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- Ukraine – European Union
- Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine
- The course of the Russian-Ukrainian war

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## Ukraine – European Union

- *THEME ANALYSIS: 'Freezing' the front line, or thawing Russian assets on the EU agenda*



*Photo: Getty Images*

Over the next week to ten days, Ukraine will work with European leaders on a concise plan for a ceasefire. President Volodymyr Zelensky announced this in an interview with Axios. This came after Zelensky's meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House on 17 October. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer proposed developing a peace initiative based on Washington's approach to Gaza. According to Zelensky, he has already discussed this idea with the British Prime Minister and other European partners. The President noted that the situations in Ukraine and Gaza are different, but he is ready to work on the proposal. The plan should contain only key points, without excessive details. "A few clear points, in particular regarding the ceasefire. We agreed that we would work on this over the next week or ten days," Zelensky said. At the same time, he expressed doubt about Russian President Vladimir Putin's willingness to accept any peace proposals. Zelensky called the American meeting at the White House 'constructive' but not easy. 'I spoke with President Trump about the need to increase pressure on Russia. I think he also wants to exert pressure, but does not want escalation or the closure of diplomatic opportunities,' the head of state explained. According to him, the parties were able to find a common vision. 'President Trump said that we need to fix the current situation and start negotiations,' Zelensky said. He also added that the conversation between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was 'not positive.' According to Zelensky, this is not the first time that Putin and his entourage have rejected proposals from the American side. The Ukrainian leader also refuted claims about the alleged advance of Russian troops. He stressed that he had conveyed this information to the American side, which, according to US intelligence, also

does not see any advantage for either side on the front line. Zelensky stressed that Russia's plans for the complete occupation of Donbas by 15 October had failed, as indicated by Ukrainian intelligence data. "Russia is unable to achieve this: Putin does not have enough forces. His most combat-ready units have been destroyed. The front line has remained largely stable over the past few months," the President added. According to estimates by the Ukrainian command, by 2025 Russia will have lost 346,000 killed and wounded — virtually the same number that were mobilised during this period.

So now **Ukraine is working with international partners to develop a unified peace plan**. No 'alternative' initiatives from individual states are being considered. This was stated by the head of the President's Office, Andriy Yermak, in a comment to RBC-Ukraine, commenting on media reports about alleged parallel options from the US, EU or other countries. "There is a lot of discussion in the media right now about other plans — separately in the US, the EU or individual countries. I want to emphasise: this is not true. There are no different options for us to choose from, and even less so — for someone else to choose for us. There are working discussions on specific formulations, and all partners are in constant dialogue," Yermak said.<sup>1</sup> He noted that joint work should result in the creation of a single coordinated document that fully takes into account Ukraine's national interests. 'This is not about competing initiatives, but about combining the efforts of Ukraine, the EU, the US and other allies. The role of the United States in this process is key,' the head of the Presidential Office emphasised.

According to Yermak, the positions of Kyiv, Washington and European capitals coincide: any negotiations must start with a ceasefire on the current front line. He also positively assessed Donald Trump's participation as a politician capable of helping to establish a just peace with security guarantees for Ukraine. At the same time, the proposals prepared by the European Commission to meet Ukraine's financial needs in 2026-2027 plan to present several options for sources of funding, with the main emphasis on the use of frozen Russian sovereign assets.

This was announced by European Commission spokeswoman Paula Pinho during a briefing in Brussels on 27 October, according to a correspondent for European Truth. According to her, the European Commission continues to view frozen Russian assets in the EU as a key potential source of financial support for Ukraine. 'In the document that will contain possible decisions on further financing for Ukraine, we will consider other options. However, without a doubt, the main focus should remain on the use of frozen assets,' Pinheiro said.

She specified that analytical material on possible approaches to financing will be presented in the near future so that EU leaders can make the necessary decisions at the European Council meeting on 18 December. When asked whether this would only apply to Russian sovereign assets frozen in Belgium or also to other member states, the spokesperson emphasised that the details were still being finalised and that the question 'remained open.'

