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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: America's Munich betrayal of Europe*



Source: EFA

On Friday, 14 February 2025, the annual security conference began in Munich, and the first day of the event was not just a lot of discussion, but a real cold shower for Europe. The second in command of the US government after Donald Trump was expected to provide details on Washington's foreign policy, and J.D. Vance said that *the main threat to Europe comes not from Russia or China, but from internal processes in Europe itself*. He criticised the EU for censoring and cancelling elections, in particular, mentioning the situation in Romania, where the results of the first round of the presidential race, which was won by the pro-Russian candidate Colin Georgescu, were cancelled. Interestingly, Vance barely mentioned Ukraine, only hinting at a *'reasonable settlement'*. At the same time, his rhetoric towards Kyiv has become less harsh, perhaps because he is involved in the negotiation process.

In addition, Vance accused European countries of ignoring US calls for a fair distribution of the financial burden of defence within NATO, openly threatening to change America's geopolitical course. His speech was shared on social networking site X by billionaire Elon Musk, who now seems to be playing the role of a grey cardinal in American politics, with the slogan *MEGA - Make Europe Great Again*. Following his scandalous speech in Munich, J.D. Vance met with German chancellorial candidate and leader of the pro-Russian

Alternative for Germany, Alice Weidel, who has consistently advocated for the cessation of military aid to Ukraine and the lifting of sanctions against Russia.¹

The speech and behaviour of Vance and other members of the US delegation, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Defence Pete Haggseth, shocked European leaders and caused a wave of criticism. Moreover, American officials made a number of controversial statements about Russia's war against Ukraine, *which they later had to refute themselves. It looked like the Trump team had no clear plan for ending the war, creating information chaos, including statements about the possible provision of nuclear weapons to Ukraine and allegedly \$350 billion in aid, which had never been made before.*

Before the opening of the Munich Security Conference, the first officially confirmed phone calls between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin took place. Prior to that, Trump had repeatedly evaded a clear answer about his contacts with the Kremlin, neither confirming nor denying them. Immediately after his conversation with Putin, he also spoke on the phone with Volodymyr Zelenskyu. However, the information confusion created by the Trump administration casts doubt on whether it has a real plan to resolve Russia's war against Ukraine.

Все почалося 13 лютого, коли, наступного дня після розмови з Путіним, Трамп уникнув прямої відповіді на запитання про рівноправність Києва в мирному процесі. Він знову наголосив, що Україна не повинна вступати до НАТО, оскільки цього не хоче Росія. Окрім того, він повторив свою заяву, що США надали Україні \$350 млрд допомоги, тоді як Європа лише \$100 млрд. Проте реальні цифри значно відрізняються. Так, з початку повномасштабного вторгнення Вашингтон надав дещо більше ніж \$170 млрд, а Брюссель \$134 млрд.

Subsequently, Trump's special representative for Ukraine and Russia, **Keith Kellogg**, stated that an agreement was needed that would provide for the potential *loss of some of Ukraine's territories*. He drew a parallel with the West's policy towards the Baltic states during the Soviet occupation, when their independence was not officially recognised but no active attempts were made to change the situation. However, Kellogg did not specify whether he was referring to the loss of territories in a peace agreement with Russia or to a separate legal document that would enshrine the transfer of the four regions and Crimea that Putin had illegally included in the Russian constitution. Either way, this position effectively means recognition of the occupation.

However, the Trump team's contradictory statements did not end there. On the opening day of the Munich Security Conference, interviews with J.D. Vance, Marco Rubio, and Pete Haggseth were published. Speaking to The Wall Street Journal, Vice President Vance, who is not known for his commitment to Ukraine, did not rule out the possibility of tougher sanctions and even military action if Russia does not agree to a peace deal. He also said that the option of sending the US military to Ukraine remains open. At the same time, in an interview with Breitbart News, Defence Secretary Pete Haggseth suggested that Ukraine could join NATO in the future, although he had categorically denied this possibility the day before. In addition, he did not even rule out the possibility of giving Kyiv nuclear weapons.

