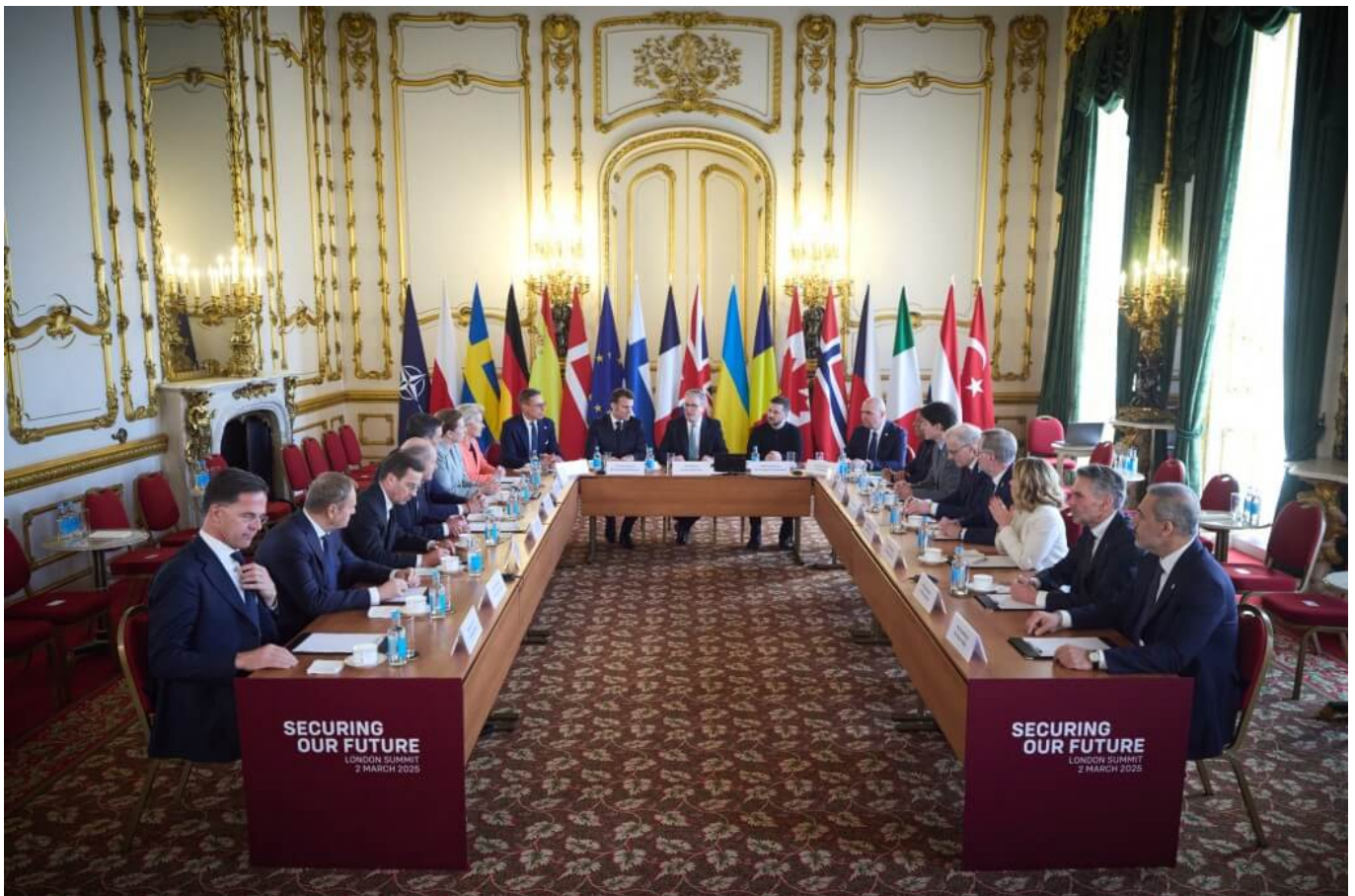




By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

# Is the reaction of the allies convincing enough to correct Trump's course regarding Russia and Ukraine?



Donald Trump's clear "no" to Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a shocking **exchange** at the Oval Office last Friday may not cement US policy towards Kyiv forever.

Inconsistency in policy implementation is not unfamiliar to the US president; on the contrary, it is a common occurrence. This is a result of the decision-making process being highly centralised, with the US president at the top of the hierarchy.

This kind of mechanism, which is unusual for developed democracies, has not done much damage to Trump's reputation in the past, and he is not expected to change it.

After all, after just a few days, he denied his own words that Zelenskyy was a "dictator" and asked reporters who reminded him of this during a meeting with British PM Keir Starmer, "Did I really say that?"

