



**DAILY EXPRESS**

One Canada Square, London E14 5AP  
Tel: 020 8612 7000 (outside UK: +44 20 8612 7000)

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# UK and EU face new role as defenders of the free world



Picture: UNS FLUEEL/ERA/FP

**ISOLATED: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky at peace summit last week**



**Lord Ashcroft**  
Businessman and Philanthropist

envisages US military aid and training but, with another refusal to send US troops to Europe, some saw it as a message to Russia that “we are not up for a fight”.

Ukraine is not a Nato member despite its desire to join and receive the protection from other member states.

It is privately resigned to the fact that it will not be offered membership next month and it is highly unlikely to receive it while the war with Russia continues. The US and other Nato members fear this would escalate the war and could even lead to a nuclear conflict.

The best Ukraine can hope for next month is a pledge that it will be given Nato membership once the war is over but it is far more likely that it will simply be offered watered-down “security guarantees”.

One major problem that President Zelensky faces in the US is that both main parties

know that massive support for Ukraine – and the cost that goes with it – is not a vote-winner in the forthcoming election.

Senior figures at the Odesa forum now fear that, whoever is president after the November vote, he will push strongly for a peace deal – even one that allows parts of Ukraine, the so-called “Occupied Territories”, to remain with its Russian invaders.

The Democrats’ support for Ukraine so far is widely seen as half-hearted: continually giving Ukraine just enough support not to lose the war but never enough to win it.

But more worryingly, many Republicans are advocates of the “America first” strategy and they want to end the US’s massive war funding for Ukraine.

Trump himself has often aired his anger that European nations do not pay their way when it comes to defence. So the reality that Ukraine and its European

allies are now contemplating is that the on-going war with Russia may have to be fought in future without significant support from the US.

**I**N SHORT, the US’s days as the self-styled “defender of the free world” are over. There was talk in Ukraine last weekend that European countries will have to form a “coalition of the willing” whereby, in the short term, their funding for the war in Ukraine is substantially increased.

In the longer term, the European Union – supported by the UK and other key non-EU allies – may need to match its economic might with some form of military might too.

No European nation relishes war with Russia but most realise that inaction is not an option. As Leon Trotsky, the famous Russian revolutionary, once put it: “You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.”

● Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is an international businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. For more information on his work, visit lordashcroft.com. Follow him on X/ Facebook @LordAshcroft

**‘The war with Russia may have to be fought without US support’**