

## Washington Hosts Ukraine Peace Talks After Trump Rules Out Troops

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WASHINGTON, D.C, Senior U.S. and European military leaders met in Washington on Tuesday to examine possible frameworks for a Ukraine peace settlement, following President Donald Trump's announcement that American ground troops will not be deployed in the conflict. Trump indicated that U.S. support could come in the form of air power, but stressed that Europe must take the lead in any enforcement arrangement.

The meeting came after a series of diplomatic engagements that included Trump hosting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and several European leaders at the White House. It followed Trump's recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska. According to official readouts, Trump urged Putin and Zelensky to meet directly under Western-backed security terms.

Trump, speaking to conservative radio host Mark Levin, said, "I thought it would be better if they met without me, just to see. We'll see how they do." The comment underscored his position that European partners should assume primary responsibility while the U.S. provides conditional support.

General Dan Caine, a senior U.S. officer, held discussions with European counterparts in a closed-door session ahead of a scheduled NATO meeting of military leaders from all 32 member states. The talks focused on potential enforcement structures should a ceasefire be reached.

Trump has consistently argued that the financial burden of supporting Ukraine should not fall heavily on American taxpayers. In a Fox News interview, he pointed to France, Germany, and the United Kingdom as countries prepared to commit resources, including ground forces, if a peacekeeping force is required. "We're willing to help them with things, especially, probably, by air," Trump said. Asked whether U.S. troops would be sent, he replied firmly, "You have my assurance and I'm president."

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reiterated the president's stance, confirming that no U.S. ground forces will be deployed. She said air power remains "an option and a possibility," depending on developments in negotiations.

European leaders have also been weighing possible venues for peace talks. The U.K. confirmed preparations for a reassurance force in the event of a ceasefire, while French President Emmanuel Macron suggested Geneva as a neutral location. Switzerland has formally offered to host talks. Hungary's capital, Budapest, has been mentioned in European discussions as an alternative site.

Russia has stated that any settlement must address its security concerns and that Ukraine should remain outside NATO. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said negotiations must be "prepared very thoroughly."

In Ukraine, skepticism about Moscow's intentions remains high, while in Russia, some citizens have expressed cautious optimism.

For now, the outcome of the process rests on whether Putin and Zelensky will agree to meet and whether European nations will take on the central role in any enforcement mechanism, with the U.S. limited to a supporting position.