Senator **Marco Rubio** was more reserved, suggesting in an interview with American radio that we start with a ceasefire, the creation of humanitarian corridors, a mutual cessation of attacks on energy infrastructure, and security guarantees for Ukraine, not from the US, but from Europe. He also mentioned 'language and cultural issues', which immediately evoked associations with the Minsk Agreements, which did not prevent a full-scale invasion.

¹ Мюнхенський холодний душ: чому Європі та Україні більше не варто сподіватися на лідерство США. 15.02.2025. <https://tsn.ua/exclusive/myunhenskiy-holodniy-dush-chomu-yevropi-ta-ukrayini-bilshe-ne-varto-spodivatisya-na-liderstvo-ssha-2767797.html>

In response to the outcry, Vance accused The Wall Street Journal of distorting his quotes and effectively retracted his remarks about the possibility of sending US troops to Ukraine. However, his speech in Munich remained extremely harsh: he actually accused European governments of preventing right-wing parties from coming to power and restricting freedom of speech, comparing the situation in the EU to the Soviet regimes. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius condemned the remarks, saying that it was unacceptable to compare Europe to authoritarian governments.²

European media reported that senior EU officials were shocked by Vance's position, which mirrors Trump's views and coincides with the rhetoric of pro-Russian far-right politicians. At the same time, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed that Europe should significantly increase defence spending, in particular by allowing European banks to finance the defence industry. She reminded that currently, EU countries spend about 2% of GDP on defence, which is still not enough to guarantee security. Nevertheless, Trump and his allies continue to insist that Europe must take care of its own security, while the US defends it 'at its own expense'. It is worth noting that the US army itself is facing a shortage of personnel, and China has already surpassed the US in terms of the size and power of its navy. **This raises doubts about Washington's ability to fulfil its security commitments to its allies.** Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged Europeans not to panic and blame the United States, but to take more responsibility for their defence. According to him, the Trump administration is not 'surrendering' Ukraine, as it continues to recognise its sovereignty and states that Putin cannot win.

On the sidelines of the conference, Volodymyr Zelensky met with J.D. Vance, during which the US Vice President said that the US was committed to achieving peace that would prevent future conflicts in Europe. Zelenskyy, in turn, said that Keith Kellogg would arrive in Ukraine next week for further talks and assessment of the situation. In an interview with NBC News, Zelensky said that **it would be extremely difficult for Ukraine to survive without US military assistance, and that Putin was actually using the talks to try to lift sanctions.**

In fact, *Trump's phone call with Putin was the first step towards his exit from international isolation.* Preparations are already underway for a face-to-face meeting between Trump and Putin, which Saudi Arabia is ready to host. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, who is considered to be close to Trump, urged not to focus on his contacts with the Kremlin, but to think about ways to end the war. At the same time, Graham put forward a proposal for Ukraine's accession to NATO: if it is not possible now, then, in his opinion, the West should fix a rule that in the event of a new Russian invasion, Ukraine will automatically become a member of the Alliance. He stressed that if such an agreement had been in place back in 2014, Putin would not have dared to aggress.

Thus, the Trump administration's approach remains contradictory: on the one hand, it declares support for Ukraine, while on the other, its representatives talk about territorial concessions, renunciation of NATO membership, and growing pressure on Europe to increase military spending. **At the same time, the very fact that Trump and Putin have resumed contacts and are preparing for their meeting indicates possible changes in the US international positioning.**

One of the key events of the conference was the meeting between Vance, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Trump's special envoy Keith Kellogg with Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian delegation. The meeting was initially postponed, sparking rumours that a resource deal between the US and Ukraine had been agreed. However, in the end, it was never signed.

