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## Topics:

- 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: The future of Europe under Trump*



*Photo: AFP*

Donald Trump's return to the US presidency could change the balance in NATO and push European countries to strengthen their own defense and nuclear capabilities. In his first term, Trump repeatedly criticized the Alliance, emphasizing insufficient defense spending by European members and even hinting at a possible US withdrawal from NATO.

In the face of Russian aggression, the issue of nuclear deterrence has taken on new significance. The only European countries with nuclear weapons are France and the United Kingdom, but their arsenals are far inferior to the US. Experts point out that in the absence of US guarantees, European countries may need to develop new nuclear programs. Analyst René de Nevers emphasizes that some countries have the technological potential to create nuclear weapons, but they are held back by international nonproliferation agreements and dependence on the NATO nuclear shield.

**The rise in defense spending after the start of Russia's war against Ukraine demonstrates Europe's desire for greater independence.** At the same time, creating new defense capabilities requires significant resources, time, and political unity. Although 23 NATO members already spend more than 2% of GDP on defense, this may not be enough if the United States leaves the Alliance. This situation requires Europe to develop strategies to strengthen defense capabilities and ensure security in the face of a possible reduction in US participation in NATO.

The return of Donald Trump to the US presidency will also have a significant impact on international politics, especially in the areas of security and trade. Analysts warn that his *A skeptical attitude toward NATO could destabilize the transatlantic alliance and increase Russia's confidence in its aggressive intentions.*

Trump may cut aid to Ukraine or insist on peace talks that benefit Moscow. In this case, there is a risk that Russia could intensify its actions in Europe, particularly against the Baltic states, forcing the EU to revise its defense strategy. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has expressed fears that further support for Ukraine may cease if the United States changes its policy.

At the same time, Trump's return could lead to a resumption of the trade war with the EU, including the possibility of imposing duties on imports, particularly on automotive products. This will put significant economic pressure on European countries, especially Germany.

The situation is also complicated by the fact that Trump's victory could divide European governments: right-wing political forces, such as the governments of Hungary and Italy, may see it as a confirmation of their position, while other countries may see it as a threat to the unity of the EU and NATO. These challenges require European leaders to increase their autonomy in defense and economic matters to minimize dependence on American support.

Meanwhile, Josep Borrell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, commented on the possible presidency of Donald Trump as an opportunity for Europe to rethink its security strategy and geopolitical role. He emphasized the need for Europe to become stronger and more united, as the world is experiencing significant changes in the geopolitical balance. This, he said, is a signal for Europe to wake up to ensure its security on its own, without dependence on external partners.<sup>1</sup>

Borrell also noted that although Trump's intentions in the field of international trade, such as tariffs on Chinese and European products, are clear, the US position on Ukraine remains uncertain. In particular, according to The Wall Street Journal, the idea of freezing the frontline in Ukraine and creating a demilitarized zone, which would include a 20-year moratorium on Ukraine's membership in NATO, is being discussed.

Against the backdrop of these uncertainties, EU leaders at a meeting in Budapest considered the possibility of continuing military support for Ukraine in the event of a change in US policy. This position of Europe demonstrates the desire to maintain stability and support in the face of a potential decrease in Washington's involvement in European affairs.

Grigore Pop-Eleceș, a professor at Princeton University in Romania, suggests that Donald Trump's victory in the US election may have mixed consequences for Europe, Ukraine, and NATO. He notes that Trump has repeatedly criticized the Alliance and has said that he could make peace with Vladimir Putin within 24 hours. Such rhetoric could create tensions for all NATO countries, including Romania and Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, a part of Ukrainian society hopes that Trump can initiate negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, and if Putin refuses, fully support Ukraine, including providing long-range weapons. However, the professor emphasizes that such consistency from Trump is

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<sup>1</sup> "Світ вже змінився": шеф дипломатії ЄС розповів про наслідки обрання Трампа для Європи. 11.11.2024. <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2024/11/11/7198118/>

<sup>2</sup> Наступні Грузія і Молдова: що буде з Європою, якщо переможе Трамп, — ЗМІ.05.11.2024. <https://focus.ua/uk/world/677111-vibori-u-ssha-yakim-bude-maybutnye-yevropi-yakshcho-peremozhe-tramp>

**questionable.** A quick peace is now more beneficial to Russia than to Ukraine, especially in the current situation on the frontline.

