

THE 2025 TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT: ROAD TO PEACE AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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Abstract: This study investigates the 2025 Alaska summit between Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin as a diplomatic effort to address the ongoing armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russia. The primary objective is to analyze the prospects for peace in Ukraine, considering the complex interplay of sovereignty, European integration, security guarantees, reconstruction, and strategic resource management. Specifically, the study aims to identify the constraints and opportunities for Ukraine’s future within the European and global political context.

A qualitative research methodology is employed, relying on data sources including speeches, statements, conferences, and organization reports. Key leader’s declarations from the United States, Russia, Ukraine, and European Union countries are interpreted to assess diplomatic intentions and negotiation dynamics. Supplementary data on humanitarian impacts, infrastructure damage, refugee flows, and financial aid are drawn from UNHCR, World Bank Rapid Damage and Needs Assessments (RDNA), and economic reports, enabling an understanding of both material consequences and interests.

The results reveal that peace prospects hinge on three interlinked areas: (i) balancing Ukraine’s potential non-membership in the EU and NATO with robust security guarantees; (ii) addressing sovereignty concerns alongside European Union integration; and (iii) coordinating post war reconstruction with resource management to avoid dependency. European Union member states exhibit diverging positions, reflecting economic, security, and geopolitical considerations. The study concludes that the most sustainable path to peace is a hybrid strategy in which the Ukraine abandons the desire of EU membership, obtains security guarantees from non-NATO partners, forms economic cooperation agreements, and keeps full control over its mineral resources.

Keywords: peace negotiations, Trump-Putin summit, European Union integration, explosive remnants of war, reconstruction, rare earth minerals.

JEL Classification: F51, F52, H56.

1 Introduction

The 2025 summit in Alaska between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin has been presented as a pivotal moment in the attempts to address and end the ongoing armed conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Ukraine wanted a ceasefire, but both the leader of the Russian Federation and the United States pushed the talks towards a peace agreement, which led the path to permanent peace in Ukraine (Kottasová, 2025). This summit signifies not just a potential route to peace. But also, an opportunity to reconsider the broader question of European integration. For over three and a half years, the war has inflicted significant costs on Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the European Union, and the global community at large.

The conflict dates back to February 2022 when the Russian Federation started a special military operation in Ukraine. This ongoing armed conflict is one of the largest wars in the European Union since World War II. The armed conflict quickly escalated into a prolonged confrontation. Because of the war, Ukrainians are facing severe territorial, economic, and humanitarian consequences. Ukraine continues to face rising destruction across infrastructure, housing, and industry. The human and territorial costs of the war have mounted steadily.

On August 16, 2025, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said that Only Ukraine can negotiate on the terms and its own territories (**Official website of Italian Government, 2025**).

Annual International Scientific Conference
“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”
September 26-27, 2025
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Ukraine has already lost 20 percent of its territory. If the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy follows the path to restore Ukraine’s sovereignty within its 1991 borders, the present battlefield situation and economic crisis do not favour him. On September 21, 2025, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Türkiye stated that Ukraine cannot compete economically with Russia. In his opinion, Europe will not sustain its aid to Ukraine forever (Balachuk, 2025). In addition, the Russian Federation annexed the autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson oblasts as a result of independence referendums (Moeckli & Reimann, 2022). The scale of destruction suggests that if the war continues, both territorial losses and infrastructure damage will worsen over time in Ukraine. These factors highlight the urgency of pursuing meaningful peace negotiations.

The 2025 Alaska summit gained international attention because of the role played by President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin. The Ukraine war was started during the period of the former President of the United States, Joe Biden. Trump has presented himself as a mediator between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. His engagement opens a new dimension in peace diplomacy. At the same time, President Vladimir Putin has reiterated that Ukraine remains deeply tied to the Russian Federation historically and culturally. He framed the conflict as a tragedy that requires eliminating the root causes of the armed conflict (Official website of President of Russia, 2025).