² Армія Європи, лідерство Німеччини та заяви США: підсумки Мюнхенської безпекової конференції. 16.03.2025. <https://fakty.com.ua/ua/svit/20250216-armiya-yevropy-liderstvo-nimechchyny-ta-zavyavy-ssha-pidsumky-myunhenskoji-bezpekovoyi-konferencziyi/>

According to leaks from the US media, Kyiv did not agree to some of Washington's conditions, and unofficial sources say that the agreement did not contain sufficient security guarantees for Ukraine. Apparently, the negotiations are continuing, and this is important: Ukraine has to defend its interests not only with Russia, but also in communication with its strategic partners.

Despite talks that the US is negotiating mainly with Russia, the situation is different: **Washington talks with Kyiv officially, but with Moscow behind closed doors.** A separate meeting was held in Munich between Andriy Yermak and Keith Kellogg, which confirms that the Office of the President remains the main negotiator on behalf of Ukraine. As for the American negotiating team: Whitkoff will be in contact with the Russians, while Kellogg will be in contact with Kyiv and the Europeans. In addition, J.D. Vance has already announced the possibility of direct talks between Ukraine and Russia.

European leaders and Zelensky have been saying for months that peace talks with Russia should be held with their participation, as any agreement would affect the security of the entire continent. However, Trump said that only Ukrainians, Russians, and possibly Americans could be at the table, which caused a diplomatic backlash in European capitals. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special representative for Ukraine, said in Munich that although Europe would not be involved in the talks, it would still play a crucial role in ensuring Ukraine's sovereignty.

In the context of these developments, **Volodymyr Zelensky proposed to create the Armed Forces of Europe so that the future of Europe depended only on Europeans and decisions about Europe were made in Europe.** He emphasised that Ukraine should not be allowed to make deals behind its back without its participation, and this rule should apply to the whole of Europe. Regarding Ukraine's NATO membership, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said that Ukraine should not give up this aspiration as part of peace talks with Russia, although Hughesett hinted at a NATO meeting in Brussels this week that it could be part of the peace process. However, Rutte denied these suggestions, saying that NATO membership would not depend on the outcome of the talks.

In recent months, the European Union has been actively discussing the issue of strengthening the bloc's defence capabilities and reducing its dependence on the United States. ***These discussions culminated in the EU member states agreeing to invest €500 billion in defence over the next decade, with the intention of creating common defence instruments.*** Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, announced the activation of the provisions on derogations for defence investments. This will allow member states with limited financial resources to increase defence spending without violating EU fiscal rules and possible fines for excessive deficits. The current excessive deficit procedure applies to eight EU countries. Von der Leyen also stressed that this measure will be part of a new 'bold approach', as more needs to be done and Europe needs to deliver more to ensure Europe's security.

At the same time, during the conference, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, Friedrich Merz, said that Germany lacks leadership in the European Union. He emphasised the importance of Germany's strategic position in the centre of Europe and its readiness to take on this leadership, as much of Europe depends on Berlin. These statements were a reaction to Germany's economic difficulties and political disagreements in the government of Olaf Scholz, which weakened Germany's position on the European stage.

Thus, **the recent international security conference in Munich was a real 'cold shower' for Europe.** Statements by US officials, in particular Vice President J.D. Vance, sparked a lively discussion both on the sidelines and on the conference stage. In his speech, he focused not on finding ways to end Russia's war against Ukraine, but on criticising European

democracies, accusing them of lacking freedom of speech, internal EU issues such as migration, and supporting extreme right-wing forces.

For many European politicians, who are accustomed to relying on US leadership and who have been adopting a 'wait and see' approach since the election and inauguration of President Trump, these statements came as a big shock. What was particularly striking was that the US did not consider Europeans to be important participants in potential negotiations or in the search for a solution to the war. This suggests that transatlantic unity has begun to fray, and has forced Europeans to question their place in regional security policy. Nevertheless, this wake-up call could be the moment that really wakes Europe up.

In the light of the new US administration's clear position that Europe's security is Europe's own responsibility, it is now critical for Europe to demonstrate its own agency. In their speeches, European leaders have assured Ukraine of unwavering support and its growth. The key now is to turn these statements into concrete and decisive steps. **One of these steps could be the complete confiscation of frozen Russian assets and their transfer to Ukraine, as well as significant military aid packages or tougher sanctions against Russia.** The emergency summit of European leaders organised by the French president in Paris was the first practical step in this direction.