Pope-Elechess also draws attention to the composition of Trump's team, which he describes as low-influence and uncritical. However, other U.S. institutions, such as the military, may keep Trump from taking radical steps by ensuring continued support for Ukraine. At the same time, in terms of stability and predictability, Kamala Harris' victory would be more beneficial for Europe, as Democrats traditionally support Ukraine. However, the professor notes that the outcome of the US elections will depend not only on the president but also on the composition of the Congress, which also plays a key role in shaping the policy of supporting Ukraine.

It is worth noting that if Russia occupies a part of Ukraine, the situation could lead to further aggression on the part of the Kremlin, especially towards non-NATO countries such as Moldova or Georgia. **Even if Russia temporarily stops to rebuild its military forces, the Putin regime's logic is aimed at confrontation with the West. If the West gives in in Ukraine, Moscow could see this as a weakness that could be used for new manipulations.**

Pop-Elecs, in particular, considers a full-scale Russian invasion of Europe unlikely, but emphasizes the real threat to the Baltic states, which Russia perceives as part of its former influence. Instead of direct military aggression, the Kremlin is likely to focus on hybrid warfare, destabilizing the region through information attacks, cyber threats, and political manipulation.

**One of the key problems is the West's lack of readiness to counter this hybrid aggression.** Countries that do not have NATO security guarantees, such as Moldova and Georgia, remain vulnerable to Russia's actions. At the same time, some experts believe that Donald Trump's return to power could accelerate the formation of a more independent and consolidated European security and defense policy.

The Washington Post also notes that European leaders are concerned about the prospect of Donald Trump's return to the US presidency because of his ability to destroy established rules of cooperation. Modern Europe is facing new challenges: Emmanuel Macron is facing internal problems in France, Olaf Scholz is facing disagreements in his coalition, and Keir Starmer in the UK has record low support.

The leaders of Germany, France, and the UK are developing new approaches to diplomacy and planning how to respond to possible increased economic and political pressure from the US to avoid a repeat of previous crises. As noted, **European countries are increasingly strengthening their own defense capabilities in an effort to reduce their dependence on the United States for security.** Military budgets in Europe have reached their highest level since the end of the Cold War. NATO has taken on additional responsibilities for coordinating military assistance to Ukraine, as the United States is expected to focus more on the Indo-Pacific, leaving Europeans to maintain stability in the region on their own. **But this is still not enough.**

Germany, which is heavily dependent on exports, is particularly concerned about the possibility of trade conflicts with the United States. Donald Trump has announced his intention to increase tariffs on European goods, including cars, which could significantly affect the German economy, which is already showing signs of stagnation. According to forecasts by the German Economic Institute, such duties could lead to losses of \$162 billion for German companies. Brussels is already discussing possible countermeasures, including

retaliatory tariffs and the development of joint approaches with the United States to combat China's unfair trade practices. This is part of Europe's attempts to prepare for possible challenges in the event of changes in US policy.

Given the potential changes in transatlantic relations, Brussels is intensifying discussions on ***the need for Europe's strategic autonomy in the field of security and defense.*** In case of a decrease in US support **Europe is likely to take on more responsibility for regional stability.** **But it is also possible that the West will agree to the new American policy and freeze the war. But in this case, it would be a disaster for Europe in the long run.**



## Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

- *THEME ANALYSIS: What awaits Ukraine during Trump's presidency: peace in 24 hours, or a state without peace, security and territory?*



Source: Getty Images

Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 U.S. presidential election triggered a positive reaction in global stock markets, where indices began to rise. Many politicians were quick to congratulate Trump, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. He expressed his gratitude for the *“peace through strength”* approach, which he believes can bring Ukraine closer to victory in the war with Russia.

