**Trump’s Failed Ukraine Peace Plan Risks   
U.S. Credibility and Global Instability**

Donald Trump promised to end the war in Ukraine within 24 hours of his election. As of April 2025, now well past the symbolic 100-day mark of a second Trump presidency, that vow rings hollow. Not only has the war continued into its third year since Russia’s full-scale invasion and its 11th year since the 2014 occupation of Crimea, but Trump’s peace initiative is faltering.

## Blame-Shifting Instead of Accountability

Instead of acknowledging his blame, Trump is casting it in every direction: on Ukraine, on President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the Biden administration, and even on the war's victims themselves. However, the truth is unavoidable: Trump is failing because he refuses to confront the war's aggressor. He has the leverage to compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table. Yet, out of ego, cowardice, and political entanglement, he chooses not to use it.

## Rubio's Warning and a White House on the Brink

This week, Trump’s Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, signaled growing frustration within the White House regarding the lack of diplomatic progress, warning that the U.S. might have to withdraw from the talks entirely. "We’re not going to continue with this endeavor for weeks and months on end," Rubio said, indicating that unless there is swift progress, the U.S. will "just [take a pass](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2025/apr/18/trump-says-us-will-take-a-pass-on-ukraine-peace-deal-if-parties-make-it-difficult-video?utm_source=chatgpt.com)."  Trump echoed the sentiment, stating, "If one of the two parties makes it very difficult, we’re just going to say, 'You're foolish... we're going to just take a pass.'"

## A Conflict Trump Failed to Solve in His First Term

But while Trump threatens to abandon negotiations, he fails to acknowledge that during his first term as president, he did not end this war. Russia invaded Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014. Trump served from 2017 to 2021. If he had the secret to peace, why didn’t he use it then? Instead, his presidency was marked by an unwillingness to confront Putin and an infamous decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine for political gain—an act that led to his first [impeachment,](https://www.politico.com/news/2019/11/13/public-impeachment-hearings-live-highlights-and-updates-070279?utm_source=chatgpt.com) which he blames on Zelenskyy.

## Distorting the War’s Origins to Avoid Blame

Today, Trump continues to show the same unwillingness to challenge Putin. In February, he falsely claimed that Ukraine had started the war in 2022, only reluctantly [conceding](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/white-house-expects-ukraine-sign-critical-minerals-deal-soon-2025-02-21/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) that "Russia attacked" before blaming Ukrainian leadership for not preventing it. He routinely implies that the war occurred solely because he was not in office, suggesting the “respect" Putin has for him would have [deterred the invasion](https://apnews.com/article/russia-putin-trump-zelenskyy-ukraine-war-talks-0892a64bd9080555094acceddbc37346).

## Putin's Ideological War on Ukraine

This narrative avoids the harsh reality: Vladimir Putin has no genuine interest in peace. His ideological project, known as "Russkiy Mir" or "Russian World," aims to reabsorb Ukraine into a new Russian empire. He does not want negotiations; he wants submission. Every ceasefire proposal out of Moscow is designed to buy time, consolidate gains, and wear down Ukraine's resistance. Meanwhile, Russia continues launching missile barrages at Ukrainian cities killing innocent civilians and abducting children from occupied territories—acts widely denounced as war crimes.

## Ukraine's Position: Peace Without Capitulation

Ukraine, by contrast, has consistently shown a willingness to talk, provided that any agreement protects its sovereignty and people. President Zelenskyy has advanced detailed [peace proposals](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/5/what-is-ukraines-new-peace-plan-that-zelenskyy-presented-to-trump) and even agreed to a trial ceasefire in March. But Ukraine cannot agree to a peace that legitimizes the mass murder and ethnic cleansing of its citizens in occupied areas. This is not about territory; it is about the lives of millions of Ukrainians trapped behind Russian lines and being subjected to daily acts of genocide and russification.

## Trump’s Neutrality Amounts to Appeasement

That makes Trump’s apparent “neutrality” all the more dangerous. A genuine peace plan would require Trump to wield the full force of American influence to pressure Russia into withdrawal. This entails increasing sanctions, supporting Ukraine militarily, and isolating Putin diplomatically until he understands that retreat is the only path to survival.

But Trump refuses to do this. His fear of confrontation with Putin is palpable. He avoids directly criticizing the Russian president. He downplays Russian atrocities and constantly pressures Ukraine to concede, arguing that if they don’t make peace on his terms, they will lose their country. This isn’t peacemaking; it’s appeasement.

## A Pattern of Failure and Deflection

Observers note that Trump has never truly accepted blame for any of his failures—and the war in [Ukraine](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg5q0mev07lo) is no exception. He promised he could stop the war in 24 hours, but he hasn’t. Instead of owning that failure, he blames the victims, the allies, and anyone but himself. The truth is clear: Trump is the one obstructing peace. He has the power to help Ukraine win and force Putin to sue for peace; he simply chooses not to.

## Putin’s Leverage Over Trump

Why? Part of the answer lies in Trump’s admiration for authoritarian leaders like Putin. Another factor is his desire to prove that the war occurred because he lost the 2020 election—not due to Russia’s aggression. However, more concerning is the shadow of Trump's past dealings with Russia. His 2016 campaign welcomed Kremlin interference. He pursued a Moscow real estate deal while running for president. He has never fully [disentangled himself](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/report_volume5.pdf) from financial or political ties to Russian interests that can be traced back as early as 1987.

## A Legacy at Risk, and Peace Out of Reach

Trump does not want to admit that he cannot deliver peace because he is beholden to the very regime waging the war. His pious statements about ending the war were never grounded in strategy or principle. They were political theater, crafted to boost his image, win votes, and position him as a strong American leader, but not to save Ukrainian lives.

We are now more than 1,000 days into the bloodiest war in Europe since World War II. Over 11 years have passed since the first Russian troops crossed into Crimea. Trump has had ample opportunity to shape the outcome. But instead of stepping up, he’s stepping back—talking tough while doing little, projecting strength while showing fear.

The outcome is potentially devastating not just for Ukraine but also for America’s credibility. By opting not to wield America’s power for good, Trump allows tyranny to flourish. If peace in Ukraine fails, it will not solely be due to Putin’s ambition or Zelenskyy’s defiance. It will be because Donald Trump declined to lead.

**A Final Reckoning**

Trump must now confront a simple truth: unless he compels Russia to retreat, there will be no peace. And if he cannot or will not do that, then the failure of this peace initiative is his—and his alone. The result will be devastating not only for Trump but also for U.S. credibility worldwide and for Ukraine.

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