

KRISTEN WELKER:

President Zelenskyy, welcome back to Meet the Press.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Thank you so much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Thank you for being here. It is an honor to have you. Ukraine is approaching the third anniversary of Russia's invasion into your country. My condolences to you for all of the lives that have been lost. You are here --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Thank you.

KRISTEN WELKER:

– at the Munich Security Conference, and just a short time ago you spoke with the secretary of state and the vice president about the state of the war. Was that a productive meeting? What came of it?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I think it was good. Good conversation, good meeting. The first one, it's really, to be honest, I don't believe that a lot of leaders during the first meeting have very constructive and very decisive meeting. Now it's about, you know, about relations, how to feel each other and to begin to make some really productive, you know, steps – steps to do something very important, in this case, for Ukraine, for our security, for our people. And for both nations, I'm sure maybe not everybody in the United States or in Europe are sure that a lot of things depends on security in Ukraine in the world. I'm sure that Putin doesn't want to stop and he wants to go further and further. So, I'm sorry that I'm jumping. Yeah, but I wanted to say that I think that the meeting was good. We have to understand each other. That also the Secretary Rubio was and the special envoy Kellogg, General Kellogg, he will come on 20th to Ukraine, and we make this decision. I want – I think he was surprised, but I said to him that, "If you will come, we will go to the front." I said to him that, yes, maybe it's too dangerous. I don't know. But if you really have to understand – the new administration – they really have to understand what's going on on the battlefield not from, you know, only from information from media, to see what's going on.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We are going to delve into your views on President Putin. But to follow up on what you said, from this meeting, did you gain any clarity? What is the Trump administration's peace plan? Do they have one?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

First of all, I think, no, they don't have a real plan because they can't have it without us. I think so. Maybe there are some ideas. And I heard some ideas about the economy, how to secure economy, how to invest. We spoke mostly about it with the vice president. I think security

guarantee is totally the question of the president. With all respect to vice president, but it's about more to president because he is the president of the United States, and he is the leader of NATO, and it's been the leader of security alliances. So – but economy, I mean, it's a big part of security. We need it very much. We need a real contract if both sides are happy because our people have to be happy. Yes, otherwise we can't just pressure on society. So I hope that we will prepare the economy, and we'll prepare the contract, the document where business of the United States will invest, where we can be partners, but we have to make some steps further, and we have to – the lawyers have to work more for this document.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about something that President Trump said this week. He did not say yes when he was asked if he sees Ukraine as an equal member in the peace process. He did say later that Ukraine would have a seat at the table. Have you been given any assurances that Ukraine will have an equal seat at the negotiating table?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

So I will never accept any decisions between the United States and Russia about Ukraine. Never. And our people, never. And our adults, and children, and everybody, it can't be so. The war in Ukraine is against us, and it is our human losses. And we are thankful for all the support, unity between USA – in USA around Ukraine support, bipartisan unity, bipartisan support, we're thankful for all of this. But there is no any leader in the world who can really make a deal with Putin without us about us. Of course, the United States can have a lot of decisions, economical partnership, and et cetera. We're not happy with it, but they can have with Russians. But not about this war without us. And that's why I think that what we need, very closely to work and quicker. I think we lose time now quicker to work on the plan, common plan. So we're ready because United States is our – the biggest strategic partner. We are ready not only to share our plan. We're ready to put common plan with President Trump. And of course we need support from EU. It's important. They are also big donators during this war. And we will be the members of future European Union. That's why we need the support of Europe. And this common plan, we have to discuss with Russians, and we will. And at the table, it's very important to hear America, Europe, Ukraine and Russia. Yes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Has the president, has the vice president, given you an assurance that Ukraine will have an equal seat at the negotiating table, which, as you just said, is critical to any peace plan?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Yeah, I understood, to be honest, that we have common view on it. But there are messages, as you said, right, in media some messages which are, you know, make disappointment, yes? Is it right word in English? Sorry. Yeah, disappointment for a lot of leaders of Europe, because they also feel sometimes that they are out of decisions. And I said to them that they have to be in unity with the United States. Otherwise, not only United States can lose Europe as a strategic partner, Europe also can lose the United States. And I'm in this interesting -- both, you know, of continents that's not to lose, because this is really, really the biggest and the strongest allies in