The United States remains Ukraine's largest partner in the fight against Russia, so the US presidential election is of great interest to Ukrainians. However, there are concerns that a Trump presidency could have negative consequences for Ukrainian statehood. Therefore, political experts urge not to make hasty conclusions. Although the US president has considerable influence, his decisions depend on many factors and are not solely his own.

Ihor Reiterovych, PhD in Political Science, notes that it is difficult to predict exactly what Trump's approach to Ukraine will be. He believes that Trump's victory could lead to both optimistic and not so good scenarios for Ukraine. In particular, Reiterowicz emphasizes that Trump will not be able to ignore the position of US allies and the influence of military-industrial corporations. This may provide Ukraine with support, although final decisions will depend on the composition of his team, which is yet to be assessed.

It is important for Trump to understand what scenarios are possible for ending the war with Russia and to determine his position after meeting with Putin. If the talks fail to produce results, Trump may increase military aid to Ukraine. However, if after the talks he feels that Russia will not fulfill the agreements, this may lead to further strengthening of assistance to Ukraine.

However, since Trump will not take office until January 2025, some decisions may be made by the Biden administration. The Democrats may leave Trump with a “Parthian arrow” (which could have political consequences if he changes his position on supporting Ukraine), and this will be an important factor for his future policy. Reiterowicz continues to note that Democrats can influence Donald Trump's policy toward Ukraine, even after his victory. One of the possible scenarios is a freezing of the war on the front line, where the territories are recognized as temporarily occupied, but Ukraine receives support in the form of a fortified zone to stop the advance of Russian troops. This is not an ideal option for Ukraine, but it could be discussed, although it will depend on whether Russia agrees to such an arrangement.

Trump may also consider reinforcing NATO troops in Europe, which would be acceptable to him, but on the other hand, he may give Putin a commitment that Ukraine will not join NATO during Trump's term. Trump has repeatedly expressed a critical attitude toward NATO, believing that the alliance uses American resources without proper results. On the issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO, Trump is likely to take into account the outcome of negotiations with Russia, although he will not rush to withdraw support for NATO. In addition, it is clear that the main challenge for the United States, according to the Republicans, is not Russia, but **China**. *Trump may try to use Ukraine to break ties between Russia and China by offering Russia certain economic concessions*, such as lifting some of the sanctions.

Donald Trump's foreign policy during his previous term was unpredictable, which, according to some experts, including the director of the Institute for Foreign Policy Studies, H. Perepelytsia, indicates the impulsive nature of his decisions. Trump does not have a clear strategy that would meet the global interests of the United States, and his approaches often change depending on personal preferences. This is confirmed by his statements, in particular, about trusting Vladimir Putin more than his own intelligence services. However, despite the existence of certain principles presented in the so-called “Trump foreign policy strategy,” they seem to be just a set of individual positions, not a comprehensive policy line capable of guaranteeing stable American leadership on the world stage.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, his foreign policy cannot be predicted, and Trump's actual actions often confirm his tendency to make impulsive decisions, depending on the moment or personal sympathies.

Assessing Donald Trump's foreign policy and support for Ukraine is complex and multidimensional. Trump has often demonstrated an impulsive approach, making decisions that are not always based on strategy or long-term interests. His attitude toward authoritarian leaders like Putin, Xi Jinping, and Kim Jong-un indicates his preference for relations with dictatorial regimes, as he values their full power, which he compares to the limited opportunities in democracies. Trump has also demonstrated a tendency to make decisions that are more focused on business interests than on America's long-term strategic goals, particularly in the area of security and national interests, indicating a certain psychological and possibly material dependence on Russia.

