing it for themselves also, meaning their country, because Ukraine is a very important country for them in particular. For us, it's very important.

To me, it's the lives. You know, we're thousands and thousands of miles. We're protected by a thing called the Atlantic Ocean and lots of other places, to be honest. And they're not. You know, they're right there.

But we're working together with them, as we should be. But I'm doing it to save lives. You know, we're not spending any money. Biden gave \$350 billion away, and the President was nice enough to give us a contract to take out rare earth and things. So we'll see what—how that all works out. We have a contract, but we appreciated that. He was very good. But we'll see how that works out.

But if you think about it, we're going to have—we're—I really believe we're probably, Mr. President, closer than—by far, closer than ever before with both parties.

We had some times when he was close and President Putin wasn't. Then when President Putin was close and he wasn't. You saw that in the White House. But—I think they both want to see it happen.

Q. Mr. President, in your conversation with——

Russia/Ukraine

Q. President Trump, you're saying that—you've said multiple times that you want to stop the killing. And nearly a hundred American citizens died in Ukraine on the battlefield.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. What's your message to their families whose loved ones died fighting for Ukraine?

President Trump. Well, look, I mean, the message is so obvious. It's "what a shame." They died in a country, a foreign country. And some are celebrated people. They're very celebrated. But so sad that a thing like that would happen.

Yes.

Ukraine/Future Security Arrangements With Europe and U.S.

Q. President Trump, obviously security is a major issue for the Ukrainians.

President Trump. Right.

Q. Did you offer any promises, any assurances today? And can you——

President Trump. Yes. I did. I did. We want to work with Europe, and Europe is going to take over a big part of it, as you can imagine. You know, they're right there. But we're going to help Europe 100 percent, like they'd help us.

Yes, ma'am. You were going to say something?

Q. Yes, I was just was just going to ask——

President Trump. Who are you with?

Q. Andrea Shalal with Reuters.

President Trump. That's what I thought.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Yes. So, in your conversation with President Putin, did you discuss what responsibility Russia will have for any kind of reconstruction of Ukraine post an agreement?

President Trump. I did. I did. They're going to be helping. Russia is going to be helping. Russia wants to see Ukraine succeed. Once—it sounds a little strange, but I was explaining to the President: President Putin was very generous in his feeling toward Ukraine succeeding, including supplying energy, electricity, and other things at very low prices.

So a lot of good things came out of that call today. But they were in the works for 2 weeks with Steve and with Jared and Marco and everybody.

U.S. Diplomatic Efforts/Territorial Considerations

Q. Did Russia agree or did Putin agree to a cease-fire to allow a referendum to take place?

President Trump. Not a cease-fire. And that's one of the points that we're working on right now. No, not a cease-fire. He feels that, look, you know, they're fighting, and to stop and then to—if they have to start again, which is a possibility, he doesn't want to be in that position. And I understand that position. The President feels strongly about that or something, but I think we're finding ways that we can get around that.

But I understand President Putin from that standpoint. You know, you have to understand the other side. And you know, I'm on the side of peace. I'm on the side of stopping the war.

So—but I think that's a problem that's going to get solved. Yes.

Q. Would people who live outside of—Ukrainians who fled during the war be allowed to participate in the referendum?

President Zelenskyy. What do you mean? People where live?

President Trump. The people that left.

Q. The refugees who fled to Poland and Germany.

President Zelenskyy. Are you speaking about the people who are abroad, who are not on—

Q. Mm-hmm. Yes.

President Zelenskyy. —the territory of Ukraine? I mean, there's—in Poland, in Germany, we have millions of people. Yes, they have the referendum in the same of elections. In the same way how people come and vote, they have rights for this. And of course, they have to come.

That's why, if we will come to referendum, yes, if we will come to such decision, people need infrastructure for this. And it's not simple. And that's why we spoke about it. It can't be in 1 day, very quickly. It's difficult because we need infrastructure. When you have millions people, you have to build it, in Europe. Mostly in Europe for today.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. President Trump, I know you sounded an optimistic note here, but what happens in a few weeks if things sputter, or what are you prepared to do——

President Trump. They keep fighting and they keep dying. No good. But if things don't happen, they keep fighting, and they keep dying, and we don't want that to happen. He doesn't want it to happen. President Putin doesn't want it to happen either. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it. Thank you.

Q. And thanks for lunch.

President Trump. I don't know. Was it a good lunch?

Q. Yes, sir.

President Trump. There's no lunch. He walks in. He said, "This place is gorgeous." I don't think he wants to go to the White House anymore. That's the problem. *[Laughter]*

President Zelenskyy. I'm ready to go to the White House.

President Trump. I know. *[Laughter]*

President Zelenskyy. Always.

President Trump. It is, it is. The White House is a very special place. And so is this.

I hope you enjoyed it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:50 p.m. at the Mar-a-Lago Club. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Gen. Andriy Hnatov of Ukraine; former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her capacity as the 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee; and Sen. Adam B. Schiff, in his former capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He also referred to his son-in-law Jared C. Kushner. President Zelenskyy referred to Minister of Defense Rustem Umerov and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergiy Kyslytsya of Ukraine. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on January 1, 2026.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

Locations: Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Hegseth, Peter B.; Hnatov, Andriy; Kushner, Jared C.; Macron, Emmanuel; Meloni, Giorgia; Merz, Friedrich; Nawrocki, Karol; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark; Schiff, Adam B.; Starmer, Keir; Støre, Jonas Gahr; Stubb, Alexander; von der Leyen, Ursula; Witkoff, Steven C.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: European Commission President; Finland, President; Florida, President's visit; France, President; Germany, Chancellor; Italy, Prime Minister; Joint Chiefs of Staff; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Norway, Prime Minister; Poland, President; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Secretary of War; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions; Ukraine, critical minerals supply; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. diplomatic efforts; Ukraine, Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant; United Kingdom, Prime Minister.

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