

Historic Trump–Putin Summit Could Reshape Global Politics Forever

Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin are about to make decisions that could radically alter the trajectory of human history. When they meet in Alaska on Friday, the stakes will be incredibly high. If they are able to agree to some sort of a deal, the world will rejoice. But if the meeting goes badly, there will be immense pressure on western leaders to militarily intervene in Ukraine in order to prevent Russia from taking as much territory as it wants. At the moment, Russian forces are moving forward quite rapidly. If negotiations can stop them, western leaders will be thrilled. But if talks fail, the conflict in Ukraine will dramatically escalate, and that will put us dangerously close to nuclear war.

On Wednesday, President Trump was asked about what will happen if the Russians do not agree to end the war.

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President Trump responded by warning that there will be “very severe consequences.”

US President Donald Trump promised “very severe consequences” on Russia if its President Vladimir Putin doesn’t agree to end his war in Ukraine during the two leaders’ meeting on Friday.

“There will be consequences,” Trump just said during an event at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

Asked if that meant new sanctions or tariffs, Trump demurred.

"I don't have to say," he said, adding only: "There will be very severe consequences."

This was not a wise thing to say just before such an important meeting.

As I have stated over and over again, threatening the Russians will not work.

If Trump insists on making threats, it will backfire severely.



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The Russians have already said that they are willing to end the war, but they want certain things in return.

Of course what the Russians have proposed is not acceptable to the Ukrainians or to our European allies at all, and that is not likely to change any time soon.

A virtual conference that included Trump and leaders from all over Europe was held on Wednesday, and President Trump felt that it went very well.

The president joined a call earlier on Aug. 13 with Zelenskyy and European leaders, two days before Trump's one-on-one summit with Putin in Alaska. Trump is trying to push Moscow into a peace deal that Kyiv and its allies fear will include the loss of significant territory seized by Russia in its three-year war on Ukraine.

"I would rate it a 10," Trump told reporters on August 13 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. "Very friendly."

Zelenskyy was in Berlin for the virtual conference hosted by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz that included the leaders of Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, the European Union and NATO. Vice President JD Vance was also expected to

join the portion that included Trump.

Following the virtual conference, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz made it exceedingly clear where our European allies stand.

The German leader said Ukraine would need a seat at the table if peace was to be reached in Ukraine, and that he told Mr. Trump he would speak to him after his Alaska meeting with Putin.

“We want to make sure that the right chronology happens: that there is a ceasefire and that there is an agreement that is discussed after that,” he said. “A legal recognition of Russian ownership of this territory cannot happen. There have to be robust security guarantees. The sovereignty of Ukraine has to be respected. Negotiations have to be part of a larger transatlantic strategy, and has to be part of necessary pressure on Russia.”

Merz added, “If there is no movement on the Russian side, we and the U.S. have to put more pressure on Russia. President Trump knows this position and largely agrees with it, and we had a good conversation with each other.”

Merz obviously does not want a peace agreement to happen, because there is no way that the Russians are going to agree to any of that.

The Russians are not going to give one inch of the territory that they have taken in the five provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Crimea back to Ukraine.

In fact, the Russians want Ukraine to hand over all of the territory that the Ukrainians are still holding in those five provinces.

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If Ukraine is not willing to hand over all of that territory, Russia will simply take it.

That is the Russian position, and they see no reason to compromise because they are clearly winning the war.

When asked about Trump's suggestion that there could be some "swapping of territories", the Russians made it very clear that this is a non-starter.

Russia pointed to its constitution in response to a remark by U.S. President Donald Trump that there would likely be a "swapping of territories" in a deal to end Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

Trump is due to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday to discuss a peace deal. Territorial control is a key issue. Russia has seized about a fifth of Ukrainian land in the east. Ukraine controls no Russian territory.

Asked about Trump's suggestion that Russia and Ukraine could swap land, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Alexei Fadeev said at a news briefing on Wednesday that there was "no need to even invent anything territorial."

"The structure of the Russian Federation is enshrined in the Constitution of our country," Fadeev said, originally in Russian. "That says it all."

The Russians also want Ukraine to be permanently banned from joining NATO.

This is something that the Ukrainians and our European allies are adamantly against.

So I have no idea why so many pundits think that a deal is

possible, because the two sides are not even in the same universe when it comes to what an acceptable deal would look like.

Ahead of the meeting on Friday, the White House has been trying to play down expectations.

“This is a listening exercise for the president,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Aug. 12. “This is for the president to go and to get a more firm and better understanding of how we can hopefully bring this war to an end.”

I give Trump credit for being willing to sit down with Putin.

The window of opportunity for a peaceful solution is almost closed, and so let's hope that this last-ditch effort is successful.

Because if it isn't successful and we get to the “very severe consequences” phase, that will have massive implications for all of humanity.

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Twenty years ago, if someone told you that a day would come when the only thing standing between us and nuclear war would be Donald Trump, would you have believed it?

But here we are.

The meeting in Alaska on Friday really will be one of the most important events in modern history, and the fate of our society is hanging in the balance.

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