



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on May 26, 2025

Russia and Ukraine Exchange Strikes on Capitals

Multiple rounds of peace talks and optimistic rhetoric have done nothing to end the war in the Eastern Bloc, where hostilities have significantly flared up over the last few days.

The heads of America and Russia had barely hung up the phone last Monday after their long and [optimistic conversation](#) before the Eastern European rivals were back at it again. By the weekend, Russia had launched a devastating retaliatory drone and missile attack on the Ukrainian capital.

Sunday's overnight attack "saw Russia fire 367 drones and missiles — the highest number in a single night since Putin launched a full-scale invasion in 2022," the BBC [reported](#). At least 12 people died and dozens more were hurt. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky cast blame on U.S. President Donald Trump for not being tough enough on his nemesis, Russian leader Vladimir Putin. "The world may go on vacation, but the war continues, despite weekends and weekdays," Zelensky said. "This cannot be ignored. America's silence, and the silence of others in the world, only encourages Putin."



Keith Kellogg/X
Kiev after Russian strike

Administration's Response to Russian Strikes

Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy for Ukraine, accused Russia of violating international law. He posted a photo on his X account with the caption:

This is Kyiv. The indiscriminate killing of women and children at night in their homes is a clear violation of the 1977 Geneva Peace Protocols designed to protect innocents. These attacks are shameful. Stop the killing. Ceasefire now.

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— Keith Kellogg (@generalkellogg) [May 25, 2025](#)



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Kellogg's boss was disappointed as well. "I don't like it at all," Trump said during a quick address to reporters on his way back to the White House from New Jersey. He followed that up with a lengthy Truth Social [post](#) in which he accused Putin of going "absolutely CRAZY!":

He is needlessly killing a lot of people, and I'm not just talking about soldiers. Missiles and drones are being shot into Cities in Ukraine, for no reason whatsoever. I've always said that he wants ALL of Ukraine, not just a piece of it, and maybe that's proving to be right, but if he does, it will lead to the downfall of Russia! Likewise, President Zelenskyy is doing his Country no favors by talking the way he does. Everything out of his mouth causes problems, I don't like it, and it better stop.

.[@POTUS](#): "I'm not happy with what Putin's doing... he's sending rockets into cities and killing people — and I don't like it AT ALL. We're in the middle of talking and he's shooting rockets into Kyiv and other cities. I don't like it at all." pic.twitter.com/dBxCD9K6s4

— Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47) [May 25, 2025](#)

Russia's Defense

Russian leaders are likely to take issue with Trump's "for no reason whatsoever" statement. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian attacks were a response to "Kiev's attempts to launch drone raids on Russian civilian facilities," Russian media organ RT [reported](#). Moreover, the Russians said, the strikes targeted a drone and missile manufacturing plant in Kiev. RT continued:

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, Kiev launched hundreds of drones between Tuesday and Friday alone. On Monday, it said that more than 150 long-range Ukrainian drones had been downed in the span of just 24 hours.

More from Peskov:

We see the Ukrainians strike our social infrastructure facilities, civilian infrastructure. This is a retaliatory strike. And the strike is aimed at military facilities, on military targets.

Russia [claims](#) that Ukraine launched at least 764 drone attacks into Russia between Tuesday and Friday. The barrage was so far-reaching that "a helicopter carrying Russian President Vladimir Putin was reportedly caught in the epicenter of a massive drone raid while he was visiting Kursk Region on Tuesday."

Western media corroborates this part of the Russian narrative. The left-wing British newspaper *The Guardian* [reported](#) Saturday:

The [Russian] strikes followed several days of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russia, including Moscow, which prompted the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, to vow retaliation.

And on Friday, *The Washington Post* [published](#) an article detailing how Ukrainian drone attacks "rattled multiple Russian regions for the third consecutive day, grounding flights, disrupting internet access and



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stretching the country's air defense systems thin." The strikes reached deep into Russia, the *Post* reported, "disrupting day-to-day life in a jarring reminder to Russians far from the front lines that the war is not confined to the trenches."

The Russians say Kiev ramped up attacks as soon as Trump and Putin ended their conversation about ending the war, and claim that Ukraine's attacks are part of "an attempt to derail the US-brokered peace talks between Moscow and Kiev." Lavrov accused "European nations led by the UK, France, Germany, and the EU leadership" of intentionally working to obfuscate peace.

America Pulling Back

Up until Trump's second term, Western Europe's security was at the nearly exclusive mercy of the U.S. military. But the Trump administration vowed to end that arrangement by pulling back American military presence on the Continent and forcing the people there to learn to defend themselves. In response, Europe is beginning to take ownership of its security. For instance, a group of Scandinavian nations has recently begun to forge a coalition.

Germany Stepping Up

And the Germans have made a series of announcements and moves over the last few months indicating that they're taking seriously Trump's admonition for European nations to bolster their warfighting capabilities. In March, the government implemented statutory changes for the explicit reason of boosting military spending. The power of Central Europe vows to upgrade the Bundeswehr, Germany's army, which has been gathering dust for decades. "Our goal is to provide in future all financial means necessary for the Bundeswehr to become Europe's strongest conventional army," German Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced.

Germany also just rolled out the new 45 Armoured Brigade, which it plans to post in Lithuania, a former Soviet satellite state that sits on the northwestern border of Russian ally state Belarus. At a military ceremony in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Thursday, Merz [announced](#) that:

Anyone who challenges NATO must know that we are prepared. Anyone who threatens an ally must know that the entire alliance will jointly defend every inch of NATO territory.

Vilnius is expected to host 400 German military personnel; 4,800 troops; and 2,000 vehicles, including tanks.

And today, Merz engaged in another round of saber-rattling. He announced that his country, along with other major European allies, will stop imposing range restrictions on weapons supplied to Ukraine. He [said](#):

There are no longer any range restrictions for weapons that have been delivered to Ukraine — neither by the British, nor by the French, nor by us, and not by the Americans either. That means Ukraine can also defend itself by, for example, attacking military positions in Russia. Until a while ago, it couldn't. ... It can now. We call this "long-range fire" in jargon, also supplying Ukraine with weapons that attack military targets in the hinterland.

Peskov called the decision "quite dangerous," and added that it runs "contrary to our efforts to reach a



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political settlement.” Moscow denies that it has any intentions to attack NATO nations, and labels “Western speculation of a possible attack ... fearmongering aimed at justifying extensive militarization by the bloc’s European members.”

Prisoner Exchange

Surprisingly, somewhere in between all the carnage over the last week, Russia and Ukraine still managed what reports dub the biggest prisoner exchange since the war began. “Ukrainian and Russian officials said that each side had received 270 military personnel and 120 civilians on Friday,” *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#). Each side is expecting to get back a total of 1,000 people over coming days. There have been 64 previous prisoner swaps since the war began, but none involving so many people. Thousands of soldiers are still in captivity on both sides of the war.

U.S. Involvement in NATO

As tensions rise in Europe, U.S. leadership should seriously reconsider its NATO membership. As a member nation, if a NATO nation ends up at war, fellow member nations are obligated to join. NATO is an entangling alliance that, despite its stated purpose, is more likely to inflame a large-scale conflict than avoid one.



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