

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

Updated August 7, 2026

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 since World War II. With estimates of up to [2 million or more](#) killed or wounded, and with Russia controlling about 20% of Ukraine's territory, neither side appears [poised](#) to achieve a decisive military victory. In 2026, Ukrainian forces have [limited](#)—and in some cases reversed—Russian gains and markedly expanded a campaign of long-range attacks against Russian [oil facilities](#) and [logistics](#) infrastructure.

The second Trump Administration has engaged in efforts to facilitate an end to the Russia-Ukraine war. Formal negotiations were last held in February 2026; whether negotiations will resume—and, if so, when—is uncertain. 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

Building on 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. Two [rounds](#) of U.S.-mediated talks [followed](#), but formal peace talks have not resumed since U.S.-Israeli military operations against Iran began in late February 2026.

In an August 2025 meeting with President Trump in Anchorage, AK, Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly [proposed](#) a ceasefire along the line of contact in two of Ukraine's southern regions, if Ukraine transferred populated areas of its eastern Donetsk region to Russia. This proposal appeared to be included as an element of subsequent talks, but Ukrainian authorities rejected it, 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.

In May 2026 remarks to the press, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [said](#) Russia-Ukraine talks had not been "fruitful" and the Trump Administration was "not interested in getting involved in an endless cycle of meetings that lead to nothing." In July 2026, Secretary Rubio [referred](#) to the "failed" efforts that began in

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN12534

Anchorage but said “if the opportunity presents itself and the conditions are right,” the United States was “prepared to offer some [new ideas] in the right setting and forum.”

In June 2026, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [proposed](#) meeting with President Putin in a neutral country to kickstart negotiations and called for “a full ceasefire for the duration of the negotiations.” President Putin reportedly [rejected](#) the proposal and suggested Russia would continue fighting until it achieved its stated goals.

Security Cooperation. The Trump Administration has announced new [security assistance](#) for Ukraine, at levels lower than from FY2022 to FY2024, while continuing to provide certain previously committed assistance. In 2025, the United States and NATO allies launched the [Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List](#) (PURL) initiative, whereby NATO allies fund procurement of U.S. defense articles for Ukraine. As of July 2026, NATO allies and partners had contributed [more than \\$6 billion](#) in PURL-related assistance. 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. Ukrainian officials [state](#) they are running low on air defense munitions to intercept Russian ballistic and hypersonic missiles.

Ukraine has concluded some, and is [seeking](#) more, joint production and defense agreements and has removed barriers to exporting surplus defense production. Some [reports](#) indicate U.S. and Ukrainian officials are exploring ways to improve defense industry cooperation. In July 2026, President Trump [indicated](#) the United States was considering options to allow Ukraine to coproduce Patriot missiles but subsequently [noted](#) this would be a “big step” and “we have to be very careful.”

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 some kind of European-led security guarantees, potentially with U.S. involvement.

U.S. Sanctions Against Russia. The Trump Administration generally has maintained previously established U.S. sanctions on Russia. The U.S. Department of the Treasury listed some new entities for sanctions, most notably two of Russia’s [largest oil companies](#), Rosneft and Lukoil, and several subsidiaries. After the start of U.S.-Israeli military operations against Iran, the Treasury Department, to help stabilize oil markets, issued a series of general licenses temporarily relaxing sanctions on certain Russian oil exports. The last of these licenses expired on June 17, 2026, and was not renewed.

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 and FY2027, Congress authorized \$400 million annually in security assistance for Ukraine (P.L. 119-60, [§1243](#)); for FY2026, Congress appropriated \$400 million in [European capacity building](#), to include [Ukraine](#) (P.L. 119-75, [Division A](#)). On June 4, 2026, the House of Representatives passed the Ukraine Support Act (H.R. 2913), by a vote of 226-195, following a [discharge process](#) on a special rule that provided for the bill’s consideration.

On August 7, 2026, the Senate passed (by a vote of 86-11) a revised version of a sanctions bill first introduced in 2025, now titled the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 (S.Amdt. 6711 to H.R. 5334). This bill would reinforce existing sanctions authorities, authorize tariffs against Russia and third countries that import certain Russian products, and expand congressional oversight of most Russia sanctions imposed since 2022.

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.

Author Information

Andrew S. Bowen
Analyst in Russian and European Affairs

Cory Welt
Specialist in Russian and European Affairs

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of

Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.