European Union institutions and leaders face significant dilemmas. The war has placed intense pressure on European countries economies and energy markets. Millions of Ukrainian war refugees have relocated and resettled in European Union member states and European Union candidate states like Moldova (Khan, 2025). This created long term social and financial burdens on the economies of European countries. Moreover, the prospect of further NATO expansion has deepened divisions between the Russian Federation and the West. China also does not welcome NATO expansion eastwards. The 2025 Alaska Summit presents an opportunity to review security agreements concerning both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. One potential solution under consideration is that Ukraine would refrain from joining NATO and European Union membership.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The study of peace negotiations and conflict resolution has evolved significantly over the last few decades. Zartman (2001) highlights the importance of “hurting stalemates” and “ripe moments” in conflict resolution, arguing that peace initiatives are most effective when both parties recognize a mutual cost in continued conflict. This approach is particularly relevant to the ongoing Russian Federation–Ukraine war, where prolonged hostilities have produced substantial humanitarian and economic costs, making the timing of negotiations crucial for both sides. Wallensteen (2018) further emphasizes that conflict resolution is not a one dimensional process but involves political, economic, and social considerations that shape the effectiveness of peace efforts.

Peacekeeping and international interventions have been shown to influence the durability of post-conflict peace. Fortna (2004) demonstrates that the presence of peacekeeping forces can prolong stability after civil wars, though success depends on the alignment of security guarantees with local political realities. In the Ukrainian context, NATO and its allied states military assistance to Ukraine illustrates a complex balance between deterrence and peace facilitation. Russian Federation’s insistence that foreign troops in Ukraine constitute a threat (Official website of President of Russia, 2025) underscores the delicate interplay between intervention and negotiation, suggesting that peacekeeping efforts must be carefully calibrated to avoid exacerbating the conflict.

The theoretical underpinnings of war also shed light on the roots of the Ukrainian conflict. Fearon (1995) argues that rationalist explanations, including information asymmetries and commitment problems, often drive states to war despite the costs of conflict. This perspective can

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explain the Russian Federation’s strategic concerns about NATO expansion and Ukraine’s European Union integration, as both are perceived as shifts in the regional balance of power. Mearsheimer (2014) similarly critiques the West’s liberal assumptions, suggesting that NATO enlargement and European Union integration efforts contributed to Russian Federation insecurity and the escalation of the conflict. These analyses underscore that understanding the motivations and perceptions of all parties is essential in designing negotiation strategies.

The role of natural resources in conflict dynamics has been extensively studied. Ross (2012) identifies the “natural resource curse,” wherein resource wealth can both finance conflict and generate economic dependence. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) distinguish between “greed and “grievance” motives in wars, noting that resource wealth often incentivizes continued fighting. Ukraine’s mineral reserves, including rare earth elements, have heightened its strategic value to both the United States and the European Union (Abdurasulov & Plummer, 2025). Agreements such as the Ukraine United States Mineral Resources Agreement (2025) and the European Union Ukraine raw materials partnership (2021) reflect this reality, tying reconstruction aid to strategic resource access. While these agreements can provide Ukraine with essential financing, they also create potential long term dependencies, highlighting the tension between sovereignty and economic support.

The path of potential European Union integration presents both opportunities and constraints for Ukraine. European Union membership entails the transfer of legislative, judicial, and economic sovereignty to European Union institutions, as experienced by Norway, Switzerland, and Iceland, who opted out of European Union membership to maintain independence. For Ukraine, these sovereignty considerations intersect with security concerns, as European Union membership is often coupled with alignment to NATO frameworks. The literature on European Union integration highlights this tension: member states balance the benefits of collective security and economic cooperation with the potential costs to national decision making autonomy (Moeckli & Reimann, 2022). The debate within the European Union regarding Ukraine’s accession illustrates these trade-offs, with some countries advocating for an impartial or non- European Union member model to facilitate peace while preserving Ukraine’s sovereignty.

Post-conflict reconstruction theory provides insights into the challenges of rebuilding war torn societies. Wallensteen (2018) emphasizes that reconstruction requires not only financial resources but also institutional stability, social cohesion, and strategic planning. The projected cost of rebuilding Ukraine, estimated at over US\$524 billion (RDNA4, 2024), exemplifies the scale of the task. International assistance is critical, yet tied to both strategic interests and governance concerns. Fortna’s (2004) findings suggest that reconstruction success is enhanced when aid is coordinated, predictable, and accompanied by mechanisms to ensure local agency. This is an important consideration given Ukraine’s dual relationships with the United States and European Union.