By attacking the Ukrainian president in a live broadcast, Trump made a lasting impression on his supporters, especially in the US, which was the most important thing for him.

Bashing Zelenskyy verbally in the Oval Office was the final video presentation of MAGA's multi-year policy of disqualifying Ukrainian resistance to Russia and spending even more US money to support that defence.

Even more, Trump glorified his supporters in Moscow and finally removed all their doubts as to whether he is really "theirs" or just pretending to be (which is also a consequence of Trump's sudden policy shifts).

"I really like what he is doing right now. He did our job for us that we did not dare to do," Vitaly Tretyakov, a professor at Moscow's State University, **said** on Moscow's main political talk show.

## Not enough votes of support

Undoubtedly, some allies welcomed Trump's attack on Volodymyr Zelenskyy, viewing his policy as the future of transatlantic relations.

Hungarian PM Viktor Orbán **said** after the meeting in the Oval Office – "Strong men make peace, weak men make war. Today, the President stood firmly for peace, even if it was difficult for many to accept. Thank you, Mr President."

But will this circle of supporters of his stance on the Ukrainian leader be big enough to satisfy Trump's ego? Probably not.

On the first day after the White House showdown, the backlash was quite strong, perhaps even unexpectedly strong for President Trump.

## The vast majority of European leaders strongly supported President Zelenskyy in the hours following the White House meeting

The vast majority of European leaders strongly supported President Zelenskyy in the hours following the White House meeting. This wave of support for Ukraine and even stronger opposition to Trump's change of course culminated in a meeting of European leaders in London, which took place unusually quickly for the European nonchalance often displayed.

This latest in a series of emergency meetings of European leaders brought discussions but not many concrete results. One exception is the announcement by the British PM that the leaders have agreed to draw up a peace plan for Ukraine, which they will soon present to the US President.

There are not many details about the plan, except that it would start with a one-month ceasefire at sea, in the air, and against energy installations, as announced by French President Emmanuel Macron.

## Stabilising earthquakes

More important than the content of this plan is that the Europeans want to continue close

communication with Washington on the peace initiative. It is a call to stabilise the earthquake among the allies; it began with America initially ignoring the Europeans and entering into direct talks with Moscow in Riyadh.

In this way, the Europeans are first showing that they remain (more or less) united after Trump's blows, but at the same time, they are leaving a great opportunity for repairing damaged relations.

The US president has the opportunity to use this appeal to calm things down, and he will probably go down this route. This will not be a problem for his pronounced ego, as it is a pragmatic move that he is normally inclined to make.

Trump's return to balance with his European allies, in connection with Ukraine, is therefore realistic and possible. But that process will not go along the course of tightening relations between the US and Moscow.

### The room for striking a balance remains only on the side of easing the pressure on Kyiv

Trump has already adopted most of the Russian vision for the resolution of the war in Ukraine, above all territorial concessions to Ukraine's disadvantage. The room for striking a balance, therefore, remains only on the side of easing the pressure on Kyiv, and that is exactly what the Europeans are seeking by acting quickly and forcefully to protect it.

Washington's calculation in terms of concessions also takes into account the fact that it has not received support for its sharp shift regarding Ukraine from the partners it may have been counting on.

Italian PM Georgia Meloni, for example, **called** for a European-American summit "without delay" after the drama in the Oval Office and before the London meeting of the Europeans.

In doing so, she clearly distanced herself from Trump's attack on Volodymyr Zelenskyy and

aligned with the European partners. Marine Le Pen also **expressed** reservations about Trump's performance in relation to Ukraine, although she herself is close to Trump's doctrine of sovereignty.

## Not just a European response

The backlash after Trump's confrontation with Zelenskyy was not limited to European allies and those ideologically close to him. Outgoing Canadian PM Justin Trudeau showed his commitment to a joint allied approach regarding Ukraine by attending the London meeting of European leaders.



*We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes - Anthony Albanese*

Immediately after the dramatic meeting at the White House last Friday, Australian PM Anthony Albanese **expressed** this by saying that Australia "stands with Ukraine," emphasising Australia's distancing itself from Trump's rapprochement with Moscow.

"The people of Ukraine are fighting not just for their national sovereignty; they are fighting for the international rule of law. We will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. Because this is the struggle of a democratic nation versus authoritarian regime led by Vladimir Putin."

It would not be the first time that the US president has corrected some of his foreign policy directions or rhetoric when he deems it appropriate.

The reaction of allies in Europe, as well as key non-European partners, to his tough tightening on Ukraine was swift and united enough to push him in this direction again.