

# U.S. & World News

## Ukraine allies to meet as Kyiv sends draft plan to Trump

**ALIAKSANDR KUDRYTSKI**

*Bloomberg News (TNS)*

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte warned Russia will come for the rest of Europe if its war-mongering is not checked now, just moments before Ukraine’s allies were slated to discuss U.S. President Donald Trump’s latest peace push.

“We need to be crystal clear about the threat,” the military alliance leader said in a speech Thursday in Berlin. “We are Russia’s next target. And we are already in harm’s way.”

Rutte painted a stark picture of what’s at stake for the continent as Moscow continues to press its maximalist demands for territory and NATO restrictions in return for a vague promise to end its full-scale invasion, currently heading into its fourth winter.

“Russia has brought war back to Europe,” Rutte said. “And we must be prepared for the scale of war our grandparents and great-grandparents endured.”

Rutte’s remarks come as Europe frets over what the Trump administration may do in its ongoing talks with Russia over the war. Trump is pressuring Kyiv to make concessions that

many in Europe feel will leave not just Ukraine, but the entire continent, exposed to future Russian aggression.

The prospect has sent European officials into a flurry of activity. On Thursday night, leaders from more than 30 countries that are part of the so-called coalition of the willing will hold their second virtual meeting this week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a video address.

Allies will discuss the state of peace talks and the latest draft plan that Ukrainian officials sent to Washington overnight, people familiar with the planning said. U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz are also expected to brief participants on an exchange they had with Trump on Wednesday, the people said on condition of anonymity as the talks take place behind closed doors.

Merz has said he was “relatively optimistic” after the “very constructive” exchange with Trump. A meeting may be held in Berlin at the start of next week to keep discussing the issue, he added.

“Above all, it’s about the terri-

torial concessions that Ukraine is ready to make — but that’s a question that the Ukrainian president and the Ukrainian people must answer,” Merz said in Berlin after meeting with Rutte. “We made that clear to President Trump.”

Zelenskyy submitted a new version of a peace plan to the White House, following discussions with key European partners this week. The 20-point draft is a “fundamental document” to end the war, Zelenskyy said. Ukraine also developed two additional proposed agreements from the plan, addressing U.S. security guarantees and future recovery, he said.

“We are actively working on the key steps – and they must be doable steps,” Zelenskyy said.

New election  
Trump has stepped up pressure on the Ukrainian leader to accept his peace plan, reinforcing a call for Zelenskyy to organize presidential elections. The vote — currently restricted under martial law — would be possible if the U.S. and Europe ensure security in Ukraine, Zelenskyy said earlier this week. He met with lawmakers to discuss changes to the election

law.

Meanwhile, the warring parties continued to carry out aerial strikes. Ukrainian forces hit the Filanovsky offshore platform in the Caspian Sea, owned by Lukoil PJSC, according to a person familiar with the attack. The platform suffered at least four strikes, halting its operations, the person said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said on its Telegram channel that air defenses downed 287 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 40 in the Moscow region. Russian aviation authorities imposed temporary restrictions on flights at Moscow’s Domodedovo and Vnukovo airports, the state-run Tass news service reported Thursday.

In Ukraine, energy infrastructure in the central city of Kremenchuk and in the Black Sea port of Odesa in the south came under attacks overnight, according to local governors.

The European Union in the meantime is close to reaching an agreement on Friday to extend the bloc’s freeze on Russian assets using emergency powers — a key step toward tapping the funds to help Ukraine.

The issue has become a major sticking point in E.U. attempts to secure a €90 billion (\$105 billion) loan for Ukraine using immobilized Russian central bank assets. All 27 E.U. member states currently must renew the asset freeze every six months, leading to concerns that Hungary or anyone else could veto and give Moscow a sudden claim to its funds.

This is happening against the backdrop of unprecedented tensions with the U.S., with Washington’s new national security strategy blasting Europe and Trump calling the continent “weak.”

In Berlin, Rutte said U.S. views of its allies has been sullied by “this big irritant of the Europeans and Canadian allies not spending as much as the Americans” within NATO.

“That is now dealt with,” he added, saying the shift to Europe doing “more of the heavy lifting” was underway.

He denied a Reuters report from Friday claiming the U.S. has given Europe until 2027 to take over the decisive bulk of NATO’s conventional defense capabilities, threatening to withdraw from some of the alliance’s mechanisms if it didn’t.