NATO expansion and European security dynamics are central to the conflict’s resolution. Mearsheimer (2014) and Sakwa (2015) argue that NATO enlargement toward Russian Federation’s borders is perceived as a strategic threat, prompting defensive measures by the Russian Federation. The Alaska Summit of 2025 reflects an attempt to reconcile these security tensions, with proposals for Ukraine to forego NATO membership in exchange for robust security guarantees. The literature suggests that such security arrangements must be credible, enforceable, and mutually acceptable to all stakeholders to prevent renewed hostilities (Charap & Colton, 2017; Kofman et al., 2017).

The intersection of natural resources, international integration, and security guarantees creates a multidimensional negotiation environment. As Fearon (1995) notes, conflicts are rarely reducible to single issues; rather, they involve overlapping economic, political, and strategic dimensions. Ukraine’s rare earth and energy resources make it a target of geopolitical interest,

while European Union integration ambitions complicate sovereignty considerations (Ross, 2012; Abdurasulov & Plummer, 2025). Post-conflict reconstruction demands extensive international aid, which is inevitably linked to these strategic interests, creating potential friction between donor objectives and national priorities.

The theoretical frameworks on conflict resolution, natural resources, and European integration converge in their implications for Ukraine’s peace prospects. Zartman’s (2001) concept of “ripe moments” is particularly relevant: the combination of battlefield stalemates, economic pressures on the European Union, and extensive humanitarian costs suggests a critical juncture for negotiation. Wallensteen (2018) and Fortna (2004) reinforce that the durability of peace will depend on careful alignment of security guarantees, economic reconstruction, and respect for sovereignty. The literature on NATO and European Union integration (Mearsheimer, 2014; Sakwa, 2015; Charap & Colton, 2017) highlights the importance of addressing perceived threats and balancing competing interests among regional and global powers.

In conclusion, the specialized literature indicates that resolving the Ukraine conflict requires a multi-pronged approach. Peace negotiations must be timely, sensitive to perceptions of security and sovereignty, and cognizant of the economic and strategic implications of Ukraine’s resource wealth. The European Union’s integration policies, NATO expansion considerations, and international reconstruction efforts form an interconnected set of variables that will shape the feasibility and sustainability of any peace settlement. Drawing on these theoretical frameworks provides a robust foundation for analyzing the 2025 Alaska Summit, Ukraine’s negotiation options, and the broader European security context.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the dynamics of the 2025 Alaska Summit and its implications for the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The methodology combines political discourse analysis, comparative document analysis, and scenario construction to systematically interpret public statements, official documents, and relevant secondary sources. The aim is to understand the strategic positions of key actors, the negotiation environment, and the prospects for sustainable peace in Ukraine.

3.1 Research Design

Given the complexity and multidimensional nature of the Ukraine Russia conflict, a qualitative approach is most appropriate. The study relies on interpretive methods to explore how political leaders frame the conflict, outline conditions for peace, and respond to competing strategic pressures. This approach allows for in depth understanding of discourse, power relations, and strategic considerations without relying on purely quantitative metrics.

3.2 Data Sources

The analysis is grounded in both primary and secondary data sources:

(i) Primary sources: Official statements, press conferences, and interviews delivered by leaders involved in the conflict. For example, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump, Chancellor Friedrich Merz, President Emmanuel Macron, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, United Kingdom Prime Minister Kier Starmer, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, President of the European Commission, Heads of State of European Union Member Countries, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. And official government documents from Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and European Union institutions. Examples include joint statements issued by European leaders, transcripts of press conferences from the 2025 Alaska Summit, and declarations by foreign ministers.

(ii) Secondary sources: Academic literature on conflict resolution, peace negotiations, and post conflict reconstruction; media reports; expert analyses; and statistical reports (e.g., Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment reports, Eurostat statistics, and strategic resources assessments).

These data sources provide a triangulated view of political positions, negotiation conditions, and strategic interests.

3.3 Analytical Techniques

The study employs three complementary qualitative techniques:

(i) Political Discourse Analysis:

Public statements of leaders are analyzed to uncover the framing of the conflict, underlying priorities, and implied conditions for negotiations. Political Discourse Analysis focuses on language choices, recurrent themes, and narrative strategies to identify political intent, rhetorical positioning, and potential negotiation leverage. For example, Putin’s emphasis on shared cultural roots and Trump’s portrayal of himself as a mediator are examined to assess how these frames influence the negotiation process.

