



Russia's War Against Ukraine: Diplomatic Talks and U.S. Policy

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The Russian Federation (Russia) launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. More than four years later, Russia and Ukraine remain engaged in Europe's largest war in scope and scale since World War II. With estimates ranging from up to [1.3 million](#) to [1.8 million](#) killed or wounded to date, and with Russia in control of about 20% of Ukraine's territory, neither side appears poised to achieve a decisive military victory.

The second Trump Administration has engaged in efforts to facilitate an end to the Russia-Ukraine war. Building on prior discussions in 2025, Russian, Ukrainian, and U.S. officials [met](#) for the first time in a trilateral format in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in January 2026. Subsequent U.S.-mediated talks followed in February 2026 in [Abu Dhabi](#) and [Geneva](#), Switzerland. The United States, European states, Ukraine, and Russia have continued [talks](#) in a [variety of formats](#), but formal talks between Russia and Ukraine have not resumed since the start of U.S.-Israeli military operations against Iran in late February 2026. Members of Congress may evaluate the prospects for, and potential costs and benefits of, continued U.S. mediation between Russia and Ukraine, including implications for U.S. strategic interests.

Aspects of Negotiations

Talks have addressed or may address various issues, including the following.

Contours of a Potential Peace Settlement. U.S. talks with Russia and Ukraine in 2025 centered in part on whether negotiations should seek to secure a sustained ceasefire prior to a comprehensive peace settlement. Ukrainian officials have long [expressed](#) support for a sustained ceasefire. Russian officials have expressed preference for a comprehensive settlement, which for Russia would optimally [include](#) neutrality for Ukraine, constraints on Ukrainian military power, and occupation of additional Ukrainian territory that Russia claims to have [annexed](#) but does not control.

In an August 2025 meeting with President Trump in Alaska, Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly [proposed](#) a ceasefire along the line of contact in two of Ukraine's southern regions, if Ukraine transferred to Russia populated areas of the eastern Donetsk region. Ukrainian authorities rejected this proposal, maintaining (among other reasons) that the transfer of this heavily fortified "[fortress belt](#)" would greatly diminish Ukraine's ability to defend itself from further Russian aggression.

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Security Guarantees for Ukraine. Ukrainian officials have sought guarantees against further Russian aggression, including through the deployment of Western peacekeeping forces and closer integration with NATO and the European Union. [President Trump](#) and other Administration [officials](#) have expressed the view that NATO membership for Ukraine is unrealistic while indicating [support](#) for the provision of European-led security guarantees, potentially with U.S. involvement. Ukraine’s leadership has [asked](#) the United States to pledge support for such guarantees in the event of a postwar agreement; U.S. authorities reportedly have [indicated](#) that Ukraine and Russia should first reach an agreement. The precise nature and form of potential guarantees remains uncertain.

Security Cooperation. The Trump Administration has not publicly announced new security assistance to Ukraine, although it has continued to provide previously committed assistance. In 2025, the United States launched the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List ([PURL](#)) initiative with NATO allies, whereby the latter are funding the transfer of U.S.-sourced defense articles to Ukraine. As of March 2026, NATO allies and partners had contributed [more than \\$4.1 billion](#) in PURL-related assistance.

In April 2026, a U.S. defense official [said](#) the United States is “prepared to continue helping through initiatives like PURL, but this support must not rely on significant U.S. contributions.” Some NATO and European officials reportedly have [expressed](#) concern that U.S. military operations against Iran could lead to procurement shortages and delays that may affect assistance to Ukraine.

Ukraine has [pursued](#) new defense agreements seeking to leverage its defense expertise, particularly in drone and anti-drone warfare. These include cooperation [agreements](#) with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and [Germany](#), among others.

Sanctions Against Russia. Previously established U.S. sanctions on Russia generally have remained in place during the Trump Administration. The U.S. Department of the Treasury has listed some new entities for sanctions, most notably (in October 2025) Russia’s [two largest oil companies](#), Rosneft and Lukoil, and several subsidiaries.

After the start of U.S.-Israeli military operations against Iran, to help stabilize oil markets, the Treasury Department issued two General Licenses (GLs) authorizing for 30 days transactions “ordinarily incident and necessary to the sale, delivery, or offloading of crude oil or petroleum products” of Russian origin “loaded on any vessel” on or before the date the GLs were issued (initially to Indian ports and then worldwide, excluding transactions involving Iran, North Korea, Cuba, and Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine). The second of these licenses has been extended twice; [GL134C](#) currently authorizes such transactions for products loaded on or before April 17, 2026, through June 17, 2026.

Prisoners, Detainees, and Forcibly Transferred Populations. Talks have addressed the exchange of [prisoners of war](#), the remains of [deceased persons](#), and the release of Ukrainian [civilian detainees](#) and forcibly transferred populations, including [children](#).

Potential Considerations for Congress

Members of Congress may assess the costs and benefits of potential outcomes of U.S.-mediated negotiations and the likelihood of a sustainable ceasefire or peace agreement. Members may evaluate the potential impact of negotiations on other U.S. policy interests, including relations with NATO allies.

The Trump Administration and Congress may assess whether and on what terms to provide continued [support](#) to Ukraine alongside [U.S. allies](#). For FY2026, Congress authorized \$400 million in security assistance to Ukraine, increasing appropriations by an identical amount for “[European capacity building](#)” security cooperation programs. Congress may authorize, appropriate, restrict, or conduct oversight over further assistance to Ukraine (e.g., H.R. 2913; S. 2592). Members of Congress may conduct oversight of U.S. sanctions on Russia or consider the use of legislation (e.g., S. 1241/H.R. 2548; S. 2904; S. 3513; H.R. 6856) to maintain, strengthen, or lift [sanctions](#).

Figure I. Ukraine



Source: CRS, using data from the Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project, Global Administrative Areas, and Esri.

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