

# 5 Things to Know Ahead of Trump's Meeting With Putin

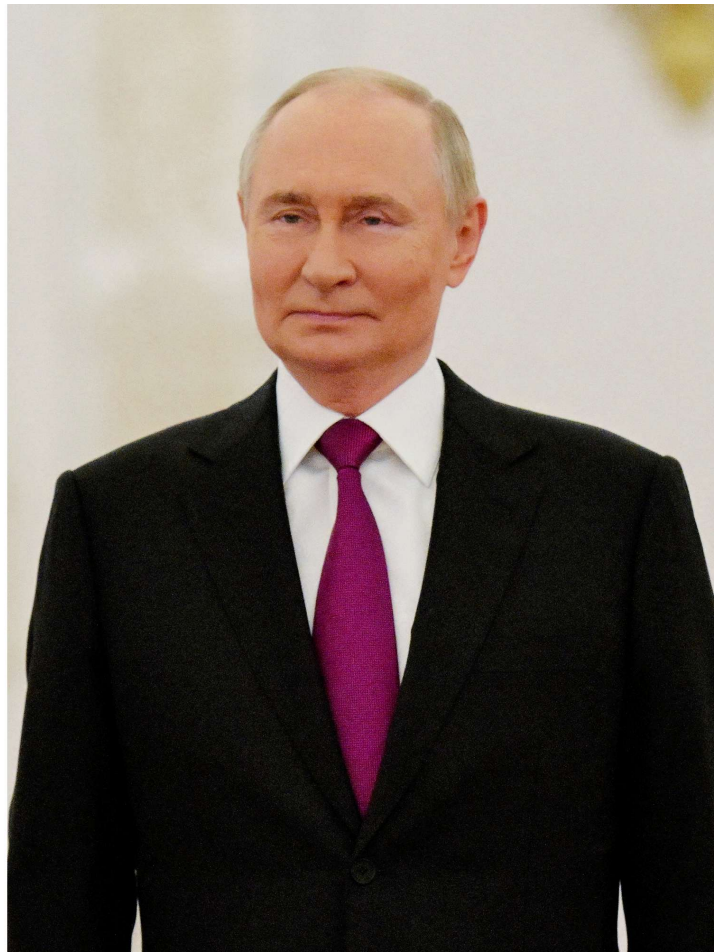
The two leaders are set to meet in Alaska on Aug. 15 to discuss a way to end the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict.

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(Left) President Donald Trump outside the West Wing of the White House on July 16, 2025. (Right) Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin in Moscow on Aug. 7, 2025. Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images, Alexei Nikolsky/Pool/AFP via Getty Images

U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are set to meet in Anchorage, Alaska, on Aug. 15, in an effort to bring the Russia–Ukraine conflict to a close.

The summit will be the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders since the start of Trump’s second term and the first time that the presidents of the two countries have met since Russian troops entered Ukraine in February of 2022, setting off the current phase of the conflict.

While Russian and Ukrainian forces have been in direct combat for about 3 1/2 years, the current conflict is part of a larger struggle for regional influence between Russia and the West.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who had been on friendly terms with Russia, fled Ukraine in February 2014, amid violent street demonstrations over his decision to back out of an agreement to expand economic ties with the European Union.

In February 2014, just days after Yanukovich fled Ukraine, Russian forces seized control of the Crimean Peninsula. By March, Moscow had formally declared Russia’s annexation of the territory. In Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, pro-Russian secessionists began to break from the post-Yanukovich Ukrainian government, setting the stage for a Ukrainian internal conflict that bled into the current stage of direct fighting between Russia and Ukraine.

The United States and various other countries around the world have supported Ukraine throughout the current stage of conflict, supplying weapons and financial aid to Kyiv, while expanding sanctions intended to isolate Russia financially.

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Since 2022, the United States has appropriated \$175 billion in direct aid and financial support to address the ongoing conflict and related regional security efforts, with about \$128 billion of that going as direct support to Ukraine, according to an [assessment](#) by the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations.

Throughout his 2024 presidential campaign and into his second presidential term, Trump repeatedly chafed at the U.S. financial commitment to Ukraine thus far, called on Europe to take on a greater share of the financial burden for its regional security, and expressed a desire to quickly negotiate an end to the conflict.