In terms of policy toward Ukraine, Trump is likely to use diplomatic tools and sanctions, but his impulsiveness and tendency to seek quick, effective solutions could lead to unpredictable results. Moreover, Trump's attitude toward NATO and his desire to stop wars could lead to a weakening of the defense of Eastern European countries.

From Ukraine's point of view, the future US president may find himself on Russia's side in certain negotiations, which could pose a serious challenge to Ukraine in its war with Russia.

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<sup>3</sup> "Маємо переходити до загальної мобілізації" - що чекає Україну за каденції Трампа. 06.11.2024.  
<https://gazeta.ua/interview>



In such a situation, it will be important to engage allies in Europe, particularly countries that actively support Ukraine, to provide strong support to overcome this political instability. The current situation on the frontline is indeed becoming more difficult for the Ukrainian Armed Forces, as Russian troops continue to advance in the Donbas, seizing territory. In the past month alone, they have managed to occupy about 500 km<sup>2</sup>, the largest breakthrough for Ukrainian defense since 2023. This is leading to a rise in support for peace talks among Ukrainians - according to the poll, the number of supporters of negotiations has increased from 21% to 35%.

Donald Trump's statements about possible peace agreements are gaining popularity among those who want to end the war. However, these “*peaceful*” proposals are likely to involve only a freezing of the conflict and a ceasefire, which would mean **continued Russian control over part of the Ukrainian territories. For Ukraine, this is unacceptable, as recognizing the occupied territories as part of Russia in exchange for ending the war is seen as a national betrayal.**

Russia's position, as stated by Vladimir Putin, is that Ukraine should withdraw its troops from the territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, declare neutrality and refuse to join NATO, after which peace talks are possible. But for the Ukrainian leadership and society, this raises the question of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, making such compromises **unacceptable**.

Indeed, it is possible to freeze the conflict without recognizing the occupied territories, as happened with Crimea after 2014. However, according to political scientist Volodymyr Fesenko, even if Ukraine takes such a step, there will still be no unity in the country on this issue, as a significant number of citizens will be against it. He also suggests that if peace talks are initiated by the United States, this may ease the situation, as Ukrainians will see it as peace under pressure from their main international partner, rather than as Zelensky's initiative, which could lead to accusations of treason. The problem is not how Ukrainians will perceive it, but how it is perceived in Russia. According to him, Putin does not need a freeze on the conflict, but rather peace on his terms, which makes diplomatic negotiations with Russia extremely difficult. Russia used the talks only to prepare for further aggression. **A ceasefire without real changes could lead to a new wave of aggression, which would be even more dangerous for Ukraine.**

However, **Peter Dickinson**, an Atlantic Council analyst and editor-in-chief of Business Ukraine Magazine, believes that Ukraine should give Donald Trump the opportunity to demonstrate his strength as a leader. In his opinion, it is important that Ukraine's strategy for the new administration emphasizes that ***the war in Ukraine is the main geopolitical problem of the modern world***. In this context, Trump will be able to reaffirm his position as a strong leader who supports Ukraine and recognizes its importance for global stability. This, according to Dickinson, will give Trump the opportunity to emphasize the importance of the US role in supporting Ukraine and protecting those who are threatened by the war.<sup>4</sup>

**Daniel Rice** says that only President Volodymyr Zelensky can determine the conditions for ending the war. He hopes that President Trump will support Zelensky's victory plan by providing Ukraine not only with weapons to hold the front line, but also to achieve victory.

At the same time, **Brian Mefford**, a fellow at the Atlantic Council, notes that in the United States, decisions are not made by the president alone. Even if Trump shows anti-Ukrainian sentiment, Congress still has strong support for Ukraine: there are at least 75 votes in favor of

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<sup>4</sup> «Трамп нас здивує»: чого чекати українцям від 47-го президента США.07.11.2024.  
<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/choho-chekaty-ukrayintsyam-vid-prezydentstva-trampa/33192077.html>

Ukraine in the Senate and more than 300 votes in the House of Representatives. This means that Congress will resist any attempts to change course on Ukraine.

