

War in Ukraine

Trump fails to secure Ukraine deal at Alaska summit with Putin

Truncated talks end without ceasefire despite US president's warm welcome for Russian leader



The summit in Alaska between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump ended without any significant breakthrough on peace in Ukraine © Reuters

Max Seddon and **Amy Mackinnon** in Anchorage, **James Politi** and **Steff Chávez** in Washington, **Christopher Miller** in New York and **Fabrice Deprez** in Kyiv

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Donald Trump failed to secure any commitment from Vladimir Putin to end the war in Ukraine after a summit in Alaska that began with fanfare but ended in anticlimax.

The meeting was the first between a US president and Putin since the Russian leader ordered the full-scale [invasion of Ukraine](#) in 2022, marking an emphatic end to years of western attempts to isolate him.

Trump said before the meeting that he would demand a ceasefire in Ukraine from Putin. He left Alaska to return to Washington without any kind of commitment from his Russian counterpart, who made it clear he had not dropped his hardline demands for Ukraine to capitulate.

The US president held out the possibility of future meetings with Putin and Ukraine's leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but suggested responsibility for ending the conflict rested with Kyiv and its European allies.

“Now, it’s really up to President Zelenskyy to get it done,” he told Fox News host Sean Hannity after the summit. “And I would also say the European nations, they have to get involved a little bit. But it’s up to President Zelenskyy . . . And if they’d like, I’ll be at that next meeting.”

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US President Donald Trump: 'I believe we had a very productive meeting. There were many, many points that we agreed on.' © Reuters

Trump’s advice to Zelenskyy was “make a deal”. He added: “Russia is a very big power and they’re not. They’re fighting a big war machine.”

Zelenskyy said he would meet Trump in Washington on Monday.

In a post published on social media on Saturday, Zelenskyy said he had held a “long, meaningful” phone call with Trump in which the US president debriefed him on the Alaska summit and discussed possible American involvement “in guaranteeing Ukraine’s security”.

Zelenskyy added that he would aim to discuss “all of the details regarding ending the killing and the war” at Monday’s meeting.

On Saturday Trump posted on his Truth Social network that it had been a “very successful day”. “If all works out” with Zelenskyy, then “we will then schedule a

meeting with President Putin,” he wrote.

“The best way to end the horrific war between Russia and Ukraine is to go directly to a Peace Agreement, which would end the war, and not a mere Ceasefire Agreement,” he added.

On Friday Trump appeared to back away from plans to hit Russia’s economy if Putin did not agree to a ceasefire, suggesting he would defer any proposal to penalise importers of Russian oil such as China.

“Because of what happened today, I don’t think we have to think about that right now,” he said.

The US president’s failure to secure any concessions from Putin in Anchorage dismayed some experts.

William Taylor, a former US ambassador to Kyiv, said the “good news” was there was “no Yalta, no Munich”, referring to the 1945 meeting of US, UK and Soviet leaders that divided Europe, and the 1938 meeting between Nazi Germany and allied nations.

“The bad news is no ceasefire.”

The muted end to the summit came after Trump had [greeted the Russian president](#) with a red carpet rolled out by US military at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. He invited a smiling Putin into “The Beast”, his armoured vehicle, for the short ride to the summit’s venue.

The meeting was a “big win” for Putin, said Andrea Kendall-Taylor, at the Center for a New American Security, especially after Trump had promised severe consequences if the Russian leader did not agree to a ceasefire.

“He’s very good at flipping that leverage back,” said Kendall-Taylor, who previously served as a CIA analyst, referring to Putin.





Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump met for about three hours before holding a short joint press conference © GAVRIIL GRIGOROV/SPUTNIK/KREMLIN POOL/POOL/EPA/Shutterstock

The leaders met for about three hours, each flanked by two senior officials and an interpreter. They gave statements afterwards in a 12-minute news conference that offered no details. They declined to take questions.

As the presidents wrapped up their remarks, at least seven regions of Ukraine were under air raid alert amid what authorities in Kyiv said were attacks by Russian drones, missiles and guided aerial bombs.

They appeared to differ on whether they had come to any agreement. A planned second meeting between the two leaders' teams in Anchorage was scrapped.

Putin, who spoke first at the news conference, said he hoped "the agreements today will become a starting point not just to solve the Ukrainian problem, but also to start restoring businesslike, pragmatic relations between Russia and the US".

"There's no deal until there's a deal," Trump said. "We didn't get there, but we have a very good chance of getting there."

Eric Green, who worked in Joe Biden's National Security Council and organised the former president's 2021 meeting with Putin in Geneva, said the Anchorage summit reflected the US's shifting Ukraine policy under Trump.

“The visuals and the symbolism were to me a continuation of the Oval Office Zelenskyy meeting,” referring to the White House shouting match with the Ukrainian president in February.

“You have this seemingly inexorable erosion of Ukraine’s position, where the US is giving away more of its leverage, ending Putin’s isolation, and raising fundamental questions about what Trump’s vision is about European security and Ukraine and Russia’s positions in it.”

The summit was hastily convened in little over a week after Trump expressed frustration with Putin’s refusal to drop his hardline demands for Ukraine’s capitulation.

Putin said they hoped “the understanding” reached with Trump in Anchorage would help bring peace, but suggested his position remained unchanged.

“Russia sincerely wants to end the Ukrainian conflict, but all the root causes of the conflict must be resolved,” he said.

A Ukrainian presidential aide described the outcome of the meeting as “very strange”. But an early read from the Ukrainian president’s team was that little progress had been made, with another aide to the president describing the meeting as a “nothing burger”.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that Russia’s invasion would not have happened on his watch. Putin sought to play to Trump’s ego during the press conference, saying he agreed with the sentiment. Trump turned to Putin and nodded in assent.

When Trump said he hoped to meet Putin again soon, the Russian leader replied in English: “Next time in Moscow?”

Trump responded: “That’s an interesting one. I’ll get a little heat on that one, but I could see it possibly happening.”

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