Hegseth sets out hard line on European defence and Nato

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Speaking at a defence summit in Brussels, Hegseth said the US would no longer "tolerate an imbalanced relationship" with its allies and called on Nato members to spend much more on defence.He also said it was "unrealistic" to expect Ukraine to return to its pre-2014 borders and downplayed the prospect of Ukraine joining Nato.The comments came as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin held a "lengthy" phone call in which they agreed to begin negotiations to end the war.

Pete Hegseth: Return to pre-2014 borders unrealistic' for UkraineEuropean nations must provide the "overwhelming" share of funding for Ukraine, the new US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has said, as he signalled a drastic shift in Washington's position on the war. at a defence summit in Brussels, Hegseth said the US would no longer "tolerate an imbalanced relationship" with its allies and called on Nato members to spend much more on defence.

He also said it was "unrealistic" to expect Ukraine to return to its pre-2014 borders and downplayed the prospect of Ukraine joining Nato.The comments came as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin held a "lengthy" phone call in which they agreed to begin negotiations to end the war.The new US defence secretary's remarks are the clearest indication yet of the Trump administration's position on the Ukraine war and what a peace plan to end the conflict could involve.The positions set out by Hegseth will be met with dismay in Ukraine - which has repeatedly called for Nato membership and has rejected ceding territory as part of any peace deal - and will be welcomed by Moscow.

There will also be nervousness across the continent after Hegseth suggested the US would significantly scale back its support for Ukraine, insisting that European nations would now need to provide the "overwhelming share" of aid to Kyiv