As for economic support for Ukraine, most experts agree that the US and Europe will continue to provide economic assistance to Ukraine despite the military situation. Mefford emphasizes that Trump supports American business and is likely to favor investors, particularly in Ukraine, which will help the country's economic stability.

Oleksandr Musienko notes that Ukraine will have to go through several possible scenarios depending on the position taken by the new US administration under Donald Trump.<sup>5</sup> **First**, Ukraine will continue to receive the necessary assistance to deter the Russian aggressor, similar to the Biden administration. **Second**, Trump may declare that he is ready to do more for Ukraine, including authorizing long-range strikes deep into Russia, which is in line with President Zelensky's strategy of peace through strength. **The third** scenario involves putting pressure on Ukraine to reach compromises with Russia, which could lead to concessions from the Ukrainian side.

By early 2025, it will become clear what the Trump administration's final course will be toward Ukraine, and whether they are willing to allow Ukraine to join NATO and empower it to attack deeper into Russia. But **Kyiv should begin to establish ties with the Republican Party and show uncompromising efforts to prove its importance to the new US President.**

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<sup>5</sup> Ситуація може розвиватися за 3 сценаріями: що буде з Україною за президенства Трампа 06.11.2024.[https://24tv.ua/tramp-peremig-viborah-ssha-yaki-3-stsenariyi-mozhut-chekati-ukrayinu\\_n2679948](https://24tv.ua/tramp-peremig-viborah-ssha-yaki-3-stsenariyi-mozhut-chekati-ukrayinu_n2679948)



Source: Army FM

### ■ Changes at the front

**Trend:** *The Russian army is advancing in the Kursk region of the Russian Federation and continues to attack the positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Ukraine, slowly advancing on the main directions of the southeastern and southern parts of the Russian-Ukrainian front.*

Using air superiority, missiles and artillery ammunition, the Russian proxies are trying to reach the administrative border of Donetsk region. Using assault groups supported by armored vehicles, the Russian invaders continue to conduct offensive actions day and night. In certain areas, the enemy is trying to conduct assault operations in waves on foot, acting with platoon to company, sometimes battalion-sized forces.

Russian troops have advanced in the south of Donetsk region in several areas along a 20 km wide front. The occupation forces consider this area a priority. Within a week alone, Russian troops seized control of several small settlements and advanced up to 9 km, maintaining a favorable balance of forces in this sector, which partially explains the acceleration of the Russian offensive. Despite heavy losses of personnel, Russia continues to recruit large numbers of people to support its operations in southern Ukraine.

The highest number of hostile attacks was recorded in the *Kurakhove and Pokrovske directions* (51 and 23 attacks per day respectively).

*In the Kurakhove direction*, the occupants managed to enter from the eastern outskirts of Kurakhove. Currently, the Russian army continues to advance from three directions - from the north, east and south. The southern part of the city is the most threatened. There, the invaders

are trying to cut the road near the village of Konstantinople. This creates a danger that if this bridgehead is closed, we will have to retreat very far to the west - 10-15-20 kilometers. Thus, a large number of territories will be lost. If the Ukrainian Armed Forces have to retreat from Kurakhove further along the road, the attackers can move their forces from there to the Pokrovske direction.

*In the Bakhmut direction*, the situation is particularly difficult in the areas east of Chasovyi Yar and Klishchiyivka; in the Avdiivka direction - in the areas of Berdychiv, Orlivka, Vodian, Pervomayske; in the Novopavlivka direction - in the area of Novomykhailivka. The most intense fighting in November continued in the areas of Pervomayske and Vodyane, as well as east of Chasiv Yar, where the enemy is trying to break through the defense of Ukrainian troops. Chasiv Yar remains under the control of the Ukrainian Defense Forces, and all enemy attempts to break through to the settlement have failed.