(ii) Comparative Document Analysis:

Official documents, agreements, and policy statements are systematically compared to understand convergences and divergences among actors. This includes evaluating security guarantees, economic cooperation frameworks, and post-war reconstruction commitments. Comparative document analysis allows for identifying alignment or conflict between legal agreements, strategic declarations, and policy proposals.

(iii) Scenario Construction:

Based on discourse and document analysis, potential negotiation outcomes are constructed to evaluate plausible pathways to peace. Scenarios consider three primary dimensions:

- Security guarantees versus not joining of European Union/NATO membership,
 - Sovereignty versus European Union integration, and
 - Reconstruction requirements versus control over natural resources.
- Scenarios are developed through a structured approach, informed by theoretical frameworks such as Zartman’s Ripeness theory, which assesses the timing and conditions under which conflicting parties are most likely to negotiate successfully. Each scenario is evaluated for feasibility, political acceptability, and potential risks.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

The analysis applies Zartman’s Ripeness theory to assess whether the conditions for meaningful negotiation are present. This involves evaluating “mutually hurting stalemates,” where the costs of continuing conflict outweigh the benefits, and identifying potential “focal points” for agreement, such as security guarantees or economic cooperation arrangements. By mapping leader statements and policy positions against this framework, the study assesses the likelihood of progress toward sustainable peace.

3.5 Criteria for Analysis

- **Leader statements:** Examined for tone, frequency of key concepts (e.g., sovereignty, security, European integration), and framing of compromise.
- **Official documents:** Evaluated for explicit commitments, conditionalities, and legal or strategic implications.
- **Negotiation scenarios:** Constructed based on consistency between political discourse, legal frameworks, and resource dependencies. Plausibility is judged by alignment with the geopolitical context, past negotiation outcomes, and stakeholder incentives.

3.6 Methodological Limitations

- **Reliance on public statements:** The study is limited to officially released statements and media reports; private negotiations and undisclosed positions remain inaccessible.
- **Speculative nature of scenarios:** Constructed negotiation pathways are hypothetical and contingent upon evolving political developments. They are indicative rather than predictive.

- **Rapidly changing context:** The conflict dynamics, international alliances, and economic conditions can shift quickly, affecting the relevance of conclusions over time.
- **Potential bias in sources:** Media reports and secondary sources may reflect political or editorial biases, which are mitigated by cross referencing multiple sources.

By employing this methodology, the study provides a systematic and theoretically informed analysis of the 2025 Alaska Summit and its implications for Ukraine’s peace prospects, sovereignty, and strategic alignment with European and global powers.

4. Results

4.1 Diplomatic Efforts and Political Negotiations

The 2025 Alaska summit has been widely labelled as an attempt to end the war. President Donald Trump presented himself as a moderator between the Russian Federation and Ukraine during the summit. His active engagement gave the peace negotiations global visibility. And raised anticipations that the ongoing armed conflict could shift from battlefield confrontation to diplomatic engagement.

A joint press conference was held between President Vladimir Putin and President Donald Trump in Anchorage, Alaska, on 16 August 2025 (President of Russia, 2025). President Vladimir Putin said that President Donald Trump showed a strong interest in resolving the conflict and in understanding its root causes. He said that the Russian Federation and Ukraine share common roots. He called the war a tragedy and expressed the Russian Federation’s sincere interest in ending it. However, Putin insisted that for any peace settlement to be sustainable. The root causes of the war must be eliminated. President Donald Trump stated that thousands of people were dying weekly and stressed that both he and President Vladimir Putin wanted to end the conflict.

The Ukrainian stance has also shifted toward openness. On 19 August 2025, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that Ukraine was ready to consider any negotiation format. It may be a bilateral meeting with the Russian Federation at the level of leaders or trilateral meeting. This marked a cautious but significant acknowledgment of the possibility of direct dialogue. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Putin was ready to meet Ukraine’s leader when the agenda is ready for a summit, and this agenda is not ready at all (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2025). In addition, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is not willing to go Moscow but he can join the peace talks some other place (Sky News, 2025).

The Russian Federation government has emphasized that security issues cannot be discussed in Ukraine’s absence but equally cannot be resolved without the Russian Federation’s participation. Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov underlined that discussing Ukraine’s security guarantees without the Russian Federation would be a road to nowhere (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2025). He recalled that Putin had repeatedly affirmed the Russian Federation’s readiness to engage in any negotiation format regarding Ukraine.

