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Trump Signals Possible Territorial Swaps in Prospective Russia-Ukraine Peace Agreement

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President Donald Trump suggested on Friday that a future peace agreement aimed at ending Russia’s invasion of Ukraine could involve a “swapping of territories” between the two nations. The remarks came as the conflict, which began in 2022, nears its fourth year. Trump’s comments hint at a potentially significant shift in negotiations as he prepares for a high-stakes meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

When asked whether Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky would have to cede territory to achieve peace, Trump responded that the matter was complex, referencing the heavy toll

the war has taken on both sides. “Well, you’re looking at territory that’s been fought over for three and a half years,” Trump said. “You know, a lot of Russians have died. A lot of Ukrainians have died.”

Trump emphasized that any deal would not solely involve concessions from Ukraine but might also include gains. “So we’re looking at that, but we’re actually looking to get some back,” he stated. “Some swapping. It’s complicated ... but we’re going to get some back, we’re going to get some switched. There’ll be some swapping of territories to the betterment of both, but we’ll be talking about that either later or tomorrow.”

His comments suggest that the negotiations could center on disputed regions that have seen intense fighting since the invasion began. While Trump did not name specific areas, territories in eastern Ukraine and Crimea have remained focal points of contention since Russia’s initial annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the escalation of hostilities in 2022.

The former businessman and current U.S. president is expected to meet with Putin “very shortly” to discuss the terms of a potential settlement. Trump told reporters at the White House that the location of the summit would be disclosed soon, adding, “We’re going to be announcing later, and we’re going to have a meeting with Russia.”

The proposed territorial exchanges could mark a turning point in the conflict, which has caused widespread destruction, strained global energy markets, and reshaped international alliances. The war has left tens of thousands dead and millions displaced, with both sides suffering heavy military and civilian casualties.

For Ukraine, any agreement involving the exchange of territory will likely prove politically sensitive. President Zelensky has repeatedly stated that Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable, making any compromise a potential flashpoint within Ukrainian politics and society. Conversely, Russia has maintained its claim over certain occupied areas, framing them as historically or culturally aligned with Moscow.

Trump’s approach appears focused on pragmatic resolution rather than prolonged military engagement. The concept of “swapping territories” mirrors past geopolitical settlements in other regions, though such agreements often face criticism for legitimizing territorial changes brought about by force.

As preparations for the summit continue, the outcome of Trump's discussions with Putin could have far-reaching consequences not only for Ukraine and Russia but also for NATO, European security, and U.S. foreign policy. While details remain unclear, Trump's remarks signal that territorial adjustments could be a central feature of any eventual peace accord.