*In the Toretsk direction*, the Russian proxies were constantly trying to advance in the area of Toretsk and Shcherbynivka.

*In the Liman direction*, the Russian militants are conducting localized offensives in the areas of Bilohorivka, Vesele, Orikhivske and Kherson.

*In the Orikhivsk sector*, the enemy is conducting active offensives in the areas of Robotyne and Verbove to regain lost ground;

*In the Kherson direction*, the Russian army is trying to force Ukrainian troops out of the bridgehead on the left bank of the Dnipro River near Krynka. The enemy is not successful in this area.

*On the Kupyansk and Lyman directions*, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have some tactical success.

#### ■ *Military assistance*

**EU countries** have supplied Ukraine with more than 980,000 rounds of ammunition. In addition, European partners have introduced a new approach to providing Ukraine with weapons. Instead of waiting for European companies to manufacture weapons, they finance Ukrainian production contracts, which speeds up supplies and supports the military-industrial complex. Under this approach, Ukraine receives funding to order weapons directly from domestic producers. European partners inspect companies and monitor the fulfillment of contracts. This mechanism is called the Danish model. This model has already been supported by Norway, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany, and the Netherlands.

**Denmark** has allocated \$680 million, including \$400 million from frozen Russian assets. It is planned to allocate up to \$1.4 billion by 2025. Denmark will also provide Ukraine with a new aid package worth \$115 million.

**Germany** intends to supply Ukraine with weapons and military equipment totaling €650 million by the end of the year. It is known that Ukraine will receive two IRIS-T air defense systems, 10 Leopard 1A5 main battle tanks, 60 infantry fighting vehicles and M84 and M80 main armored vehicles. In addition, the list includes 6,000 unguided and 500 guided missiles, as well as 4,000 Helsing drones.

**The United States** announced a new \$725 million military aid package for Ukraine. It will include ammunition for HIMARS and artillery, Stinger missiles, drones, anti-personnel

mines, and anti-tank weapons. It includes, in particular:

- ammunition for NASAMS and HIMARS;
  - Stinger missiles;
  - anti-drone ammunition (c-UAS);
  - artillery ammunition of 155 mm and 105 mm caliber;
  - unmanned aerial systems (UAS);
  - Javelin and AT-4 anti-tank systems;
  - small arms and ammunition;
  - equipment for the protection of critical infrastructure;
- spare parts, auxiliary equipment, services, training, and transportation.

It is noted that the weapons are provided from US warehouses under the Presidential Decision Authority (PDA) program.

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

### **Trend: *Putin will act from a position of strength in relations with Trump's America***

The Russian Ministry of Defense has developed a forecast of the development of the military-political situation until 2045, which envisages the liquidation of Ukraine as an independent state and its division into three parts. According to this plan, the first part includes territories that have already been annexed by Russia: Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson regions and Crimea. These regions should officially become part of Russia.

The second part of the plan concerns the creation of a pro-Russian state in the central and eastern regions of Ukraine. This includes Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odesa, and other regions where pro-Russian authorities will be established, rejecting European and Euro-Atlantic integration and accepting Russia's military presence in these areas. Such a plan, according to sources, could be submitted to the new US administration through diplomatic channels.

The third part of the Russian plan provides for the division of the "disputed territories" of western Ukraine, including Volyn, Rivne, Khmelnytsky, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia regions. The Kremlin plans to divide these regions with neighboring countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Romania in exchange for their pro-Russian orientation. This is part of a strategic plan that involves a significant change in borders and influence on the geopolitical situation in the region. For more information, please refer to the source reporting on this situation.

According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, Russia has identified four main scenarios for the development of the international situation until 2045, depending on the outcome of the war with Ukraine:<sup>6</sup>

#### **1. Unfavorable scenarios for Russia:**

- *US and Western dominance*: this scenario implies a victory or freezing of the conflict, which increases the influence of the West on world politics.
- *China becoming the world's leading power*: this will happen if China becomes the world leader and Russia is defeated.