Although Trump said at points on the campaign trail that he could get a deal to resolve the Ukraine conflict within 24 hours of taking office, a truce has remained elusive.

Last month, amid growing frustration with the slow pace of negotiations, the U.S. president set an Aug. 8 deadline for his Russian counterpart to agree to a cease-fire deal to avoid new U.S. sanctions and economic penalties targeting Russia and its trade partners. As this deadline passed, Trump [announced](#) that he and Putin would meet in person but provided no further update about the sanctions threat.

Trump and Putin are expected to meet at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson at 11:30 a.m. local time.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will not be in attendance.

## **Trump Suggests Land Swaps Likely**

In addition to holding Crimea since 2014, Russian forces have managed to capture virtually all of the Luhansk region and the majority of three other Ukrainian regions: Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson. In all, Russia's holdings cover about 20 percent of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory.





A map of Ukraine is displayed as senior Russian defense officials brief on military operations in Ukraine in Moscow on March 25, 2022. U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to meet in Anchorage, Alaska, on Aug. 15 in a bid to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Natalia Kolesnikova/AFP via Getty Images

Since announcing his meeting with Putin, Trump has said that a deal to end the conflict could entail some exchanges of captured land.

Trump said Russian forces currently hold some valuable territory within Ukraine.

“We’re going to change the lines, the battle lines,” he said. “Russia’s occupied a big portion of Ukraine. They’ve occupied some very prime territory. We’re going to try and get some of that territory back for Ukraine.”

Zelenskyy has already raised opposition to the idea of ceding any Ukrainian territorial claims, noting that his country’s constitution prohibits such action.

“The answer to the Ukrainian territorial question already is in the Constitution of Ukraine,” Zelenskyy [said](#) in an Aug. 8 statement. “No one will deviate from this—and no one will be able to. Ukrainians will not gift their land to the occupier.”



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## There'll be some swapping. There'll be some changes in land.

*President Donald Trump*

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Trump expressed frustration with Zelenskyy's stance during his Aug. 11 press conference.

"I was a little bothered by the fact that Zelenskyy was saying, 'Well, I have to get constitutional approval,'" Trump said. "I mean, he's got approval to go into war, kill everybody, but he needs approval to do a land swap because there'll be some land swapping going on."

Trump said there will be "good stuff" and "some bad stuff" for both parties as negotiations proceed.

### Zelenskyy's Conditions

Zelenskyy spoke with Ukraine's various foreign supporters on Aug. 13, including the heads of state of Finland, Lithuania, Romania, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey.

"The participants also agreed that negotiations can only yield results if they are held under a ceasefire," Zelenskyy's office [stated](#). "The leaders decided that if Russia does not agree to this step during the meeting in Alaska, sanctions against Russia's war economy will be strengthened."



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (L) and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz prepare to talk with European leaders and U.S. President Donald Trump on the Ukraine–Russia war ahead of the summit between the United States and Russia, on Aug. 13, 2025. John Macdougall/POOL/AFP via Getty Images

Zelenskyy’s office stated that the meeting participants also “emphasized that international borders cannot be changed by force and that Ukraine, together with other European countries, must have reliable security guarantees.”

Ukraine has sought entry into NATO for years.

“The leaders stressed that there can be no restrictions on Ukraine’s defense cooperation with other countries, nor can Russia have a veto over Ukraine’s accession to the EU and NATO,” Zelenskyy’s office stated.

Putin has opposed Ukrainian entry into NATO and has made it a wartime goal to prevent such an outcome.

## **Non-NATO Security Guarantees Possible: Macron**

Addressing reporters at Fort de Brégançon on Aug. 13, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that he spoke with Trump ahead of the Alaska summit.



Macron said Trump was supportive of continued security guarantees for Ukraine but emphasized that these guarantees would not exist under the NATO umbrella.

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty entails a mutual defense provision, committing NATO member nations to support the defense of any other NATO member that is attacked. A NATO security guarantee for Ukraine could precipitate a larger direct conflict between Russia and the Western alliance.

## Trump Threatens ‘Severe Consequences’ for Russia

In remarks on Aug. 13, Trump said that there would be “very severe consequences” for Russia if the Alaska summit with Putin does not set them on a path to finally end the Ukraine conflict.