the world. I think so. That's why we have this place at the table at the very beginning. And we are the first who are at this table because the war is in Ukraine.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you accept any peace deal that is cut without Ukraine?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And do you feel like you have a seat at the table right now?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I not only count on it, I'm sure that we have to be there. Otherwise, it's not acceptable. But if there is a decision without us and Putin will go out from all our land, we will be in NATO, and Putin will be in the prison, so President Trump can do it without us.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about your phone call with President Trump earlier this week. It came on the heels of his call with President Putin. Does Mr. Trump's direct communication with Vladimir Putin before speaking to you unnerve you?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

No, no. We spoke about it, by the way, with President Trump. And I said that I know that we had already phone calls, yes, both of us, and it's okay that he phoned him. Of course I wanted very much that Ukraine is in priority for Trump, not Russia. And I hope that we are more important, more important. Yes, we are not so big as Russia. But I think strategically Ukraine is more important for the United States because we are really partners, allies, and we share common values, and we are really from democratic worlds. Yes, and that's why I think that for us it's necessary to feel it. And that's why of course it's better when president of the United States first speak with president of Ukraine and then with Russians. For me it's – you know, it's not for me – it's not only for me. It's for our people. This is their signal. This is the attitude from the United States to Ukraine. But, I mean, there's no doubt. I mean, there's no questions about this phone call because we have dialogue the same day. And I count on President Trump, and I hope that he will really support us. But if we speak about meetings, so this is not the same with phone calls. Yes. So of course we need to speak and meet with the president of the United States, and only after that with Russians.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Did he invite you to the White House? Did he invite you – he says he's planning to meet President Putin in Saudi Arabia. Did he invite you there?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

No, he didn't invite me to Saudi Arabia. I --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Did he invite you to the White House?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

You know, he always says that, "I'm ready to see you." But, you know, our teams have to work on the date. We also spoke about it. He gave me his phone number. He said, "This is my direct number. You have to call me any day you want." And, yes, thank you so much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do you feel like you have President Trump's full support? Do you feel like he's valuing Ukraine as much as you say he may be Russia?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Well, I became more, more, more pragmatic from the very beginning of this war and less sensitive to such things. And I believe and trust only in real steps. And I trust President Trump because he's the president of the United States, because your people, your people voted for him, and I respect their choice, and I will work the President Trump with trust, which I have to the United States. But of course I want to have real meeting, productive, without just words, with concrete steps, and to hear us, to hear President Trump, to make common plan, and to share it with allies, then with Russians, and stop this war. I think we need it urgently. We have to do it without basic things, where there are concrete steps.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So no plans right now to go to the White House?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I don't know. I don't know. Maybe they have. As I said – about journey to?

KRISTEN WELKER:

No plans for you to go to the White House right now that you're aware of?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I don't have the date. I don't have the date, but we spoke about it, that we will have meeting and our teams will work on it. So I think that now after vice president and after General Kellogg will come to Ukraine, I think he will get some more information for President Trump. I think they need this time to have this information, then to work with this information, and then to think, be ready, and then we will meet. Something like this.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is it true that you told President Trump during that phone call that Putin is only pretending to want peace because he is afraid of Mr. Trump?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Yes. Yes, I said that he is a liar. And he said, "I think my feeling is that he's ready for these negotiations." And I said to him, "No, he's a liar. He doesn't want any peace." But I think he's really a little bit scared about the President Trump. And I think the president has this chance, and he's strong. And I think that really he can push Putin to peace negotiations. Yes, I think so. I think he can, but don't trust him. Don't trust Putin. Don't trust just words about ceasefire. I said because I have very practical things, practical meeting with Putin in 2019, and we made a decision with all our signatures. Then we made a decision about ceasefire and exchange of prisoners. Yes. And he – I don't know how to [SPEAKS UKRAINIAN]. He destroyed all these decisions and et cetera. So we don't trust him.