On 23 October, at the European Council summit in Brussels, one of the central issues was the financing of Ukraine in 2026–2027 and the possibility of using frozen Russian assets for this purpose. Following the discussion, despite the heated rhetoric of leaders from various countries, no breakthrough or decisive decisions were made. There is political agreement

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<sup>1</sup> Буде єдиний мирний план: у Зеленського розповіли про підготовку документа з ЄС та США. 24.10.2025. <https://www.slovoidilo.ua/2025/10/31/novyna/polityka/bude-yedynyj-myrynij-plan-zelenskoho-rozpovily-pro-pidhotovku-dokumenta-yes-ta-ssha>

among EU member states on a reparations loan, which was difficult to imagine a year ago, but no final decision has been made yet. **The main obstacle remains the lack of a legally sound mechanism.** This summit confirmed that the process is moving from political statements to financial formulas and legal guarantees. We are talking about the creation of a new model of assistance, which should come *replacing Ukraine Facility* and turn on **defence component**. In the final document, the leaders emphasised that Russia's frozen assets will remain under EU jurisdiction until Russia compensates Ukraine for the damage caused. At the same time, the European Commission must propose a legal way to use these assets. It was also emphasised that support for Ukraine must be continuous — preparations for funding for 2026 must begin now in order to avoid a gap between current and future aid programmes. Thus, this is not about stopping, but about moving on to a thorough review of the legal and financial mechanisms for long-term support for Ukraine. ***The main difficulties currently lie not in the political sphere, but in the financial, economic and legal spheres.***

Belgium, which holds the largest portion of frozen Russian assets through Euroclear — over €190 billion — is demanding guarantees that it will not be the sole defendant in the event of lawsuits by Russia or other legal risks. The eurozone cannot allow a key international depository with trillions of client funds to come under attack from legal mechanisms. Brussels therefore insists that the risks be shared among all EU member states. The ECB supports this position, emphasising that any decision must be fully compliant with international law and not undermine confidence in the euro. The result is a legal pause rather than a political slowdown.

A week before the Brussels summit, at the IMF and World Bank meeting in Washington **The European Commission presented the concept of a reparations loan, confirming the EU's readiness to assume long-term financial responsibility for Ukraine.** However, the US refrained from clearly supporting the idea of using Russian assets at that time, as it was not ready to participate in a scheme with high legal risks. The American position is particularly important because ***without the participation of the United States, the mechanism will not take on the format of the G7, and also because Washington has a decisive influence in the IMF, which is forming a new programme for Ukraine.*** According to preliminary estimates by the Fund, the programme will include recommendations for a gradual devaluation of the hryvnia to reduce pressure on reserves and reduce the trade deficit. This position of the IMF strengthened Belgium's arguments and allowed the decision on the reparations loan to be postponed.

**Discussions are also ongoing between Kyiv and Brussels regarding control over the use of funds.** Ukraine advocates maximum flexibility and the allocation of funding to its own priorities — from strengthening air defence to rapid procurement outside the EU, if it is cheaper and faster, as well as the inclusion of reconstruction and compensation for victims in this mechanism. European states, primarily France, demand that funding be maximised: **'European' — with a focus on EU defence production and efficiency control.** The European Commission is seeking a compromise model: priority for European contracts with the possibility of flexible non-European procurement in case of urgent need in Ukraine. This balance of interests should be established in December.

By the December EU meeting, the European Commission must develop a comprehensive financial architecture — risk sharing among member states, a legal and effective format for using frozen Russian assets, and ensuring investor stability. Several areas of work are already being outlined:

- creating a joint guarantee system to remove the reservations of Belgium, France and Luxembourg;

- creating a new generation of debt instruments — reparation bonds, possibly with the involvement of the European Investment Bank or the European Stability Mechanism, secured by interest income from Russian assets; expanding the participation of G7 partners — the US, Canada, Japan — to give the mechanism a global dimension;
- and preparing contingency plans, including expanding the current ERA Loan programme..

**Ukraine is entering a period of complex institutional work in all areas** — from legal processing of the loan mechanism with the European Commission to agreeing on the macroeconomic parameters of the new programme with the IMF, in particular regarding the exchange rate and inflation. At the same time, Kyiv must prepare a financial ‘plan B’ in case of a delay in a large loan — from bilateral grants and loans to a more ambitious IMF programme.<sup>2</sup>

Brussels has not made a final decision either way. *Europe continues to move forward, but requires the most accurate legal and financial formalisation of decisions.* The reparation mechanism is shifting from the political sphere to the realm of specific calculations and agreed interests. For Ukraine, this is a moment when it needs to act proactively and work with its partners to develop a solution that combines law, geopolitics and national needs. December will be a test of maturity for both the Eurosystem and Ukrainian institutions. If, by that time, the EU is able to translate its political intentions into a clear and effective financial instrument, and Ukraine is able to integrate its priorities into its parameters, this will create a solid foundation for our stability and future victory.