The U.S. president did not specify what those consequences might entail.

Although the United States did not impose direct sanctions on Russia after Trump’s Aug. 8 deadline expired, it did [levy](#) a 50 percent tariff on India last week for continuing to purchase Russian fossil fuel products.



A customer shops for groceries imported from India in the Little India neighborhood of Artesia, Calif., on Aug. 7, 2025. Trump said his administration's recent decision to impose a 50 percent tariff on India for continuing to buy Russian fossil fuels likely influenced Putin to initiate the upcoming Alaska meeting. Patrick T. Fallon/AFP via Getty Images

Trump has threatened to impose so-called secondary tariffs, targeting exports from Russia's top trade partners. China has led India as a top purchaser of Russian fossil fuel exports, but Trump has yet to impose similar secondary tariffs against Beijing.

Speaking with Fox News radio host Brian Kilmeade on Aug. 14, Trump said his decision to impose tariffs on India likely contributed to Putin's decision to seek the Alaska meeting.

"Certainly when you lose your second-largest customer and you're probably going to lose your first-largest customer, I think that probably has a role," Trump [said](#).

## Possible Next Steps

As he spoke with Kilmeade on Aug. 14, Trump said, "There is a 25 percent chance that this meeting will not be a successful meeting."

The president indicated that further meetings may be necessary to bring about a deal to end the current Ukraine conflict.

"It's like a chess game. This meeting sets up the second meeting," Trump said.

Following his discussions with his various international supporters on Aug. 13, Zelenskyy said that there should be a trilateral format to discuss the conflict.

Last week, Putin said he was open to the idea of direct talks with Zelenskyy but said the conditions aren't yet right for such a discussion.

"I have reiterated that I have nothing against that on the whole, it is possible," Putin said in remarks carried by Russia's state-backed TASS news agency. "However, certain conditions should be created to do that. Regrettably, there is still a long haul ahead for creation of such conditions."

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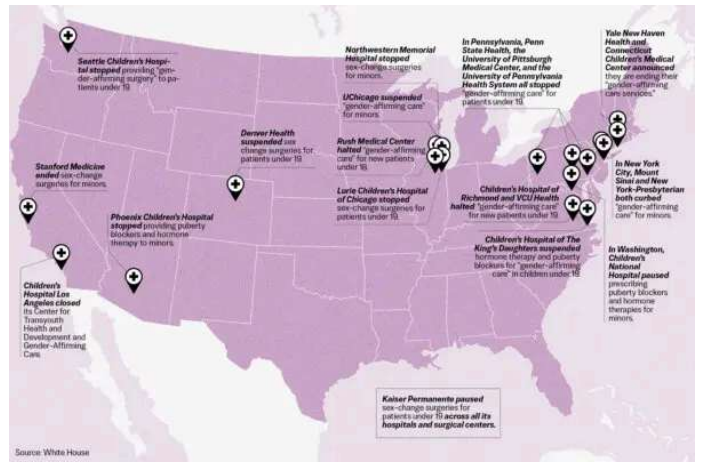
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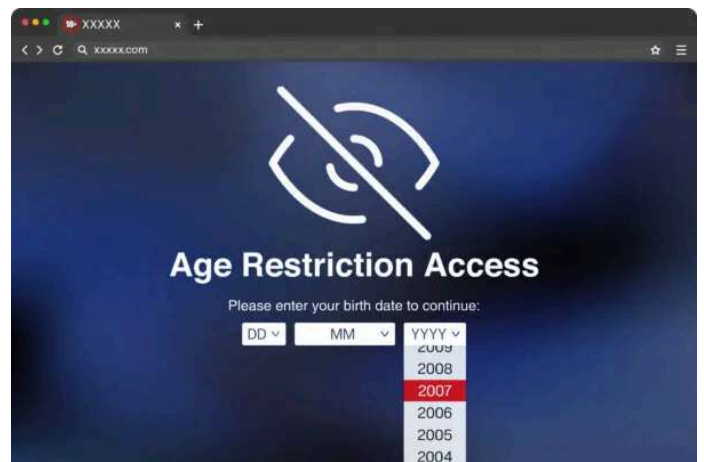
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