Weakening transatlantic unity will benefit only Russia, which has always sought to divide Ukraine's key partners. However, this time, for the first time, European partners have felt so acutely that they are in the same boat as Ukraine. After all, Ukraine's security is now their security as well. That is why the Ukrainian president's speech was received particularly warmly. Now, more than ever, Ukraine understands what it is like to be talked about without its participation, undermining its subjectivity. In his speech, Zelenskyy made a call to action: 'I believe in Europe. And I am sure that you also believe in it. I urge you to act for yourselves, for Europe, for the peoples of Europe, for your countries, for your homes, for your children, and for our common future.'

The Europeans, on the other hand, warn against agreements that may not be in Ukraine's interests. **Security guarantees** remain an important issue. These guarantees may include the military presence of partners, but the Americans want to shift this responsibility to the Europeans, claiming that they will not participate in this format. The US also does not consider Ukraine's accession to NATO to be realistic. ***Ukraine needs internal unity now more than ever, and European leaders need to show strategic leadership and concrete actions that back up their words and provide real support to Ukraine at this critical moment.***

Foreign and Defense Policy of Ukraine

- *THEME ANALYSIS: Trump-Putin plan to force Ukraine to peace on the terms of surrender*



Source: Getty Images

Donald Trump is opposed to Zelensky, especially as the leader of Ukraine. For example, he stated that Zelensky's approval rating is only 4% and that new elections are needed in Ukraine. These words caused outrage in the Ukrainian segment of social media, as they are obvious lies that do not correspond to reality. Even those who are opposed to Zelensky know that his rating is much higher now. Trump's statements should be treated calmly and not emotionally, as there will be many such statements that are untrue and support Russian narratives. There are people in the US president's inner circle with openly pro-Russian views, and he often listens only to his inner circle. Among the most prominent are Elon Musk and the new head of the National Intelligence Agency, Tulsi Gabbard, who has long repeated the theses spread by Russian propaganda.

In fact, we are witnessing the formation of an alliance between Putin and Trump. In an analytical report by Texty.org.ua, they note that they have been monitoring Russian propaganda for several years and have noticed that the Kremlin has been repeating Trumpist talking points since before the election. Therefore, the current events are not unexpected. Any agreement between Trump and Putin is an attempt to force Ukraine to capitulate. But we should look at the situation realistically: Trump's talk of peace will not bring it to Ukraine. Russia is not giving up its main goal, which is the destruction of Ukraine as a state and Ukrainians as a nation. Therefore, any negotiations between Trump and Putin will result in

Ukraine being forced to capitulate. This will mean even more suffering than we are experiencing now, when we are fighting and resisting.³

The newspaper's analysts note that Trump's peace could lead to the territory of Ukraine becoming a large concentration camp, where we will be tortured, raped, and subjected to mass executions and deportations, and we will not be able to fight back, and the world will not even express concern. This has happened before. Although the forms of this scenario may change, the result will be the same. In such circumstances, they state **that the Ukrainian government should ignore any agreements between the US and Russia, as well as US demands on Ukraine.**

Now is the time to rely solely on internal forces and actively work with the Europeans. Most likely, **Ukraine will have to fight without US support.** Kyiv has already fought the occupier without external help at the beginning of the war, when most world leaders, including US President Biden, believed that Ukraine had 3 days left. It was only after the Ukrainian people showed their perseverance that international help came. Now the situation may repeat itself. A large proportion of Trump's voters support Ukraine, and if Kyiv does not capitulate, despite pro-Russian sentiment among some actors, Trump will find it difficult to ignore the mood at home. Donald Trump's statements criticising Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky indicate a possible deterioration in US support, which is indeed a worrying signal for Ukraine. It seems that Trump is trying to force Ukraine into a peace agreement, while Russia, the aggressor, remains unchanged in its policy.