KRISTEN WELKER:

If you don't think President Putin really wants peace, are you concerned he's going to drag out this process?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

And he also – he needs pause. This is good and very bad at the same time. He needs pause because he really now mobilized 35,000 people each month. But we want to prepare very trained, well-trained people. But he has so many losses, and they are not well-trained. They don't have enough time. They are pushing them on the battlefield, and they are dying. Wounded or dying. That's why he needs pause. He needs time. Ceasefire without anything, without, you know, actions on the battlefield and et cetera, to have a pause and prepare. Prepare for invasion, I'm sure. The new ones. That's why when we speak with the President Trump and with his team, vice president, I said that I don't trust. So that's great. God bless. If President Trump will push him, he can. God bless, he will do it. But I need security guarantees. Words are not enough. Words cost nothing with Putin, yes? That's why for me it's very important, strong security guarantees. Otherwise, when he will come back so he can occupy us.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And we're going to talk about the security guarantees --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Okay.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you big picture, though. Do you think President Trump is negotiating in good faith?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I hope so. I hope so. Yes, I count on it. I count on it very much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Based on what you're saying about President Putin, do you think he's negotiating in good faith once talks begin?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Who?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Putin.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

Putin? That he really –

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is he capable of negotiating in good faith? Is Putin capable of negotiating in good faith?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

No. No, and it's not about good faith. No, no, no, no. No. No. No, no. Yes, you just can't block his motivation to put him in such strong circumstances when he can't begin the new invasion, re-invasion. But he wants. You'll see. Everybody will see. He will try to begin something new. By the way, I said it today. I'm not sure that only about Ukraine we are speaking. He is thinking not only about Ukraine. For example, now we have – and we shared it with intelligence of our partners – now we see how he's preparing to train 150,000 people mostly on the territory of Belarus, to show it for the world that it is just training, that usually he is doing the same. Usually. But it's not truth. From such point, he begin the occupation three years ago. Full-scale war he began from some symbolic trainings and et cetera. But really, really --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY [TRANSLATED]:

He conducted military training exercises, he said that these are exercises that are always ongoing on Belarus territories, that they are a allied state with Belarus and that they do regular business. But he started the invasion, and the missiles, and the first night flew from the Belarus, and the invasion came from Belarus. We know for sure that he is preparing that from the territory of Belarus this year. It can happen in summer, maybe in the beginning, maybe in the end of summer. I do not know when he prepares it. But it will happen. And at that moment, knowing that he did not succeed in occupying us, we do not know where he will go. There are risks that this can be Poland and Lithuania because we believe – we believe that Putin will wage war against NATO. That is why I told you that, "What is he waiting for?" For a weakening of NATO by, for instance, policy of the United States of America, for example, that the United States of America will think to take its military from Europe. Yes, Putin thinks of that. But I will believe that the United States will not take its forces, its contingents from Europe because that will severely weaken NATO and the European continent. Putin definitely counts on that. And the fact that we receive information that he will think of the invasion against former Soviet republics. And forgive me, but today these are NATO countries.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Just to be very clear, you are saying you have actual intelligence that President Putin is planning to attack NATO countries?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

No. We have intelligence, we have documents that they are preparing trained mission of a big number of soldiers on the, on the territory of Belarus. And we just sharing that there is a high risk that he can do the same. Maybe not. God bless not. And maybe before it, President Trump and the allies will stop him. Yes, but anyway, I think that we have to prepare, yes, to prevent it, not to be, not to have such surprises that he will come back like it was three years ago with invasion to Ukraine. That is my point. And that's not my point of view. That is our intelligence understanding.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And there are obviously these reports that a drone attacked Chernobyl overnight, the nuclear plant in Kyiv. What does that mean? What does that tell you about how complicated any peace process may be?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Oh it's, for him, he is always increasing, increasing, you know? Before – he is doing some symbolic-for-him things. So you have the Munich Security Conference, especially this day, beginning of the conference. He's trying to show that for him it doesn't matter. "Doesn't matter what you will decide about security, I can do this," what he showed. He put the drone, yes, to the sarcophagus of the fourth block of Chernobyl station. Yes, sarcophagus which was built by 40 countries. Forty countries, mostly American money, and then all of countries of Europe. Forty countries built it during the years, and he just pushed the drone there especially to this sarcophagus.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

