NEWS ANALYSIS

For Trump, Flashy Summits Come First. Grunt Work Comes Next.

Diplomats scrambled to come up with detailed proposals for security guarantees and other sticking points following two high-level summits in Alaska and Washington.



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By Zolan Kanno-Youngs

Zolan Kanno-Youngs covers the White House. He reported from Washington.

Aug. 19, 2025

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First, President Trump rolled out the red carpet for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia for a high-stakes summit in Alaska. Then he brought the president of Ukraine and seven other European leaders to the White House for an extraordinary gathering to discuss an end to the war.

Now comes the grunt work.

Mr. Trump in the past week has effectively flipped the traditional diplomatic process on its head. After two critical meetings in four days aimed at ending the war in Ukraine, American and European diplomats scrambled to come up with detailed proposals for security guarantees and other sticking points that could upend any momentum to secure peace.

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Zolan Kanno-Youngs is a White House correspondent for The Times, covering President Trump and his administration.