However, *even in such circumstances, international military assistance to Ukraine is likely to continue, albeit in a reduced volume.* In particular, the role of European military enterprises is important, as they can significantly increase their capabilities and increase the volume of assistance to Ukraine. However, in order to do so, Ukraine will have to adapt to the new conditions and look for alternative sources of support. Mykola Sungurovsky, a military expert at the Razumkov Centre, notes that although US aid may not stop completely or change its status, it could still have serious consequences. In order to compensate for the decrease in US aid, Ukraine will need to rely more on Europe and optimise its aid policy by diversifying its sources. This is certainly a complex situation, and decisions on Ukraine's next steps in the international arena require caution and a strategic approach.

Indeed, *the situation with Ukraine's information support and its relations with Trump and other international actors is very complicated.* As noted, Ukraine has not paid enough attention to promoting its achievements and the amount of assistance it receives from the US, which has allowed Trump to use Russian propaganda to shift the blame onto Ukraine. This could have serious consequences for international support if this information is not properly presented and becomes part of the general consciousness.

As for the possibility of a peace agreement on unfavourable terms for Ukraine, the expert believes *that in order to avoid such scenarios, Ukraine should define clear red lines.* This is important to protect national interests and prevent the surrender of territories or loss of control over the occupied regions. Moreover, with these territories under Russian control, the outcome of the negotiations is likely to be pre-determined in favour of Russia, especially through control over demographic changes. Europe, of course, has the potential to change the situation, but as noted, the political will is limited due to the mood of the electorate.

Nevertheless, Europe is indeed stepping up to try to improve the situation in our favour, and this could lead to more intensive assistance to Ukraine. However, it is important that Ukrainians themselves step out of their comfort zone, in particular in terms of solidarity and

³ "Мир Трампа" — це примус до капітуляції. Що робити Україні в умовах альянсу США і РФ. 19.02.2025. <https://texty.org.ua/fragments/114496/myr-trampa-ce-prymus-do-kapitulyaciyi-sho-robyty-ukrayini-v-umovah-alyansu-ssha-i-rf/?src=main>

support for their own efforts at the front, as well as active struggle against evaders, who are part of this situation. Overall, the issues of military aid, development of the defence industry and international policy remain key for Ukraine at this stage of the war. Oleksandr Khara, an expert at the Centre for Defence Strategies, emphasises the importance of the prospects for Ukraine in the current situation compared to 2014 and 2022. ***Despite the challenges, Ukraine is in a much stronger position, as the situation at the front is not catastrophic, and European support is strengthening its position. This allows for a more optimistic perception of the situation, while maintaining psychological stability and calm.***⁴

Thus, despite political misunderstandings or statements by individual leaders, the situation for Ukraine remains much less critical than in previous years, and there are real chances of European support if necessary. However, it is clear that Trump, either because of personal grievances or because of the Kremlin's money, will do his best to pressure and provoke Kyiv. In these circumstances, Ukraine should not agree to any terms that lack precise military guarantees of security, or that provide for any concessions to Russia, or that reward it for its crimes.

⁴ Експерт: Трамп не зможе змусити Україну до капітуляції, бо ми зараз у сильнішій позиції, ніж три роки тому. 18.02.2025. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/3961590-ekspert-tramp-ne-zmoze-zmusiti-ukrainu-do-kapitulacii-bo-mi-zaraz-u-silnisij-pozicii-niz-tri-roki-tomu.html>



Source: Army FM

■ Changes at the front

Trend: *The Ukrainian Defense Forces have halted the Russian offensive along the entire front line. Russian forces' activity has somewhat decreased, with more than half of the attacks concentrated on the Toretsk, Pokrovsk, and Novopavlivka directions.*

In the Kharkiv direction, Ukrainian forces repelled assaults near Vovchansk, while Russian forces carried out an airstrike with guided bombs on the Mala Vovcha area. In the Kupiansk direction, Russian forces attempted advances near Lozova, Petropavlivka, Stepova Novoselivka, and Bohuslavka but were repelled. The Lyman direction saw constant Russian attacks near settlements such as Nove, Hrektivka, Novomykhailivka, Kolodiaz, Zelena Dolyna, Yampilivka, Novoliubivka, and Torske.