Taken together, these statements show that both Ukraine and the Russian Federation are interested in exploring negotiated peace solutions. Trump’s involvement as a facilitator adds a new dimension by linking the United States influence to the possibility of de-escalation.

4.2 Perspectives of European Union Leaders

There is a division among European Union leaders on how to address peace in Ukraine. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said on September 8, 2025 that the European Union is financing the conflict. The Russian Federation is also funding its own war effort. He labelled this as a “funding race” in which the Russian Federation currently has the lead. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that Ukraine was a buffer state before the war. And both the Russian Federation and European nations have 50 percent influence in the territory of Ukraine. He also pointed out that the European Union lacks sufficient funds even to restore its own competitiveness. The European Union does not have the money for Ukraine to continue the war. In his view, this

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September 26-27, 2025
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

approach risks ruining the European Union economically. He recommended that, instead of relying on Washington, European Union leaders should negotiate directly with Moscow for a comprehensive European Union–Russian Federation security agreement. It should include Ukraine’s decision not to join NATO and the European Union. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that prolonging the war represents a losing strategy for the European Union (Velhan, 2025).

In Germany, economic concerns and immigration problems have led to calls for diplomacy. There are 1,164,200 Ukrainian war refugees in Germany. In August 2025, Chancellor Friedrich Merz stated that Germany had entered its third year of recession. He emphasized that diplomacy was essential to restore peace in Ukraine. Merz also described the Russian Federation as a European country (Times of India, 2025). He acknowledged that achieving peace might take weeks or months. But he argued that the shared interest in peace made the effort necessary.

France has also expressed interest in peace in Ukraine. On August 20, 2025, President Emmanuel Macron gave an interview to journalist Kristen Welker that the negotiation process could take the following format (Pangambam, 2025). A bilateral meeting between Presidents Volodymyr Zelenskyy and President Vladimir Putin. Then followed by a trilateral session with United States President Donald Trump. And later expanded into a multilateral format involving European Union countries and possibly the participation of Turkey.

A group of countries within the European Union continues to support Ukraine’s integration into the European Union-Atlantic structures. This includes the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, etc. On 16 August 2025, the following European leaders issued a joint statement.

(i) President Macron (ii) Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (iii) Chancellor Merz (iv) Prime Minister Keir Starmer (v) President Alexander Stubb (vi) Prime Minister Donald Tusk (vii) President António Costa (viii) and European Union Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen. They said that the Russian Federation could not have a veto over Ukraine’s pathway to the European Union and NATO (**Official website of the European Council**, 2025). Similar joint statement is given by the Nordic-Baltic leaders (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden) and Ukraine on September 3, 2025 (Government of Sweden, 2025).

Italy has also pushed for a stronger security framework for Ukraine. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni floated the proposal of a NATO Article 5 style security guarantee (**Official website of Italian Government**, 2025). It will guarantee collective defense commitments for Ukraine.

The different stances show the lack of consensus within the member states of the European Union. It complicates the development of a unified European Union approach to achieve peace in Ukraine.

4.3 Military and Security Dimensions

The security dimension of the war remains highly sensitive. NATO members and allied states have debated whether to expand military assistance or to shift focus toward peace negotiations.

A coalition of the willing has emerged which consists of 35 countries. The Coalition of the Willing is committed to supporting Ukraine through security guarantees. Most of the members in the coalition are European Union member states. But it also includes Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Of these 35, a total of 26 countries are prepared either to send military contingents to provide other forms of support. This framework demonstrates the degree of global involvement in Ukraine’s defense. Although it raises the risk of direct confrontation with the Russian Federation.

From the Russian Federation’s perspective, the presence of foreign troops is unacceptable in Ukraine. On 5 September 2025, at the Plenary Session of the 10th Eastern Economic Forum, President Vladimir Putin stated that foreign military contingents in Ukraine would be regarded as legitimate targets for destruction (**Official website of President of Russia**, 2025). He explained

that this was one of the reasons Ukraine had been drawn toward NATO membership. President Vladimir Putin also said that if any peace agreements were achieved. Then such deployments would no longer be necessary. He insisted that the Russian Federation would fully comply with any negotiated security guarantees, provided that they addressed both the Russian Federation's and Ukraine's concerns.

President Vladimir Putin emphasized that the deployment of foreign troops would not contribute to lasting peace in Ukraine. He reiterated his position that Ukraine's deepening military ties with the West were among the root causes of the February 2022 conflict.