## UN says peacekeepers came under Israeli fire in southern Lebanon

**WEEDAH HAMZAH, AMIRA RAJAB AND SARA LEMEL**

*dpa (TNS)*

BEIRUT — The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL, said on Wednesday that Israeli forces fired multiple bursts of machine-gun fire near a UN peace-keeping patrol along the UN-demarcated Blue Line, causing no casualties.

The Israeli military later said that the shots were not aimed at the peacekeepers but at a suspect.

UNIFIL said peacekeepers in vehicles were conducting a routine patrol near the village of Sarda on Tuesday when an Israeli Merkava tank opened fire.

“One burst of 10 rounds

was fired over the patrol, followed by four additional 10-round bursts landing nearby,” the statement said.

The mission said the peacekeepers immediately contacted the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) through UNIFIL liaison channels to demand an end to the shooting.

“Attacks on or near peacekeepers constitute a serious violation of Resolution 1701,” the statement said, urging Israel to halt what UNIFIL called aggressive behavior toward forces mandated to maintain stability along the frontier. UN Resolution 1701 ended the 2006 Lebanon War.

UNIFIL noted that both the tank and the patrol were located inside Lebanese territory at the time. Israel: Warning shots

by soldiers at suspect

The IDF said in a statement that soldiers had identified a suspect approaching an Israeli base and fired warning shots at him.

“During the warning fire, UNIFIL forces contacted the IDF claiming they heard gunfire in their direction. It was clarified to them that the fire was not aimed at them or in their direction, but at the approaching threat in the

area,” the IDF said.

The military emphasized that it was not acting against UN troops and would continue to cooperate extensively with their representatives.

Repeated violations of ceasefire

The incident comes amid a period of Israeli military activity along the Lebanese-Israeli border, where Israel has been carrying almost daily

strikes against pro-Iranian Hezbollah positions.

Israel and Hezbollah agreed to a ceasefire in November 2024 after more than a year of cross-border fire, though both sides have repeatedly accused each other of violating the deal since then.

A key element of the ceasefire agreement is the disarmament of Hezbollah, a politically sensitive process that has

been sought unsuccessfully in Lebanon for decades.

Israel and its northern neighbor remain formally in a state of war. Lebanon’s president recently signaled openness to new negotiations with Israel.

UNIFIL reiterated that its personnel remain committed to preventing further deterioration and maintaining channels of communication between the parties.

## • Board of Education

*Con’t from Page 1*

this election, equating to just 2,440 ballots cast. Moving on, he presented the Board with pictures and information about the aging roof atop the Community Elementary School building. The roof was installed in early 2003, making it 22 years old. An infrared moisture test will need to be done in order to determine if there are any areas of wet insulation that could cause molding problems. Wray Roofing is the company that the district uses to monitor all of the buildings and they are assisting the District in creating an RFP to go out sometime next month. Speer noted that since the Board recently committed \$800,000 to the pool, the district may have to start making plans with its funds to address other district needs. The elementary school roof will be, estimated, around \$2 million to overlay and much more to replace all together.

Action Items

The board approved the following items:

- By suggestion of the Superintendent, the installation of Microsoft Office for the entire district in the amount of \$22,245.80.
- A moisture scan by Rooflink by Community Elementary School.
- Creation of an RFP for the Roof Overlay project at Community Elementary School.
- Scheduling a special Board meeting for December 16 at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the FKHS Natatorium facility and its

future.

- Recommendations of employment of Wesley Kimmel, Maintenance and Jessie Carpenter, also Maintenance.

- Recommendation to extend administrative contracts for:

Dr. Amanda Cavaness, Principal at ELC

Julie Dunham, Principal at RMS

Edward Rutherford, Assistant Principal, RMS

Angela Krause, Principal at CES

Michael Speer, Deputy Superintendent/Business Manager

Lora Stalford, Assistant Superintendent/Learning Services

Travis Stalford, Principal, FKHS

Kelsa King, Assistant Principal, FKHS

Wade Welch, Assistant Principal/Activities Director

Julie Stukesbary, Assistant Principal, CES

Tara Goddard, Assistant Principal, CES

James Thompson, Assistant Principal, CES

- Recommendation to extend director contracts for:

Jared Chastain, Director of Maintenance

Melissa Murray, Director of Student Services

Jenna Nash, Director of Technology

Lisa Stockton, Director of ESOL/Migrant Services

Griffin Walker, Director of Afterschool Programs

Cassandra Worden, Director of Food Services

Leslie Herkleman, Director of Parents as Teachers

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- Support duties involve backing up a supervisor when absent, as well as filling in for absent operators when needed.
- Assist with training of production employees.

**Qualified candidates should submit a resume by Monday, December 15, 2025, to:**  
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