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<sup>6</sup> Росія зробила "план поділу України" і може запропонувати його США, - ЗМІ.20.11.2024.  
<https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/rosiya-zrobila-plan-podilu-ukrayini-i-mozhe-1732113632.html>



## 2. Favorable scenarios for Russia:

- *Formation of a multipolar world and division of spheres of influence:* Russia sees itself as one of the leading powers in the new global order, where no major actor will have an absolute advantage.

- *Regionalization/chaotization:* This scenario envisages the collapse of the international order, which will allow Russia to maintain its power and influence in the post-Soviet space and throughout Central and Eastern Europe.

Additionally, according to Western sources, Russia is ready to discuss the terms of ending the war with Donald Trump, but these terms may be tough for Ukraine, in particular, they will include important territorial concessions. In turn, Reuters' interlocutors suggested that Russia would agree to a freeze along the front line. Three sources suggest that negotiations are possible on how the demarcation line will be drawn in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions: despite Russia's claim to these territories, its troops control only 70-80% of their territory. Two other Reuters interlocutors suggested that Russian troops might withdraw from small areas of Kharkiv and Mykolaiv regions.

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According to the agency, the speed of the Russian army's offensive is the highest in the entire war, except for the first days of the invasion. Donald Trump, who promised to end the war quickly if elected, is returning to the White House in a position of strengthening Russia. Two of the agency's interlocutors also noted that outgoing President Joe Biden's authorization to fire ATACMS missiles at Russian territory could significantly complicate the situation: Moscow has already called it an escalation.

At the same time, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov, in response to a request for comment on media reports, said that Putin had already made it clear that ***he was not satisfied with the freezing of the conflict***: “The president has indeed repeatedly, or rather constantly, stated that he is ready for contacts. The president has also said that some kind of freezing of this conflict will not work for us, it is important for us to achieve our goal, which is well known to everyone.”

Thus, Russia is considering a ceasefire in Ukraine in the event of negotiations with Donald Trump, but at the same time, it is demanding that Ukraine abandon its aspirations to join NATO and be ready to make significant territorial concessions. In particular, the Kremlin may agree to freeze the conflict on the current front line, with conditions for the division of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions, which Russia partially controls. However, the issue of Crimea will remain outside the negotiations.<sup>7</sup> Putin also emphasizes that freezing the conflict is not acceptable to Russia, as it would allow the West to rearm Ukraine. At the same time, Trump, who promised to end the war quickly, plans to initiate negotiations with Russia from the first day of his presidency. According to some sources, **Among the possible conditions for peace are Ukraine's neutrality, international security guarantees, and limiting the size of its army.** However, achieving a real peace that satisfies

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<sup>7</sup> Путін готовий обговорювати з Трампом завершення війни в Україні, але на жорстких умовах, - Reuters. 20.11.2024. <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/putin-gotovi-obgovoryuvati-trampom-zavershennya-1732090401.html>



both sides remains extremely difficult due to the wide differences in positions. Trump may try to engage Europe in supporting a peace agreement, and European countries, such as Estonia, may be willing to send troops to secure the peace process.

Thus, **Kremlin is proposing radical changes in the territorial structure of Ukraine** aimed at strengthening Russian influence. The proposed plan for the division of the state, which includes the annexation of the eastern and southern regions, the creation of a pro-Russian government in the central and eastern territories, and the transfer of the western regions to neighboring countries, is not only illegal but also violates the principles of international law. At the same time, **the planned talks with Donald Trump look like an attempt to legitimize Russia's military achievements through the diplomatic channel.** But it is important to note that the key here is that this should happen on its own terms. Despite Trump's hopes, Russia sees its place too closely next to China, and the United States as its ultimate enemy. **Putin will not accept Trump's terms, but will aggressively push for his own. And the better the American president understands this, the better it will be for him and the future of his country.**