On 17 September 2025, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's said that the security guarantees must fully comply with the West's obligations, enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) consensus documents adopted in Istanbul in 1999 and Astana in 2010 and Minsk agreements (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2025).

The difference between Western security initiatives and the Russian Federation perspective highlights the fragility of the situation. The coalition of states supporting Ukraine seeks to build deterrence. The Russian Federation insists that external troop deployments would only prolong the conflict and undermine prospects for peace.

4.4 Humanitarian and Economic Costs

The humanitarian consequences of the Ukraine war are huge. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced within the country and across the European countries and the Russian Federation. Host countries in Europe continue to face significant challenges in multiple areas. For example, housing, healthcare, and social integration etc. The financial burden on European Union member states and other European countries has grown steadily since 2022.

According to the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA4) prepared between February 2022 and December 2024. Ukraine recorded US\$176 billion in direct damage. Over the next decade, total recovery requirements are expected to reach US\$524 billion. The armed conflict displaced 6.8 million Ukrainian people abroad. 4.6 million people are internally displaced. About 13 percent of Ukraine's housing stock was either damaged or destroyed. It affected more than 2.5 million households. A total of 1,603 healthcare facilities were damaged or destroyed 5,483 cultural and tourism assets were affected. District heating systems suffered damage worth more than US\$2.5 billion. Explosive ordnance contamination covered 138,503 km² of land and 14,000 km² of water. Humanitarian mine action was estimated to cost US\$29.8 billion. Ukraine is one of the most heavily contaminated regions by explosive remnants of war since the Second World War.

These figures illustrate the scale of the crisis. They also show why reconstruction will require unprecedented levels of international support. Beyond Ukraine, the refugee flows have imposed long term pressures on European countries economies, particularly in housing and labor markets.

The European Union's own financial capacity is under a continuously increasing burden. Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orbán said that the European Union does not even have sufficient resources to restore its own competitiveness. But the European Union is allocating money to Ukraine. He said that this approach risks pushing member states of the European Union into deeper economic problems. And undermine the European Union's long term stability.

There is an urgency to sign the peace agreement because of the humanitarian and economic dimensions. Reconstruction cannot begin without peace. Both Ukraine and its European Union partners will face worsening social and financial burdens if war continues.

4.5 Financial Contributions

Both military and financial aid have been critical to sustaining the defense of Ukraine and its government functions. The scale of this aid reflects the geopolitical significance of the conflict for the United States, the European Union, and their allies.

Ukraine has received at least €309 billion (US\$360 billion) in aid from 41 countries since February 2022 (Duggal, 2025). The United States is the largest aid contributor. The United States gave €114.64 billion (US\$134 billion) between January 2022 and June 2025. The breakdown of the United States aid is given. (i) military aid - €64.6 billion (US\$75 billion) (ii) financial aid - €46.6 billion (US\$54 billion) (iii) humanitarian assistance - €3.4 billion (US\$4 billion). The European Union Commission and European Council rank second in terms of aid to Ukraine. It delivered €63.19 billion (US\$74 billion). Germany gave €21.29 billion (US\$25 billion). The United Kingdom gave €18.6 billion (US\$21 billion). And Japan gave €13.57 billion (US\$15 billion).

These contributions show the international commitment to support Ukraine in the war. It also underlines the scale of resources diverted from domestic priorities in donor countries. In particular, debates within the European Union have intensified about whether these sums can be sustained indefinitely.

4.6 Mineral Resources and Strategic Interests

Ukraine’s huge natural resources have added a further layer of complexity to the armed conflict. Rare earth minerals, oil, and gas reserves make the Ukraine an attractive partner for both the United States and the European Union. These mineral resources raise questions of economic sovereignty and long term dependency of Ukraine.

The Ukraine United States. Mineral Resources Agreement signed on 30 April 2025 by U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, sets terms for joint investment in Ukraine’s mineral wealth and reconstruction projects. Ukraine will allocate 50% of future revenues from new mineral licences to a joint fund shared with the United States reducing the Ukraine’s direct control over these revenues.

The United States cannot fully implement the agreement unless the war ends. Around 70–80 percent of the United States rare earth imports come from China at present. This gives the strategic importance of Ukraine as an alternative supplier.