You're think that such person wants peace?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Given what you're saying, are you willing to negotiate with Vladimir Putin face to face?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Together, United States, Europe, Ukraine and Russia, yes, because without Russians, we can't stop for today, we can't stop this war. We can't stop Putin without, without his decision, because he is on our territory.

KRISTEN WELKER:

If you were –

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

It's a bit –

KRISTEN WELKER:

If you were sitting across from Vladimir Putin right now instead of me, what would you say to him?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

I will speak -- no, it's not about emotions. It's about how to stop him. So for me, he is a killer, and he will never change. And that's why this is the dialogue with a terrorist. This is dialogue with a killer. I don't have such power, enough power to push him out. That's why I have to speak about it. So our allies can give me such power to push him out, but our allies decided to make a deal with Putin. But I -- what can I say? I'm ready. Of course we don't want, you know, to lose our people. And if it can be so in diplomacy to stop this war, so, of course, we are ready. Of course we will be happy with a peace.

KRISTEN WELKER:

President Trump this week wouldn't commit to U.S. troops providing security to Ukraine, one of your key requests, wouldn't commit to NATO membership and wouldn't commit to Ukraine reclaiming the territory that Russia illegally took. Do you think that the Trump administration is giving away bargaining chips before the peace process, the negotiations, have begun?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

You know, I don't know. Maybe it's a part of tactics of the administration. I don't know. It's really, you know, I'm looking at it. For me, I don't know what about they speak, but as I said, it doesn't matter what they will decide about Ukraine. If it's without -- without us, it's their dialogue. So how can I influence on this dialogue? I can only accept any negotiation or not accept, because we are --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY [TRANSLATED]:

Yeah, we are the actor. We are the participant of this war, unfortunately. We, we would gladly be the country who helps the other country that is at war. And the best way would be to not have the war at all. We would want to be the country to prevent others even from starting the war. But we are an actor in this war. We are a victim. Putin attacked us. So without us, the war cannot end. And it is not possible to simply give Ukraine to Putin. That would mean simply to acknowledge what he did, to give the signal to others, to other regions where Americans can also feel that. Heaven forbid. I do not wish war to anybody. But that is a fact. Putin must not only be stopped, but he must feel that this is a huge mistake, if we can use such word, "mistake," in terms of the numbers of deaths. Sure.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What does a good deal look like for you for Ukraine?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

No, we will not have very good deal in such circumstances, and Putin will not have a very good deal for him in such circumstances. Because he can't for today win us, and we can't win him. And that's why it will not be a very good deal for both of us. But it can be more important thing: Peace. Maybe not the best but peaceful people. That's what we really want. It's much more,



