

Trump's NATO demands signal tech billionaire priorities, not peace

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France's President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky at a summit in London on the Ukraine war.

President Donald Trump made it no secret during his election campaign that if he won, he expected Europe to “pay their fair share” regarding NATO and the war in Ukraine. Many in the Republican Party, including Trump himself, have claimed that the aim of this is to “end the suffering” and “have a peace that is good for both sides.”

However, Trump’s somewhat performative hostility toward Zelensky and new demands on Europe have nothing to do with peace or justice. These shifts do not represent a willingness to end Western hostility but a redeployment of resources.

Tech billionaires’ focus on China

It is no secret that Trump has a significant support base among tech billionaires. This includes Elon Musk, Sundar Pichai, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg. This group of capitalists is more concerned with China’s growing investment in quantum computing technology, artificial intelligence, and electric vehicles. Chinese companies such as DeepSeek in AI and BYD in the electric vehicle market are beginning to pull ahead of Western alternatives. What Musk and Silicon Valley are not interested in, is a costly unwinnable ground war that mostly serves as a boon for old money [defense conglomerates](#) and [fossil fuel barons](#) like General Dynamics, ExxonMobil, and Northrop Grumman.

China is the far greater threat to Silicon Valley’s profits and thus to Trump’s ruling-class base of support. Trump’s focus on securing a rare earth metals deal with Ukraine is further evidence of an imperialist realignment in focus on the People’s Republic of China. China controls a significant portion of the global supply of rare earth metals necessary for all high-tech equipment. Securing alternative supply chains would be the first step in opening up Trump’s ability to escalate economic or military conflict with the PRC.

Balancing competing business interests

That realignment in focus should not be mistaken for a true U.S. softening on Russia or even a sign that the war in Ukraine will quickly come to a close. Even with the cost to the taxpayer, the war in Ukraine has still been wildly profitable for many in the ruling class. The increased price of oil and the record spending to replenish military arsenals have made defense and fossil fuel companies billions of dollars. For that reason, Musk and Trump cannot completely end the gravy train of profits from the NATO war against Russia without significant backlash from that part of the ruling class.

To be able to escalate against China while also not chaotically leaving billions of dollars on the table in Ukraine, Musk and Trump's plan seems to be twofold. First, Trump has not yet shown willingness to hold the delivery of already funded military aid indefinitely. Second, the United States will force Europe to foot enough of the bill to keep the war, and thus the profits, going for at least some period of time. The EU is already considering an [\\$840 billion plan](#) to rearm Europe, particularly Ukraine. This way, the ruling class can avoid the chaotic withdrawal similar to what the Biden administration experienced in Afghanistan. Whether this will work or not is yet to be seen.

Several European countries have already pledged their largest assistance packages to date over the past few weeks. Recently elected German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has already presented a [\\$3.2 billion](#) military aid package for Ukraine to the German legislature. The Norwegian Prime Minister recently announced that the country will spend [\\$3.12 billion](#) in mostly military aid to Ukraine in 2025. Finland will immediately provide [\\$691 million](#) in combat equipment to Ukraine's fascist military. Just days ago, Britain announced a [\\$2.84 billion](#) loan to Ukraine to continue the war. All of these deals have been announced since Trump took office.

The European countries can adopt [harsher rhetoric](#) against the Trump administration, but they are undermined by the fact that they are already doing

exactly what Trump wants. Europe will increase military spending and keep NATO's war in Ukraine going until the U.S. can try to make a graceful exit. This could very well be a ruling class fantasy considering that it is unlikely Russia will accept anything less than the full demilitarization of Ukraine. Russia will not end the war that they are winning, having sacrificed so much, just to allow a NATO bridgehead on its western border, nor should they. What this burden sharing shift to Europe makes abundantly clear, more than ever, is that the war in Ukraine was a NATO project aimed at Russia [from its onset](#).

Shifting priorities, not pursuing peace

Regardless of whether a peace agreement comes in Ukraine, or if the European Union takes over arming Ukraine, or the U.S. continues the campaign directly, Trump and Musk's actions will not lead to greater peace in the world. Much like how the Biden administration pivoted from Afghanistan in 2021 and was already fighting Russia in Ukraine in early 2022, expect any U.S. withdrawal from Eastern Europe to be quickly followed by a new military campaign against China, Iran, or even Mexico. This new political administration's plan is not to pursue peace in the world, it is simply to cool the assault on one front so as to be more effective on another.