In this context, Norway could play a decisive role. Although not a member of the EU, it has the highest AAA credit rating in Europe thanks to its \$2 trillion sovereign wealth fund and strong institutions. **Oslo can take on the risks associated with new Ukrainian debt without damaging its rating**, by strengthening Ukraine's defences and reducing financial risks for European allies.

Although the Norwegian government already provides financial support for Ukraine's military efforts, it has refused to transfer €109 billion in windfall profits from natural gas sales in 2022–2023, which were a direct result of the surge in energy prices caused by Russia's war against Ukraine. By retaining these profits, the Norwegian government has effectively become a military profiteer. This is likely due to fears of setting a dangerous precedent for withdrawals from the state welfare fund, but securing the EU credit scheme for Ukraine does not require any withdrawals.

Before issuing a state guarantee, Norway could insist that Russian assets remain frozen for the entire term of the loan and that repayment only occur after Russia compensates Ukraine for the destruction caused by the war. Otherwise, Russian assets would remain frozen in accordance with the European Council's decision. In the unlikely event that Russia provides Ukraine with adequate compensation, potentially unfreezing Russian assets in Belgium, the contingent liability could initially fall on the EU itself, with its AAA rating, with Norway acting as a backup guarantee. In another scenario, Norway could take on this contingent liability directly, finally dispelling its image as a country that profits from war.

The same would apply if Russia tried to recover the frozen assets through the courts. Norway's cynical stinginess towards Ukraine has undermined its global reputation, especially

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<sup>2</sup> Умови для допомоги Україні: за яких обставин ЄС піде на використання активів РФ. 27.10.2025. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/articles/2025/10/27/7223390/>



in the eyes of its Scandinavian neighbours. Although allocations to Ukraine have increased recently, they remain only a fraction of its total military revenues. Jens Stoltenberg, the former NATO secretary general who became Norway's finance minister in February this year, recently wrote a memoir about his time at the helm of the alliance, when Russia's invasion became the most serious challenge since the end of the Cold War, and should realise that his legacy risks being tarnished by inaction in promoting Ukraine's defence and the rearmament of Europe. Stoltenberg, together with Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and the entire Norwegian parliament, should consider **providing a state guarantee as Norway's sovereign obligation to its allies and European democracies.**

The EU is currently developing a mechanism for using frozen Russian state assets to support Ukraine's defence, but one of the main obstacles remains the potential risks to the credit ratings of some member states. 'However, additional state guarantees are needed to implement this scheme, and this is where the difficulty lies,' experts note. For EU countries with high debt burdens, such as France, additional contingent liabilities could pose a risk to credit ratings and affect public debt servicing. Thus, granting a loan to Ukraine depends on the extent to which member states can convince rating agencies that their guarantees do not increase the actual debt.<sup>3</sup>

At present, both initiatives are still under discussion without any results. The plan to guarantee gas supplies can be considered a de facto path to Trump, which is unlikely to correspond to reality. However, the path to utilising Russian assets is truly important for ensuring Ukraine's victory. Nevertheless, ***Unfortunately, European countries still tend to prioritise short-term gains and avoid any financial fluctuations over long-term existential challenges.***

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<sup>3</sup> Як Норвегія може допомогти Україні отримати "репараційний кредит". 24.10.2025. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2025/10/24/7223248/>

## Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

- **THEME ANALYSIS:** *The Ukrainian question in the focus of the economic war between the US and China and Russia*



*Source: Getty Images*

On 30 October, Donald Trump and Xi Jinping held their first face-to-face meeting in six years in South Korea. Against the backdrop of the tariff war, the conflict over Taiwan, the war in Ukraine, and general tensions in the global economy, both leaders will try to lower the temperature of the confrontation and outline the rules for a new global balance. Despite political tensions, the economic interdependence between the US and China remains extremely high. At the end of 2024, trade between the two countries amounted to approximately \$585 billion, with Chinese exports accounting for the majority. Beijing has a trade surplus of approximately \$440 billion in exports against \$145 billion in imports from the US, which has been a major irritant for Washington.