much more than any good deals. I think so. But we can't give all this, you know, good deals just to Putin and play for, you know, just play with how he wants, yes. And that's why for me it's very important that Trump, that President Trump will be on our side. And I think what is very important when Putin knows it, this is important, not just play. This is very important to say to him, "Yes, we have to speak with you. Yes, we have to make deal with you because you're an enemy. You're strong. That's why we have to speak with you to stop the war. But you have to know that you're an enemy of just human beings, just of people. And you have to know that we're against your steps, against your occupation, against your view of life." And I think it's very important. It can't be the secret from the people and et cetera. People have to understand. Their leaders have to understand that nobody can kill, nobody can occupy, nobody can begin any format of wars, of conflicts and et cetera.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you. President Trump said, he does not think Ukrainian membership in NATO is, quote, "practical." In your view, is NATO membership something that should be determined as a part of this deal?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Well, I want to be very clear with NATO for us and for everybody. It's the cheapest security guarantees, the cheapest for us, the cheapest for Europe, the cheapest for United States and the cheapest really for Russia. And if we are not in NATO, it means that we will build NATO in Ukraine. Otherwise, we will not recognize the security guarantees. If opposite you 100.3 or 100.5 million army of Russians, what number of soldiers you have to have? What number of troops you have to have just to survive and to defend the same? Now we have 110 strong brigades. Russia has twice more, 220 strong brigades. Europe has 82. So if Putin will break us, he will occupy Europe. He can destroy all the army of Europe if they are without United States. That's why I said this is the cheapest for United States and for Europe. Why? Because if we don't, if I'm not in NATO and if everybody will recognize that we need more than 1 million people of army, so we will need money for all these people. We – if we can't use, for example, fleet of NATO or jets from NATO, we will need hundreds of jets. So it's very, very expensive, even without the war just to have it, not to spend, just to have it. That's it. Then NATO is very cheap I said for Russia. Otherwise, if we are not in NATO, NATO stopping also us, because I mean, just people who lost their children. And this is painful, and they want accountability. And it's really – and if they will not get it, they will find it, they will search it. And I can't recognize it and can't like a father understand. If Putin took your child and killed by missile your child, and if those people who killed, and Putin, that if they're not in the prisons and if they even don't say sorry to all the world, it's not enough. But if they're just feeling that they are winners, what will father will do? They can take the weapon and continue his – not normal way. But he will continue his life because he hate Russians. NATO also stopping everybody because this is security, you know, allies. And this is also important and for Europe that they are secure. Because there is a big army in NATO. Ukrainian army together with Europe is comparable with Russia. That's what I said. This is the cheapest way.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And so that is one issue, and obviously territory's one of the biggest issues that you've been asked about over and over again. President Trump said on Wednesday that restoring all of the territory seized by Russia since 2014 is unlikely. Are you willing to say here that you are prepared to formally cede some of the sovereign territory of Ukraine to Russia in order to stop the killing?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

Judicially, we will not recognize everybody and standards, it's out of constitution to recognize our occupied territory like territory of Russia. We will never do it. It's not about – it's not about any negotiations. We will never speak about it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Even Crimea, you seem to acknowledge –

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

No, yeah, even Crimea, we will never recognize it, because in years, in years, all things, all things which are Ukrainian will be Ukrainian, but maybe, I don't know when. But yes, we have to return it diplomatically. Yes, we can. If we are in NATO, it's understandable why diplomatically, it's very understandable. And of course, not to lose people. It's a good way, diplomatic way, to find diplomatic way, how to get back our land. And that's it, but the people are most important for today. That's why diplomatic way is good, but, but where we will have security guarantees, where we will stand, and this is there. This is the topic of discussion, of course.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And that's my next question because the administration has sent a lot of mixed signals about where it stands when it comes to the security guarantees by the United States and whether U.S. troops will be involved in Ukraine's security after the war. What security guarantees does Ukraine need specifically from the United States?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

The strong package of missiles like preventional stuff, that we will not use it before any invasion. We will not use it, but if they will do it, we will do it quickly. But it has to stand on our territory, not like it was before the full-scale invasion that White House put sanctions after invasion. No. And gave us weapons after invasion. No, they occupied a big territory. If we could had before, they couldn't occupy us. Yes, some territory, but not everything because we'd been without weapons. That's why strong package of missiles and big army. If we are not in NATO, as I said, comparable with Russians. Not sure the same number but comparable. Not to give them possibility to occupy. And psychologically it's very important because psychologically it's a strong signal that Putin will not go if he understands that opposite they stay the same, comparable, the same number army. This is – then we need money for this, so we need investment. But I think this is in the interest of both countries to invest in Ukraine, in different gas, LNG. It's also important if Russia knows that gas infrastructure and we make business on LNG, Trump is interested. Americans are in the interest of this, and we are open for this. I think

he will not attack by missiles such, I mean, these factories where we are partners with Americans. But I hope not. So these are very important things. Then your --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can Ukraine survive?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

