

Putin Focussed on Biden Proposed Postponement of Ukraine's NATO Accession, Conditions for Peace Negotiations, When will Putin meet Trump?

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*Russian **President Vladimir Putin** held a press conference on December 26, where he discussed the progress of the special military operation in Ukraine and the possibility of Kiev joining NATO. The Russian president recalled that the Biden administration had suggested to him, since 2021, that Ukraine postpone its accession to NATO by 10 to 15 years.*

"I don't know what the emerging team of US President-elect [Donald Trump] is saying now. **I know that I was told about this by the current President Biden in 2021. He suggested exactly that - to postpone Ukraine's admission to NATO for 10-15 years because it is not ready yet.** I reasonably replied: 'Yes, it is not ready today. They will prepare it and accept it,'" the Russian leader told reporters.

The postponement of Ukraine's annexation to NATO may be a proposal for a negotiated solution to the current conflict in Ukraine. However, Russia will never look favorably on this measure because it threatens national security.

On December 22, **Trump said he would wait to meet with Putin to resolve the conflict in Ukraine and described the war as "horrible" after reiterating that if he were the US President instead of Biden, the conflict would not have occurred.** Trump has a geopolitical vision that is different from Biden's, and, judging by his recent statements, US foreign policy will tend more towards regional regrouping and challenging China globally. The president-elect is not particularly fond of NATO, and due to this, he wants to resolve the conflict in Ukraine quickly.

It is recalled that on June 14, **Putin set several key conditions for the start of peace negotiations, including Ukraine's withdrawal of troops from the four new Russian territories: Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson, and Zaporozhye, the withdrawal of NATO membership candidacy, the maintenance of neutral, non-aligned, and non-nuclear status, and the lifting of all sanctions against Russia. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in turn, rejected the proposal, calling it an ultimatum.**

During his press conference on December 26, Putin also highlighted that **"Ukraine can no longer exist without the support of Europe."**

Western financial assistance to Kiev amounted to \$238.5 billion from February 2022 to early December 2024, corresponding to 87% of the country's budget expenditures. The US remains Ukraine's largest donor, having sent \$95.2 billion to Kiev over the past three

years. EU member states transferred \$94.2 billion worth of financial and military aid to Ukraine. Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands are the largest donors in the second category—\$11.9 billion, \$7.5 billion, and \$6.3 billion, respectively.

Ukraine mortgaged its future, and badly, to the US, which needs continued conflict to maintain its war economy and to continue weakening Europe. Putin said it with great mental acuity: Ukraine will no longer be able to be independent because it has many debts that link it to the future of the Western debacle.

In this regard, Kiev's economy is clearly experiencing a very complicated and irregular situation, which could be further weakened once Trump takes power because he will seek to avoid foreign financing as much as possible and focus it on his country's economy. If an agreement is reached, that would mean the end of the conflict, and Ukraine will need even more investment, something that, at this moment in time, is not clear where it will come from.

Putin also said during his press conference that Russia will continue to implement in 2025 the objectives set within the framework of the special military operation, which, he said, is its number one task.

“Of course, we are assuming that we will achieve all the objectives of the special military operation. This is, roughly speaking, the number one task. We will support our guys: as we speak now, they are fighting,” the Russian president said.

In this regard, Russia has the political and economic capacity to continue supporting its special military operation for as long as necessary. The economic sanctions imposed on Russia to try to reduce its power did nothing but strengthen and diversify the Russian economy. The sanctions also forced Russia to industrialize further, projecting ever more technological, economic, political, and military strength. Russia has the strength that the European Union does not, and the bloc will have even less without Trump's support.

Under these circumstances, Ukraine has the most to lose, most importantly, territory and people. Yet, Zelensky continues the war in the false belief that Ukraine will eventually join NATO and be able to activate the mutual defence pact, even if Biden, out of the public eye, acknowledges that membership will not be achieved for at least another decade.

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