In response to American tariffs, China has used non-tariff methods of influence, including restricting exports of rare earth metals and launching antitrust investigations against Chinese subsidiaries of American companies. This shows that Beijing is ready to defend its positions not only diplomatically, but also economically and corporately. A few months before the APEC summit, the US planned to impose additional 100% tariffs on Chinese imports, while China responded with restrictions on exports of critical materials. This ***cooperation has turned into a global battle for technological and economic autonomy.***

On the eve of the meeting, both sides are trying to maintain balance. The US emphasises ‘fair trade and supply chain security,’ while China calls for avoiding Cold War-style thinking and adhering to mutual respect. American officials report a preliminary framework agreement that provides for the suspension of increased tariffs and a reduction in Chinese control over exports of rare earth metals.



The main topics of the negotiations will be trade, technology, security, and control over global flows of influence. The US will demand that China lift restrictions on the export of rare earth elements and, in return, is prepared to consider postponing tariffs on Chinese goods. China wants guarantees that the US will not block its access to technology and financial instruments, and is prepared to take symbolic steps such as purchasing American soybeans. Issues related to the control of high-tech exports – chips, artificial intelligence and telecommunications equipment – will also be important. Security, in particular Taiwan and transparent communications in the field of defence, will be discussed separately. The US also insists on transparency in China's military contacts with Russia and possible restrictions on technology supplies to the Russian military-industrial complex. The topic of the war in Ukraine will also be among the key issues, in particular China's influence on Moscow.

Another item on the agenda will be the fight against drug trafficking, in particular the control of exports of precursors for fentanyl. This is an important domestic political issue for the US, while China may use it for a quick symbolic compromise. In diplomatic terms, the meeting between Trump and Xi is not so much a reconciliation as a regrouping before the next stage of the global geopolitical game.

**Ukraine also made it into the list of key topics.** It is important for the US to understand whether Beijing can limit its technological, economic and diplomatic support for Russia. From China's point of view, the war in Ukraine is a matter of image for a global player trying to balance between the West and the East. ***China formally maintains neutrality and calls for a political settlement, but at the same time is deepening ties with Moscow in the fields of technology, energy and supplies.*** If Beijing at least partially restricts its assistance to Russia, this will signal US support for a change in the geopolitical balance, which is important for Kyiv. Diplomat Roman Bezsmertny adds that radical changes in relations between Moscow and Beijing are currently unlikely: Xi Jinping is unlikely to agree to Trump's proposal to refuse to import hydrocarbons from Russia.

The meeting between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump was one of the most high-profile in recent years, opening up the possibility for Beijing to participate more actively in resolving the war in Ukraine. This was stated by Chinese government adviser David Daokui Li in a comment to Bloomberg. He stressed that this meeting is of historical significance, as the US has effectively recognised China as an equal partner in the negotiations, and one of the key issues in future talks will be the situation in Ukraine. "Of all the meetings between the two leaders, this one is perhaps the most important. The most important progress is the US's recognition of China as an equal partner in discussing important issues," Li said.

After the summit, Trump announced that Washington and Beijing had agreed to cooperate to resolve the situation between Russia and Ukraine. The details of the agreements are not yet known, but experts believe that China's participation could significantly influence the diplomatic context surrounding the war. In addition, the meeting ended with an announcement **one-year trade truce** and agreements on customs duties and export controls for strategically important minerals. The most interesting thing, according to analysts, is the potential involvement of China in resolving security issues, in particular the situation in Ukraine. According to Li, there has been noticeable enthusiasm since the summit in Beijing, and the publication by Xi Jinping's chief of staff, Cai Qi, on 'proactive management of the international space' indicates ***China's growing confidence in its global role.*** At the same time, the US continues to reduce its strategic dependence on China and strengthen its alliances against the backdrop of Russia's war against Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump did not limit himself, spending almost the entire last week of October in Asia. He achieved a temporary truce on several fronts of the trade war, which he

himself initiated by imposing tariffs on various countries. At the same time, he failed to establish long-term economic mechanisms and dispel doubts about the US's strategic commitment to the region. Despite this, Trump's meetings in Japan, currently perhaps the US's main ally in Asia due to its economic and military power and its counterbalance to China, were successful. Relations with Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who has close ties to former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and facilitated the dialogue, were particularly successful. Japan's increased defence spending and promises of significant investment in the US also had a positive impact.