And he --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Go ahead.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

Just and, of course, and European Union is very important because it's a special market for us will be. Russia is not market for us. They are enemies, and Belarus is a part of Russia really. This -- they control them. So for us the biggest market is EU, and EU is very interested in our products. So we have to be in the same conditions, I mean, money conditions and with the European Union we want to be the members. We share the same values and we have similar law and et cetera. So this is the part of economical security guarantees for us to be immediately the member of EU. It's also very important.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can --

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

And, and what we need. We really don't know how it works, but when Iran attacked Israel, the United States, France, U.K., and some other guys, and Israel is not a member of NATO, but all these guys, even Jordan with air defense, all those guys began to defend Israeli people, which had been under, you know, missiles from Iran. So how it was? Israel is not a NATO member, but why these countries? Now it's great that they destroyed miss -- Iranian missiles, but they are not in NATO. So it meant that they have security guarantees, specific security guarantees from the United States, France, U.K., and other allies. I think we need it very much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And quickly, before we move onto the next topic, can Ukraine survive without U.S. military support?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

Probably it will be very, very, very difficult. And, of course, in all the difficult situations, you have a chance, but we will have low chance, low chance to survive without support of the United States. I think it's very important, critical. But, I mean, I don't want to think about it. Yes, we have to think about it. I don't want to think that we will not be strategic partners. I don't want to think about it because it will make a pressure on morale -- morality of Ukrainians and it will be worst

thing from the very beginning of the war. But now we increased our production. That really we can count on our level of defending industry, but it's not enough.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Your concern being, without U.S. military support, Ukraine would be vulnerable to another attack by Russia in another few years. Is that your concern?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI:

Yes. I think this, this can be. This is really what he wants. He wants pause, prepare, train, take off some sanctions because of ceasefire and et cetera and because of all this, you know, how do you say it? Okay, forgot the word.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI [TRANSLATED]:

Artificial world, artificial peace that he wants to demonstrate. He is ready for peace, but that is an artificial peace. That is not real. Therefore, strong security guarantees because he will want to come back again. He did not win. Do you understand? He did not win Ukraine. It is insufficient for him.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about this deal that has been discussed, President Trump has discussed it, about mining Ukraine's rare earth minerals. Just so everyone understands, those are minerals that are used to make things like cell phones, electric cars. That would be, President Trump says, to "pay back" some of what the United States has already given to Ukraine. What is the status of that deal, President Zelenskyy?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI [TRANSLATED]:

That is first and foremost, we wanted American business to come. These critical minerals, rare earth, they are closed for many partners. We are ready to open them for the business of the United States. That is what we have. That is where we can put money and make profits together. This is goodwill from us, so it's possible to make money. And I believe that, here, we cannot forget about the main idea that was in the very beginning, that let us protect all that. Help us defend this, and we will make money on this together. And here it's very important that in this document shall be a term to protect it. And that is the security guarantees. And if we are not given the security guarantees from the United States, I believe that the economic treaty will not work. It must all be fair. The second part that is not discussed yet but it must be, that is what Putin captured. There, there are many things, not only for electric vehicles and cell phones. There there are many rare earths that they will use for missiles – missiles, weaponry for their aerospace industry. Those are very costly things, and here it seems to me important to understand what we will do with those rare earths that now cost billions, hundreds of billions, that Putin occupied. Is it, is it to give to him? And this is what I want to discuss. Why shall we gift it to him? So we present it not only to him but also to his allies, Iran, North Korea. They will have access there. China can also have access there. I do not know their relations, what they discuss precisely. But today with senators, I listed one example with rare earth. Seems to me that this example is important. We looked into what America imports, what rare earth, what

