

## **Rutte tells Trump NATO members will pay for more Patriots**



NATO Secretary General Rutte and President Trump in the White House Monday.

While Russia's war against Ukraine continues on the ground against the forces defending Sumy, Kharkiv, Kupiansk, Pokrovsk and other cities in northern and eastern Ukraine, it also continues in the air, with Russian drones and cruise and ballistic missiles hitting and destroying apartment houses, hospitals, schools and other non-military targets. Over 13 hours on the night of July 3-4, Russia fired 539 drones and 12 cruise or ballistic missiles at Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine in what was, at the time, the largest drone and missile attack of the war. But only a few nights later, on July 8-9, Russia fired even more drones and missiles – 728 drones and 13 cruise and ballistic missiles – at Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv and other cities in Ukraine, setting a new record for the most attacks in a single night. Three nights later, on July 11-12, Russia fired 597 drones and 26 cruise or ballistic missiles at Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Lviv and other cities in Ukraine. The air attacks take place every night and have given rise to an urgent need in Ukraine for more air defense – in particular, more of the U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems and the missiles they fire. The Patriot is the only air defense system that can hit and destroy Russia's air-launched Kinzhal (dagger) hypersonic ballistic missile.

At the NATO Summit in Washington in July 2024, the member states agreed to create the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine command (NSATU) to coordinate the provision of military equipment and training to Ukraine by NATO members. At that Summit, the leaders announced a pledge of long-term security assistance for Ukraine and agreed to provide, through proportional contributions, a minimum baseline funding of €40 billion within the next year, and to provide sustainable levels of security assistance to enable Ukraine to prevail in the war. The Allies in fact provided more than €50 billion in security assistance in 2024, nearly 60

percent of which came from Canada and the European Allies, and thus far in 2025 they have committed an additional €35 billion in security assistance for Ukraine.

In view of the continuing Russian drone and missile attacks, and Ukraine's need for more Patriot systems and, especially, more missiles for the Patriot systems it now has, the obvious way to provide that equipment is for the NATO members to contribute proportionally for their provision through NSATU. Mark Rutte, the Secretary General, underscored both Ukraine's need for more Patriot systems and missiles and the obvious way to fund the additional equipment – by proportional contributions through NSATU – at the NATO Summit in The Hague on June 24-25, and it was in order to arrange for their provision and ensure that the financing arrangement is understood that he traveled to Washington and met Monday and yesterday with Trump, Secretary of State Rubio, Secretary of Defense Hegseth, and members of Congress.

On Sunday, in anticipation of Rutte's visit, Trump said, "I'm gonna have a meeting with the Secretary General who's coming in tomorrow. But we basically are going to send them [Ukraine] various pieces of very sophisticated equipment and they're gonna pay us 100% for them." When asked if it involved Patriot missiles or Patriot batteries, he said, "Everything. It's everything." He said he would be sending more air defense to Ukraine because Putin "talks nice but then he bombs everybody in the evening." Simplifying a bit, he said the U.S. will be reimbursed for their cost by the European states. On Monday, Rutte said Trump had called him Thursday and said he had decided that Ukraine should have what it needs to defend itself, but that he wanted the Europeans to pay for it. Rutte said that Germany, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the U.K., the Netherlands and Canada had already expressed their willingness to do that. He said the U.S. will maintain the stockpiles it needs for its other global missions.

Speaking alongside Rutte at the White House on Monday, Trump said the U.S. would send "billions" of dollars of military equipment, including air defense and missiles, to NATO allies, which could then decide to forward their existing military equipment to Ukraine. The idea of the U.S. selling weapons to European allies who would then forward them to Ukraine was reportedly proposed by President Zelenskyy at the NATO summit two weeks ago. As he has frequently in the last few weeks, Trump expressed his frustration with Putin Monday, saying, "I always hang up and say, 'Well, that was a nice phone call.' And then missiles are launched into Kyiv or some other city. And after that happens three or four times, you say, 'Talk doesn't mean anything.'" Trump also said that if Russia doesn't agree to a ceasefire within "about 50 days," he would impose "very severe tariffs," including 100 percent secondary tariffs on countries that purchase Russian oil.

At the meeting, Rutte was effusive in his praise of Trump: "Mr. President, dear Donald, this is really big. This is really big. You called me on Thursday that you had taken a decision. And the decision is that you want Ukraine to have what it needs to have to be able to defend itself against Russia, but you do want Europeans to pay for it. Which is totally logical, and this is building on the tremendous success of the NATO Summit, the

5 percent [the commitment by the member states at the NATO Summit to spend 5 percent of GDP on defense], but also the decision to keep Ukraine strong and the decision to increase our defense industrial production. So based on that, that was Europe stepping up. This is again, Europeans stepping up. So I've been in contact with many countries. I can tell you that at this moment Germany massively, but also Finland and Denmark and Sweden and Norway, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada: They all want to be part of this. And this is only the first wave. There will be more.”

“So what we will do is work through the NATO systems to make sure that we know what Ukrainians need. So if we can make packages, of course, in a way – we discussed it this morning with Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon – in a way that, of course, the US will keep its stockpiles necessary to defend this country, that's absolutely clear. But it will mean that Ukraine can get its hands on really massive numbers of military equipment, both for air defense, but also missiles, ammunition, etc.”

Continuing, Rutte said, “So if I was Vladimir Putin today...I would reconsider whether I should not take negotiations about Ukraine more seriously than I was doing at the moment.... But when I'm Ukraine, I think this is really great news for them. So I really want to thank you for that, and it means Europeans paying for it. And again, I mentioned all these countries, we will deal with that. And exactly as you said, that might also mean that countries will move equipment fast into Ukraine and then the US later, backfilling it, because speed is of the essence here. So really thank you, this is important.”

He’s right; given what happens every night in Ukraine when the Russian drones and missiles attack, this is indeed very important.

David R. Cameron  
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