The European Union had already signed a strategic partnership agreement with Ukraine on raw materials in July 2021. Historically, Ukraine’s economy has relied on exporting raw or lightly processed materials rather than value-added goods, risking a “commodity-exporting” role that limits profits from manufacturing higher value products like battery components or high-tech alloys. The challenge for Ukraine is balancing relationships with both the European Union and the United States in the field of natural resources.

Ukraine has 5% of the world’s critical raw materials. The natural resources worth map of Ukraine is given in figure 1 (Abdurasulov and Plummer, 2025).



Figure 1. Rare earth minerals and other minerals map in terms of money

Source: Abdurasulov and Plummer, 2025

Beyond legal agreements, the geopolitical stakes are clear. Both the United States and European Union member states have strong economic interests in Ukraine’s rare earth resources. These interests are tied not only to reconstruction but also to long term industrial competitiveness.

China remains the dominant player in the extraction and processing of rare earth minerals in the world. China controlled around 90 percent of global processing capacity (McNeal, 2025). According to European Union stat, in 2024, the European Union sourced 46.3% of its rare earth element imports from China and 28.4% from Russian Federation. Supporting Ukraine, therefore, offers European Union an opportunity to secure alternative supplies and reduce reliance on its traditional suppliers.

Ukraine’s future will depend not only on peace negotiations but also on how it manages its mineral wealth and its foreign policy alignments.

5. Discussion

The results shows that the armed conflict in Ukraine is no longer framed solely as a territorial dispute but it is a multidimensional struggle. It involves sovereignty, security guarantees, economic survival, and global resource competition. The analysis highlights three interlinked areas. (i) Ukraine’s Non-EU membership in the European Union versus Integration into European Union-Atlantic Structures (ii) the issue of sovereignty within the European Union framework (iii) and the role of reconstruction tied to mineral resources.

5.1 Non-EU Membership versus Integration in the European Union

President Donald Trump recommended to the Ukrainian President that drops the path to follow the membership in NATO (TOI World Desk, 2025). Viktor Orbán and Friedrich Merz have emphasized that continuing the war is economically unsustainable for the European Union. They push for peace solutions. Ukraine might take Switzerland’s approach into account, preserving national independence without joining the European Union. It could resolve the Russian Federation’s security concerns. And it will preserve Ukraine’s independence.

A joint declaration by Macron, Meloni, Merz, Starmer, Stubb, Tusk, Costa, and von der Leyen explicitly rejected the Russian Federation’s veto over Ukraine’s NATO and European Union membership. This emphasises the persistence of a strong pro-integration camp within the European Union. They emphasize that security guarantees and institutional integration remain essential for Ukraine’s survival. Ukraine’s non-EU membership in the European Union lies at the heart of the peace process debate.

Approximately 4.5 million Ukrainians live and work in the Russian Federation. Ukrainian is the third largest ethnic group in the Russian Federation. At the 2025 Alaska summit, President Vladimir Putin emphasized that Russian Federation and Ukrainians share common roots. This cultural closeness can make peace talks easier. And negotiate the peace deal without English language barriers. Emulating the Swiss model has been suggested as a potential way forward for Ukraine. Similar examples include Norway and Iceland. European Union membership raises sovereignty concerns. European States that join the European Union must share elements of legislative, economic, judicial, and immigration sovereignty. United Kingdom ended its 47 years European Union membership in January 31, 2020. Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom is considered one of the founding fathers of the European Union. Countries like Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland had resisted joining the European Union.

European Union membership demands the transfer of the following forms of sovereignty to Brussels. Legislative sovereignty, judicial sovereignty, and economic sovereignty. This has historically been refused by European countries such as Norway, Switzerland, and Iceland, which value independence in these domains. For Ukraine, such a transfer raises additional complications, as joining the European Union while maintaining an impartial position toward European Union political and military affairs may appear contradictory.

Thus, even if an impartial position toward the European Union were maintained in security matters, Ukraine would still face challenges in reconciling its aspirations for EU membership with the sovereignty concessions that accession requires.

On September 2, 2025, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin met with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico in Beijing, China. Putin said that Russian Federation never objected if Ukraine joins European Union (Reuters, 2025).

5.2 Reconstruction, Resources, and Strategic Dependency

Post war reconstruction is projected to cost at least US\$524 billion. The United States and the European Union have positioned themselves as central actors in financing and managing this process. The Ukraine–United States Mineral Resources Agreement was signed in April 2025. And the earlier European Union–Ukraine raw materials partnership of 2021. It shows that both sides view Ukraine’s rare earth resources as a strategic asset.