The US also improved its economic relations with South Korea. The allies learned to respond to Trump's diplomatic demands in a complex and flexible manner: showing respect, giving gifts, increasing defence spending and investing in the US were key to the success of the visit. The positive tone of these meetings created a favourable backdrop for Trump's negotiations with Chinese President Xi Jinping. **The meeting with China resulted in a truce in the trade war, although deep economic differences and geopolitical tensions remain.** China has agreed to partially resume purchases of American soybeans and restrict exports of chemicals used in the production of fentanyl. Restrictions on the export of rare earth minerals have also been postponed for a year. The US, in turn, will reduce the overall tariff on Chinese goods from 57% to 47%.

However, **the truce is not long-lasting**: Trade disputes may resume, as was the case with Canada. Many US production chains depend on Chinese minerals and components, which gives China leverage in crisis situations. Also, after the negotiations, there was no complete consensus on a new era of US-China relations, including Taiwan, Russia's purchase of energy resources, and support for the Russian Federation. There is a sense of relief in the region due to the stabilisation of economic relations, as countries do not want to be forced to choose between two great powers. China remains a key trading partner and military power, while the security and economic well-being of many countries in the Indo-Pacific region depends on the US.

However, not everything has gone smoothly: US relations with Vietnam and India have taken a turn for the worse, which benefits China. In addition, the US has weakened its position in the region by refusing to join the main regional trade pact and due to Trump's unpredictable behaviour with tariffs.

**There is also tension within the United States.** The suspension of federal agencies, strict immigration restrictions, cuts in research funding and pressure on universities are calling into question the country's long-term competitiveness.

**The inconsistency of foreign policy is a cause for great concern**: The weak position on Ukraine and soft stance towards Russia raise fears that the US may behave similarly towards Taiwan and China. Allies in Asia are also puzzled by US military actions in Venezuela, the National Guard inside the country, and pressure on Panama. Announced plans to reduce troops in Europe reinforce the impression of a transition to a new, unpredictable phase in foreign policy.

Returning to the importance of Ukraine, US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, during a conversation with journalists aboard Air Force One, Trump said that the US is ready to cooperate with Beijing to make progress in the peaceful settlement of the war in Ukraine. "We will work together to do something. We agreed that both sides are stuck in a struggle, and sometimes you have to let them fight. It's crazy. But Xi will help us,

and we will work together on Ukraine," the US president said, adding that it pains him to see thousands of young people dying.<sup>4</sup>

Trump also noted that although China buys oil from Russia, energy issues were not discussed at the meeting, and the main focus was on joint efforts to end the war. He recalled that the US supplies weapons to NATO allies, most of which go to Ukraine. Trump said that the shared desire to end the conflict was discussed, noting that both sides are 'stuck in combat' and 'sometimes you have to let them fight.' At the same time, the Chinese side did not mention Ukraine in its official statement, focusing on bilateral relations and trade and economic cooperation. Political scientists and diplomats note that such caution was expected: Beijing is currently ready for dialogue on resolving the war, but did not provide specific answers to priority proposals, and the meeting itself focused on economic and bilateral issues.

Following the meeting, it was agreed that Trump would visit China in April 2026, and Xi Jinping would make a reciprocal visit to the United States. Experts note that no significant progress in the diplomatic process regarding the war should be expected until next spring. Political scientist Oleg Lisny notes that at this point ***There are no specific agreements between Trump and Xi regarding Ukraine.*** He outlines two scenarios: first, relative calm without escalation can be expected until the next meeting; second, even if Trump is counting on a lull, it will be difficult for him to achieve this due to Putin's actions, which are raising the stakes, particularly nuclear ones.

Lisny emphasises that the dialogue between the leaders of the US and China was pragmatic rather than friendly, with each side retaining its leverage. ***China is currently interested in maintaining the war as an element of strategic advantage,*** while demonstrating certain signalling steps towards the United States.

Political scientist Viktor Nebozhenko adds that freezing the negotiation process until April 2026 is beneficial to Russia, creating additional conditions for Putin. According to him, in the global context, the current situation with Ukraine is taking a back seat to the nuclear standoff between the US and Russia. Nebozhenko also notes that Donald Trump, without even waiting for April, will be forced to provide more intensive assistance to Ukraine in order to put pressure on the Kremlin. This may include more active cooperation with the European Union in supplying effective weapons. For example, the US may allow Germany to transfer Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine, which, according to the expert, would significantly change the balance of power in the region.

Thus, in fact, the meeting did not change China's status quo in the war. Moreover, it did not restore the United States' credibility among the region's main allies. Most likely, this can be described as another ***A pompous performance on Trump's part, which has little practical effect.*** It is unlikely that Beijing even considers the opinion of the United States in its position. If Washington really wants to show its strength, it is time to take concrete steps rather than diplomatic parades.