America imports for its industry. And when we took titan – titanium, that's one example, titanium. We say that we have titanium in Ukraine, and that is precise information. And it is sufficient for industry for 40 years. Forty years. And today you import titanium from China and from Russia and from other sources, but these are two main – two main countries. You import from them for your industry, and we say, "Let us defend titanium in Ukraine, and you will not need to pay money neither to Russia nor to China. We will be partners in that." And such examples, they are very important. If we look in detail then we must understand that we need strong security guarantees.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you big picture. As you know, President Trump has not ruled out the possibility of pulling out of NATO. How worried are you that President Trump will follow through with that and one day decide to pull out of NATO?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY [TRANSLATED]:

I believe that this will help Putin, really. I said, honestly, you know, today, I told Mr. Vice President Vance I believe that Article V is the United States. That is it. Article V – NATO Article V, that is the United States. With all due respect to my colleagues in Europe, with all due respect to the aid they've provided, but if there is war against one NATO country and one must fight back without American army, it is impossible to fight back, to repel. Impossible, in my opinion. This means that Europe must urgently, urgently, if there are such risks, increase everything. Militarize itself, spend huge, huge amounts of money.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you if it's possible for you to say some of that in English because it's very powerful what you're saying, it's very important. You had a message to Vice President Vance about the potential implications of pulling out of NATO. What was your message to the vice president?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

That, that will be destroying of NATO.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Why?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Because in 80 strong brigades in Europe, I'm just speaking about NATO in Europe, so about 30, 30, it's more than 30%, is United States. And even if I will look at the army of Russia, if they will see it that they, Russia, have 220 or 250 brigades, and Europe has 50. That is the answer. The risk that Russia will occupy Europe is 100%.

KRISTEN WELKER:

If the United States pulls out of NATO –

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Yes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

– Russia will occupy Europe.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Yes. Not all the, not all the Europe. They will begin from those countries, as I said who are big our friends but small countries who've been in the USSR, in the Soviet Union. They will begin, and we will see what will be the answer. But Europe will not answer because they don't have – they will begin to defend itself. Each country defend itself. And at this moment, so Russia will get all the successes with all the territory they will want. I don't know they will want 30% of Europe, 50%, I don't know. Nobody knows. But they will have this possibility.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Vice President JD Vance, staying on that topic, spoke today to the security conference here in Munich. He didn't mention Ukraine during his speech. He also said that he was not worried about the threat to Europe from Russia or China. He said the biggest threat is, quote, "from within Europe." What did you make of his speech? What was your reaction?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I didn't hear his speech. I think – it will be very difficult to be safe for America without Europe. I can tell you why. I'm not sure that this is good example. Sorry, for the TV viewers. Maybe it's not good example.

KRISTEN WELKER:

No, it's okay.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

But I will tell you – [SPEAKS IN UKRAINIAN]

TRANSLATOR:

Cynical, cynical.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

No, not cynical. It'll just say it. Okay, I will say in Ukrainian if it's possible.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY [TRANSLATED]:

Russia is waging war against Ukraine on the territory of Ukraine. The people in Russia feel the pain and insecurity during this war. No. That means transferring the war to other territory. This is what they do. Until NATO is in Europe, and Europe is a part of NATO, and America is it's part, then from Russia, from the big land warfare, excuse me, from big army of Russia, America is protected by NATO military contingent. And if it decides to fight against NATO, it will fight, first and foremost, in the territory of Europe. Today, we defend Europe because the war is in Ukraine. Tomorrow, if the war is in Europe, then the war is not on the territory of America. It is

the war on the other countries, on other continent. That is how it works. That is how it works, and that is why I wanted to apologize in front of everybody. I do not want to have the war in Europe, but Putin is such person. And until there is military contingent and there is alliance, NATO alliance in Europe, America is more defended. American military, if somebody attacks NATO, yes, American military men, they will have to, they will have to withstand, fight for other countries, and Europe will count on that. But let us be frank. The war will not be in the U.S. territory. You will be in security, and your people will not feel what the war is. In my opinion, that is it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

There has been so much pain, so much suffering, and so many lives have been lost. And there's been a range of different numbers discussed. How many Ukrainians have lost their lives, do you think?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Yeah, you are right that, "Do you think?" Because nobody knows. It's true, we have fixed number of losses. We have 46-plus, yeah, 46,000 killed soldiers. Then we have for today dozens, really thousands of – it's difficult to say in English.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Hard to say.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY [TRANSLATED]:

Tens of thousands more, tens of thousands more, those who are missing in action or are in captivity. And we cannot know for certain because missing in action can be dead, or they can be in captivity. And these are tens of thousands. That is true. Also, there are more than 350,000, I think something like 380,000, wounded. And there are 20,000 deported children, deported to Russia. Nineteen and a half thousand. That is what we understand, and we do not understand at all the amount, the thousands, tens of thousands of civilians who died on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. When Russia attacked, and it encircled several cities, and it was destroying to the ground these cities with tanks and artillery. We do not know how many dead are there, unfortunately, because those cities that we de-occupied, which we entered, we found massive graves there. They conduct massive shootings, massive tortures. You know, small towns where there were a couple thousand people, we have found 500 corpses in one big grave. So, everywhere where Russia occupied it and takes under its control, we do not know how many thousands of people they killed there.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And let me ask you. We're just in our last few questions. So, if you can speak in English, that would be wonderful, just so –

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

It's difficult. Too late for my English. My English is sleeping.

KRISTEN WELKER:

No, you're doing wonderfully. Do you still think it's possible for Ukraine to win this war militarily?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

Of course, yes. But it's many, many losses. So we understand how many. I think it's too much. And I'm not sure that with such speed as our partners do this help, support, it will be difficult. It will be long. Longer than it can be. Yeah, there are some – it can be, you know, tactical victory. But for this, partners have to be ready to give us very specific weapons, very specific weapons. But I think the world has to try diplomacy. Diplomacy, it's important. But in unity.

KRISTEN WELKER:

The Trump administration and President Trump, Elon Musk have been firing large swaths of the workforce, freezing funding at the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 2013, Ukraine was by far the largest recipient of USAID. What will the impact be of freezing those funds to USAID on Ukraine?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

We didn't get a lot of the budget. That's only such programs which we can control. We see what directly came to the budget. Some programs for medicine, helping veterans, or energy. Veterans and energy is very important. We will find a possibly how to close this gap, financial gap, yes. Especially energy is painful because during the war, under attacks. But of course I said that I will find, and I think I will have success, with the veterans. I can't throw them just because they're veterans. And we will try to do it, to do our best. Other programs had been infrastructure programs and some other programs, but I don't know. Because we have decentralization, and I don't know what cities. They had contact – direct contacts with the United States, with USAID. They've got some support, some organizations and some journalists, I know. But I don't know this – I can't, I mean, just fix it because I don't know it. Judicially, I didn't see it. I asked my finance minister, "Show me what we'll lose, like a budget, to understand where to find this money for the budget." Yes, he showed me. Yes, we will manage it. But I think that such programs as veterans is not big money, and I think it's more about – I don't know if you have this word in English, sorry, prestige, yes?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Mhm, yes. Prestige.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY:

I think this is prestige for the United States, and think this is good to continue such program. But it depends on the decision of the United States. Maybe you will continue, maybe not. This is your decision. For me, because it's my vertical and the most important thing for today, the most important that you will not stop military support and better if you will continue it. And on this, I am focusing. This will be painful for all these directions. If we will lose this support, as you said, correctly, it will be, you know, very difficult for us to survive.

KRISTEN WELKER:



Last question. I know you're a dad of two and you have remarkable energy and have put so much heart into spreading the message for Ukraine. What is your message to Ukrainians who have lost hope that this war will ever end?

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

No. No, no, no. We'll finish this war. And it doesn't matter will Putin want it or not. We will finish the war. And I'm sure together we are much more stronger than Putin. And I'm sure that we will finish the war. I know that peace, that's what we really need and we really want. And, you know, it's like in the life. When you want something very much, with friends and with God we will do it, I'm sure.

KRISTEN WELKER:

President Zelenskyy, thank you so much.

PRES. VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY:

Thank you.