

Donald Trump's latest declaration that Ukraine can win the war and reclaim all lost territory has left diplomats and allies both elated and wary. The statement, issued on Truth Social after his meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, marks his strongest endorsement of Kyiv to date. It also represents a sharp departure from his earlier insistence that Ukraine could never defeat Russia and must eventually cede land in a negotiated peace.



Donald J. Trump  
@realDonaldTrump

After getting to know and fully understand the Ukraine/Russia Military and Economic situation and, after seeing the Economic trouble it is causing Russia, I think Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and WIN all of Ukraine back in its original form. With time, patience, and the financial support of Europe and, in particular, NATO, the original Borders from where this War started, is very much an option. Why not? Russia has been fighting aimlessly for three and a half years a War that should have taken a Real Military Power less than a week to win. This is not distinguishing Russia. In fact, it is very much making them look like "a paper tiger." When the people living in Moscow, and all of the Great Cities, Towns, and Districts all throughout Russia, find out what is really going on with this War, the fact that it's almost impossible for them to get Gasoline through the long lines that are being formed, and all of the other things that are taking place in their War Economy, where most of their money is being spent on fighting Ukraine, which has Great Spirit, and only getting better, Ukraine would be able to take back their Country in its original form and, who knows, maybe even go further than that! Putin and Russia are in BIG Economic trouble, and this is the time for Ukraine to act. In any event, I wish both Countries well. We will continue to supply weapons to NATO for NATO to do what they want with them. Good luck to all!

DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Rhetorical Pivot, Not Yet a Policy Shift

Trump's words matter, especially when amplified from the podium of the U.N. General Assembly. By affirming Ukraine's potential for total victory, the U.S. president gives fresh political oxygen to Kyiv's cause at a moment when European leaders are anxious about wavering American commitment. Yet, as EU officials immediately noted, Trump's statements rarely carry the permanence of policy. He is "one Putin call away" from a reversal — and allies know it.

The deeper question is whether this is a genuine rethinking or merely a tactical posture. Trump himself admitted to disappointment with Putin, hinting at personal disillusionment as much as strategic calculation. His suggestion that NATO countries should shoot down Russian aircraft violating their airspace goes further than any recent White House line, but could just as easily evaporate with the next shift in mood.

The European Dimension: Relief and Skepticism

For Europe, Trump's pivot is both vindication and risk. Leaders like Emmanuel Macron and Kaja Kallas seized on his rhetoric as proof that their patient lobbying has paid off. Ursula von der Leyen, long criticized for being too conciliatory with Trump, may now appear prescient for cultivating a close working relationship with him.

But this optimism is tempered by the memory of Trump's inconsistency. His reluctance to impose sanctions on Russia, even amid pressure from allies, underscores how little real policy has shifted. The prospect of U.S. tariffs or sanctions hitting Moscow still seems distant. The danger for Europe lies in leaning too heavily on rhetoric that may be designed less to support Ukraine than to provoke Putin.

What Comes Next

If Trump's words do solidify into action, the consequences could be profound: renewed U.S.-European unity on Ukraine, stronger sanctions on Russia's economy, and a reinvigorated NATO response to Russian provocations. Such a pivot would isolate Moscow further, raise the stakes for China, and give Kyiv a tangible morale boost.

But if, as many suspect, this is another Trumpian feint — a gesture meant to score diplomatic points at the U.N. or unsettle Putin — then the risk is severe disillusionment. Ukraine cannot afford another cycle of raised hopes and dashed expectations, nor can Europe sustain long-term unity if Washington's position swings wildly week to week.

The op-ed's central truth is this: Trump's sudden pro-Ukraine rhetoric is both an opportunity and a trap. If Europe and Kyiv treat it as a turning point, they risk being played. If they dismiss it entirely, they may miss a chance to anchor Trump to a stronger anti-Russia stance.

The challenge now is not simply to welcome Trump's words but to test them — to see whether they can be translated into durable commitments. Until then, one EU diplomat's remark captures the mood best: Monday's Trump may be Ukraine's greatest ally, but Tuesday's Trump remains its most unpredictable risk.