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<sup>4</sup> "Міна" від Пекіна: чи дійсно Сі Цзіньпін змусить Путіна укласти мирну угоду з Україною. 31.10.2025. <https://focus.ua/uk/politics/731086-tramp-i-si-czinpin-domovilisya-spivpracyuvati-shchod-o-ukrajini-shcho-stojit-za-mirnoyu-iniciativoyu-ssha-ta-kitayu>

## The course of the Russian-Ukrainian war



*Source: Army FM*

### ■ *Changes at the frontline*

#### **Trend:** *The battle for Pokrovsk at the decisive stage of the city's capture*

October was the most intense period of continued offensive efforts in the direction of Pokrovsk. During this month, Russian troops also attempted to break through weak points in the Ukrainian defence and advance towards Kupiansk, but they failed to destabilise the Ukrainian defence there to the same extent as in Pokrovsk. The occupiers' campaign to capture the city has been going on for 21 months, but during this time, with enormous losses, they have only managed to advance 39 kilometres from Avdiivka.

Analysts point out that the difference between Russian attempts to capture Kupiansk and Pokrovsk is probably partly due to the open terrain around Kupiansk and Russia's inability to commit the same amount of human resources and forces to the Kupiansk direction as it did to Pokrovsk — especially given that the occupiers are still trying to close the 'pocket' in the Pokrovsk direction. The Russians would have to engage in years of resource-intensive operations to recreate the conditions for an offensive on Pokrovsk in other areas of the theatre of war, the Institute for the Study of War concludes. **So while the occupiers continue to advance through Pokrovsk, Ukrainian troops continue their defensive efforts in the Pokrovsk direction.**

Russian troops were able to advance in the north-western, northern and north-eastern parts of Pokrovsk. On 3 November, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that



there were about 260-300 Russian soldiers in Pokrovsk and that 30% of all fighting on the front line was taking place near Pokrovsk.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of November, there was a certain slowdown in the advance of Russian troops in the Pokrovsk direction. The decrease in the occupiers' activity is due to attempts to expand their logistics and transfer reinforcements to the south of Pokrovsk. As of 8 November, the Russians were in most areas of Pokrovsk. However, they are unable to surround the city and are infiltrating Pokrovsk from the southern part of the settlement. They are transferring mortar crews and additional UAV crews to Pokrovsk, whose key task is to cut off the Ukrainian army's supply routes. To this end, the Russians mainly used FPV drones. At the same time, the Defence Forces are holding their positions throughout Pokrovsk, while Russian forces are holding positions only in a certain part of the city.<sup>6</sup>

***In the Kupiansk direction***, the occupiers continued their offensive actions, but without any confirmed changes to the front line.

***In the Lyman direction***, Russian troops intensified their activities north of the city – near Karpivka, Ridkodub and Stavky, as well as to the east – in the direction of Zarichne and Torske, but did not achieve any success. Fighting continues.

***In the Siverskyi direction***, the Russians continue their offensive, but without success.

***In the Kostyantynivka direction***, Russian troops are storming positions east and southeast of Kostyantynivka, near Ivanopil, Bila Hora and Pleshchiivka, as well as south towards Illinivka.

***In the Dobropillia direction***, fighting is also taking place near Novoye Shakhovoye, Pankivka, and Zapovidne. Ukrainian forces have launched a counterattack in the Shakhovoye area.

***In the Pokrovsk direction***, both the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the occupiers are known to be advancing. The Russians are attacking near Pokrovsk, Rodynske, Krasny Liman, Mykhailivka, Novookonomichne, and further south near Novopavlivka, Lysivka, Zeleny, and Dachenske. Ukrainian troops are conducting counterattacks northwest of the city.

***In the Novopavlivka direction***. Russian troops attacked to the northeast near Novomykolaivka, to the south – near Filiya, Yalta and Dachne, but were unsuccessful.

***In the Orikhiv direction***, Russian troops advanced northeast of Huliaipole in October, capturing the village of Nove. They also appeared in the eastern part of Solone, but without confirmation of a change in the front line.