In the Siversk direction, Ukrainian forces repelled continuous attacks in the areas of Bilohorivka and Verkhokamianske. In the Kramatorsk direction, defenders pushed back Russian assaults near Bila Hora. The Toretsk direction saw Russian attempts to advance near Dachne, Kurdiumivka, Krymske, Druzhba, Toretsk, and Shcherbynivka.

In the Pokrovsk direction, Ukrainian defenders repelled all 14 Russian attacks near Valentynivka, Yelyzavetivka, Pomin, Lysivka, Pokrovsk, Udachne, Kotliarivka, Oleksiivka, and Andriivka, while Russian aviation targeted Leontovychi and Zvyrove with guided bombs.

The Novopavlivka direction saw battles near Kostyantynopil, Rozlyv, Skudne, Burlatske, and in the direction of Vesele. In the Hulyaipole direction, clashes continued for a month near Novosilka and Pryvilne, while airstrikes with guided bombs and unguided rockets hit Voskresenka, Shevchenko, Novodarivka, Hulyaipole, and Zaliznychne.

In the Orikhiv direction, Russian forces made gains near Novodanylivka, Pyatykhatky, and in the direction of Stepove, while Mala Tokmachka was hit by rocket attacks. In the Prydniprovske direction, Russian forces made unsuccessful attempts to attack Ukrainian positions, with an airstrike on Lvivske causing damage.

■ *Military assistance*

Ukraine has become the world's largest importer of major weapons systems for the period 2020-2024, increasing its imports nearly 100 times compared to 2015-2019, while Russia's arms exports dropped by 64%. This is according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The report states that 64% of Ukraine's arms imports during this period came from the United States.

Overall, arms imports by European NATO members more than doubled (by 105%) compared to the previous five years. For the first time in two decades, the largest share of U.S. arms exports went to Europe (35%) rather than the Middle East (33%). The total U.S. arms exports grew by 43%, with the country supplying major weapons systems to 107 states between 2020 and 2024.

France ranks as the second-largest arms exporter (9.6%, 65 countries), followed by Germany (5.6%) and Italy (4.8%). China accounts for 5.9% of global arms exports, but many major importers avoid purchasing Chinese weapons for political reasons.

■ *Russia: External and internal challenges*

Trend: *The U.S. and Russia are initiating a new global realignment: what will be left for China, and where will Europe stand?*

Eighty years ago, the leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom held a meeting that determined the post-war division of the world. Defeated Germany was split into two parts: West Germany (FRG), aligned with the West, and East Germany (GDR), under Soviet influence. The Soviet Union established control over Eastern Europe, gained Kaliningrad and Sakhalin, while the United Kingdom secured the right to settle the situation in Greece.

The 80th anniversary of the Yalta Conference nearly coincided with Donald Trump's return to the White House. He immediately announced U.S. claims to Greenland (which belongs to Denmark) and the Panama Canal and proposed that Canada become the 51st state. These statements draw parallels to a potential new global realignment. It is important to note that such redistributions typically follow wars that dismantle the previous international system. According to *The Independent*, despite his peace-oriented rhetoric, **Trump supports the concept of spheres of influence**, as evidenced by his remarks on Greenland, Panama, Canada, and other territories. Consequently, Moscow and Beijing are closely watching Trump's actions, concluding that while he speaks about democracy, he employs methods characteristic of authoritarian regimes. "This approach alarms China and Russia, which are used to the predictability of democratic countries, whereas Trump's unpredictability creates additional risks for them," said Ihor Reiterovych, Head of Political-Legal Programs at the Ukrainian Center for Social Development.