These agreements place Ukraine in a position of economic dependency, potentially amounting to neocolonial influence. (Madali, 2025). 70–80 percent of United States rare earth imports currently come from China, Ukraine will be a potential alternative supplier. Similarly, the European Union, which imports 46.3% from China and 28.4% from the Russian Federation rare earth needs (Eurostat, 2025). The European Union sees Ukraine as a solution to its strategic vulnerabilities.

Thus, Ukraine’s mineral wealth may secure its relevance to Western partners, but at the same time risks limiting its sovereignty over its own natural resources.

5.3 Prospects for Peace in Ukraine

The evidence suggests that peace depends on resolving three overlapping areas:

➤ **Security Guarantees vs. Non- European Union membership: Hungary is not in favour of Ukraine joining the European Union, but other European Union countries want Ukraine to join them.** The security guarantees must fully comply with the Minsk agreements, United Nations Charter and in the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) consensus documents adopted in Istanbul in 1999 and Astana in 2010.

➤ **Sovereignty vs. European Union Membership: Ukraine wants to join the European Union, but that means sharing some of its sovereignty.**

➤ **Reconstruction vs. Resource Control: Western countries help with money and technology, often comes with conditions, like access to Ukraine’s minerals, which could make Ukraine dependent.**

Unless these areas are addressed simultaneously, any peace settlement risks being temporary. The path forward may require a hybrid solution. (i) Ukraine should abandon its pursuit of European Union membership (ii) secures robust but non-NATO security guarantees (iii) economic cooperation agreements with the European Union without full membership (iv) retains negotiated control over its natural resources.

6. Conclusion

(i) This study has examined the evolving dynamics of Ukraine’s war and peace prospects. It is drawn on recent political statements, economic data, and strategic agreements. The findings indicate that Ukraine’s future is shaped by three interdependent issues. (a) Non-EU membership in the European Union and NATO versus European integration, (b) sovereignty versus European Union membership, and (c) reconstruction versus resource dependency.

(ii) Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, have expressed opposition to Ukraine’s accession to the European Union. He emphasized the huge economic burden of war for the European Union and the need for a negotiated peace settlement with the Russian Federation. A strong bloc within the European Union and NATO insists that Ukraine must be integrated into Western institutions and granted long term security guarantees. This divide shows the lack of consensus in the European Union and complicates collective policymaking.

Annual International Scientific Conference
“Competitiveness and Innovation in the Knowledge Economy”
September 26-27, 2025
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

(iii) European Union membership is attractive for Ukraine, but it could further strain its relations with the Russian Federation and place an economic burden on EU member states, including Hungary and Italy.

Reconstruction and resources add another dimension. With damages exceeding US\$176 billion and recovery needs surpassing US\$524 billion, Ukraine cannot rebuild without massive external assistance. The United States and the European Union have already positioned themselves as central players, linking aid to strategic access to rare earth resources and other mineral resources. While this provides Ukraine with opportunities, it also risks creating long term economic dependency.

(iv) The evidence suggests that a sustainable peace will depend on reconciling these competing demands. A hybrid approach might be necessary, in which Ukraine: (a) Formally declares its decision not to join the European Union, (b) negotiates strong yet non-NATO security guarantees, (c) economic cooperation agreements with the European Union without membership, and (d) maintains control over its natural resources while permitting carefully supervised foreign investments.

(v) Ukraine’s choice to pursue European Union membership, integration, or a compromise model will shape its sovereignty and have significant implications for the stability of Europe, including Russian Federation.

(vi) The process of European integration is contingent upon the removal of sanctions imposed by the Russian Federation on Ukraine, the European Union, and other European states, as well as those reciprocally imposed on Russia. These measures also significantly affect countries that maintain an impartial stance regarding Russia’s Special Military Operation in Ukraine.

(vii) President Donald Trump needs to actively work with President Vladimir Putin to end the war in Ukraine. Signing of the peace agreement will take some time because there are many countries that are supporting the Ukraine war. Therefore, the President of the United States needs to have great patience as a mediator.

Acknowledgment: *The purpose of this non-funded research work of Pakneftegaz is to end the war and normalize the relations between Ukraine and Russian Federation.*

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