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<sup>5</sup> Удари по логістиці і операторах БПЛА. РФ витратила 21 місяць на прорив у Покровськ: чи загрожує цей сценарій іншим ділянкам фронту — ISW.  
<https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/pokrovsk-na-mapi-boyovih-diy-5-listopada-rosiyani-prosunulisya-zavdyaki-atakam-na-droni-ta-logistiku-50558096.html>

<sup>6</sup> Логістичні шляхи під ворожим контролем. Російські окупанти блокують забезпечення Сил оборони в Мирнограді — ISW.  
<https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/situaciya-v-mirnogradi-rosiyski-okupanti-blokuyut-logistiku-zsu-novini-ukrajini-50559293.html>



*In the Kherson direction*, Russian troops continue to attack, in particular Ukrainian positions on the right bank of the Dnipro, but without changing the front line.

#### ■ *Military aid*

**Germany** has confirmed preparations to transfer long-range missiles to Ukraine. Friedrich Merz said that technical consultations with Kyiv have been ongoing for several months and the processes are already in their final stages.

**Sweden.** The manufacturer of Swedish Gripen fighter jets, which Ukraine plans to purchase in bulk under a long-term contract, is ready to open a plant in Ukraine for the final assembly of aircraft. Defence company Saab, the manufacturer of Gripen fighter jets, is ready to open a plant in Ukraine for the final assembly of aircraft as part of an agreement between Ukraine and Sweden to purchase up to 150 fighter jets. Group CEO Mikael Johansson noted that the contract with Ukraine for the production of 100-150 fighter jets means that Saab will need to double its production, and said that part of the capacity for this contract could be located in Ukraine.

**Norway.** In Norway, there are growing calls among parties for the country to use its €1.8 trillion sovereign wealth fund to help push through a stalled €140 billion EU loan to Ukraine. This was reported by Euractiv, according to European Truth. Five Norwegian political parties have called on Oslo to intervene to overcome Belgium's concerns about using frozen Russian sovereign assets to finance a €140 billion reparations loan for Ukraine. As noted, EU leaders discussed the issue on 23 October at a summit in Brussels but failed to reach an agreement, as Belgium insists that other EU countries must share the legal and financial risks associated with the plan before it agrees to its implementation.

#### ■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

**Trend:** *Having secured an alliance with China, Russia is trying not to lose US support*

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russian President Vladimir Putin is allegedly 'ready to accept the US concept on Ukraine' and 'move forward.' This refers to a proposal previously announced by Trump's special representative Steve Witkoff during his visit to Moscow.

Lavrov spoke about this in an interview with the Hungarian YouTube channel Ultrahang. According to him, **During the summit in Alaska, Putin familiarised himself in detail with each element of Vitkoff's concept, constantly checking whether he had understood its details correctly.** After that, Putin allegedly stated that Russia was ready to accept this concept and 'move forward on the proposed basis.' At the same time, there has been no direct response from the United States yet.

Lavrov added that both sides agreed to take a break to consider the proposals and discuss the results of the negotiations with their allies. It should be noted that in the proposed concept, Putin insisted on the complete withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from Donbas, i.e., the actual occupation of two regions of Ukraine.

Andriy Kovalenko, head of the Centre for Countering Disinformation at the National Security and Defence Council, responded to Lavrov's statement. He noted that the Kremlin is trying to create the appearance of peaceful intentions ahead of the upcoming meeting between Trump and Xi Jinping, but without a real ceasefire, this is only an imitation.

It should be recalled that this month, US President Donald Trump proposed that Ukraine and Russia stop the war within the existing territorial borders and immediately conclude a peace agreement. However, after new Russian strikes on Ukraine, in particular on a kindergarten in Kharkiv, Trump imposed powerful sanctions against two Russian oil companies.

Dmytro Zhmaylo, executive director of the Ukrainian Centre for Security and Cooperation, noted that the war could end within a few months or a year at most, but much depends on China's position and the outcome of negotiations between Trump and Xi Jinping. **Ending the war requires political will on the part of the Western world and the absence of external support for Russia.**

The potential transfer of Tomahawk missiles to Ukraine could influence Putin's strategy, but according to Matthew Whitaker, the US ambassador to NATO, the Russian leader is not yet ready for negotiations, fearing to appear weak. A final decision on providing missiles to Ukraine has not yet been made in Washington.

The US has cancelled a planned meeting between President Donald Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin in Budapest after Moscow sent Washington a memorandum with tough demands regarding Ukraine, the Financial Times reports, citing sources. According to the publication, **Russia's conditions included territorial concessions by Ukraine, a significant reduction in its armed forces, and guarantees that the country would never join NATO.** US President Donald Trump said he did not want to hold a meeting 'in vain' and had not yet made a final decision on the summit. The decision to cancel the meeting was made after a telephone conversation between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. According to sources, Rubio informed Trump that Moscow was not showing any willingness to engage in real negotiations.