Timothy O'Brien, editor-in-chief of *Bloomberg*, questions whether Trump truly believes in the idea of a global division where the U.S. controls the Western Hemisphere, China dominates Asia, and Russia rules Europe. "This is an isolationist stance held by some Republicans, which could lead to a chaotic restructuring of international relations," O'Brien warns. Despite experts' doubts about his real intentions, Trump has already acted aggressively. Immediately after his inauguration, he called Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, demanding that Greenland be sold to the U.S.

According to European officials, the conversation was tense. After Frederiksen refused, Trump reacted harshly and confrontationally. "It was a cold shower. Previously, this issue wasn't taken seriously, but now the situation looks real and potentially dangerous," a source told *Politico*. A week later, Denmark allocated 14.6 billion kroner (approximately \$2.04 billion) to bolster Greenland's defense. Prime Minister Frederiksen also sought support from European leaders to counter Trump's aggressive rhetoric. The response was swift: French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot confirmed that Paris was considering sending troops to Greenland in response to repeated U.S. threats to annex the Danish territory.

This situation highlights Europe's precarious geopolitical position between two major powers—Russia and the United States. With traditional international mechanisms failing to ensure stability, **Europe will have to take significant strategic steps to safeguard its security and political unity. This involves not only increasing defense spending but also rethinking the role of transatlantic relations, which have been vital for post-war Europe.**

A key issue is trust in the U.S. During previous administrations, European partners received worrying signals, but today's geopolitical challenges, including uncertainty surrounding Trump's stance, have heightened their concerns. Relations between two major figures—Putin and Trump—are unfolding amid considerable political and economic uncertainty in Europe. An emergency summit in Paris, planned to address this crisis, is expected to be a decisive moment in determining whether Europe can take responsibility for its own security or remain dependent on external actors.

In the context of the current geopolitical situation, European unity and its ability to resist both Russian aggression and U.S. influence have become critically important for its future on the international stage. This underscores the serious geopolitical challenges Europe faces amid global instability. The rhetoric of Russian President Putin and Donald Trump demonstrates how Europe risks being marginalized in international negotiations, where crucial issues like Ukraine's security and the continent's future are decided without its participation.

J.D. Vance's statement that Europe's main threat is not Russia or China but immigration and far-right movements has sparked outrage **among European leaders, highlighting the U.S.'s lack of understanding of European realities and priorities.** Support for far-right parties, such as Germany's AFD, further strains relations between Europe and the U.S. Particularly alarming was Keith Kellogg's assertion that European leaders should be excluded from negotiations on Ukraine, which is seen as an outright humiliation for Europe. Amid this situation, China is seizing the opportunity, promoting alternatives by emphasizing international law and U.N. principles, which align with European standards.

At the same time, European leaders recognize that Russia's strategic ambitions go beyond Ukraine. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that Europe can no longer consider itself at peace, as Russia is building up its military strength and could use the current pause to prepare for new aggressions against EU and NATO countries. Although Ukraine's resistance has temporarily provided a window of opportunity, Europe risks failing to prepare for future threats unless it significantly increases military spending and strengthens its defense

industry. This situation demands not only European unity but also decisive steps toward enhancing its military capabilities.

While some experts and media outlets suggest that Trump may still be inclined to support Ukraine and take a tough stance against Russia and China to defend the Western order, the reality appears quite different. In just a month, the actions of the U.S. president have effectively dismantled American hegemony and fractured the Western alliance—an alliance that Ukraine helped unite three years ago. Meanwhile, China is quietly observing as its primary competitor weakens itself from within. The Yalta Conference once solidified the U.S. as a global leader, largely by securing European allies. Now, those allies have lost faith in Washington.

This redistribution of power will have catastrophic consequences for the U.S., as it will no longer be able to maintain its dominant position. At the same time, it is now Europe's moment to wake up and take the lead in the West, thereby protecting itself from threats to its sovereignty. Signs of this shift are already visible in Brussels' actions. In the coming months, we are likely to witness new European initiatives that, until recently, seemed improbable in the near future.