During a telephone conversation on 16 October, Putin allegedly discussed with Trump the 'successes on the battlefield' near Kupiansk and the Oskil River, which caused dissatisfaction on the part of the American president. The next day **Trump pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to make concessions to Russia, showing him maps of Ukraine.** The situation in Kupiansk remains difficult: Ukrainian forces have been able to strengthen their control over some areas, while Russian troops have secured a foothold on the western bank of the Oskil River, enabling them to attack the part of Donbas that Putin demanded in his negotiations with Trump.

After the summit was cancelled, Trump increased pressure on Moscow by imposing sanctions on two leading Russian oil companies and criticising Putin for testing nuclear weapons instead of engaging in peace talks. Earlier, Trump said he was ready to meet with Putin again, but only on condition that there were guarantees of an agreement to end the war in Ukraine. The day before, President Zelensky said that Putin had promised to occupy the entire Donbas by 15 October, but this plan had failed.

At the same time, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin arrived in Beijing, where he held an official meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Following the talks, the parties signed a number of documents on cooperation in the fields of energy, space and high technology, according to Russian media reports. Mishustin conveyed 'warm greetings from

Vladimir Putin' to Xi Jinping and emphasised the strategic partnership between the two countries. About ten agreements were signed, covering satellite navigation, agriculture and the use of nuclear materials. Separate discussions were held on joint projects for the development of energy deposits, the production of high-tech equipment, Arctic research and space programmes, including participation in the exploration of the Moon.<sup>7</sup>

'It is important to continue creating favourable conditions for attracting mutual investments and supporting our joint projects,' Mishustin said. In addition to meeting with Xi Jinping, the Russian Prime Minister held talks with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Hangzhou. Following the 30th regular meeting of the heads of government, a joint communiqué stated that Russian-Chinese relations 'are not bloc-based or confrontational' and 'are not directed against third countries.' The parties agreed to 'respond appropriately to external challenges' and develop partnerships in all areas, including **The Arctic and the Northern Sea Route**.

Analysts note that against the backdrop of China's growing influence in Central Asia, where Beijing is actively investing in the transport and energy infrastructure of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Russia is gradually losing its economic influence in the region due to the war in Ukraine and Western sanctions. **China's strategy also has geopolitical undertones — in the event of a conflict with the West, the country will be able to ensure stable exports of goods, bypassing naval blockades.**

Chinese President Xi Jinping has confirmed his intention to expand mutual investment with Russia and strengthen strategic partnership despite the 'unstable' international situation. This was reported by Reuters following Xi Jinping's meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Beijing. Xi stressed that Sino-Russian relations continue to develop 'towards a higher level and greater quality' and highlighted areas for cooperation: energy, agriculture, aerospace, the digital economy and green development, which could become new drivers of economic growth.

For his part, Mishustin stressed the importance of creating favourable conditions for mutual investment and supporting joint projects. In a joint communiqué, the parties agreed to 'strengthen cooperation in all areas and respond adequately to external challenges.' Russia also reaffirmed its commitment to the 'One China' principle and opposition to 'Taiwan independence.' It should be recalled that China and Russia signed an agreement on 'unlimited' partnership in February 2022, before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Since then, Moscow has been trying to mitigate the effects of sanctions with China's help by increasing trade, settlements in yuan and cooperation in the energy sector.

However, bilateral trade has recently declined due to pressure from the United States: Chinese state-owned oil companies have suspended purchases of seaborne oil from Russia following sanctions against Rosneft and Lukoil. Analysts estimate that this could reduce Russian oil exports to China by 45% or about 400,000 barrels per day. It is clear that these statements from Moscow are nothing more than a **farce**. **Together with China, it is attempting to disrupt the world order, viewing the United States as an existential enemy.** Nothing will make her give up her ambitions. **But having received a gift in the form of**

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<sup>7</sup> Росія та Китай уклали нові угоди: про що домовились.04.11.2025.<https://tsn.ua/svit/rosiia-ta-kytay-uklaly-novi-uhody-pro-shcho-domovylys-2949122.html>

**Trump's sympathy, which greatly helps the Kremlin's position, they continue to try to manipulate his ego to prevent Kyiv from gaining an advantage.**