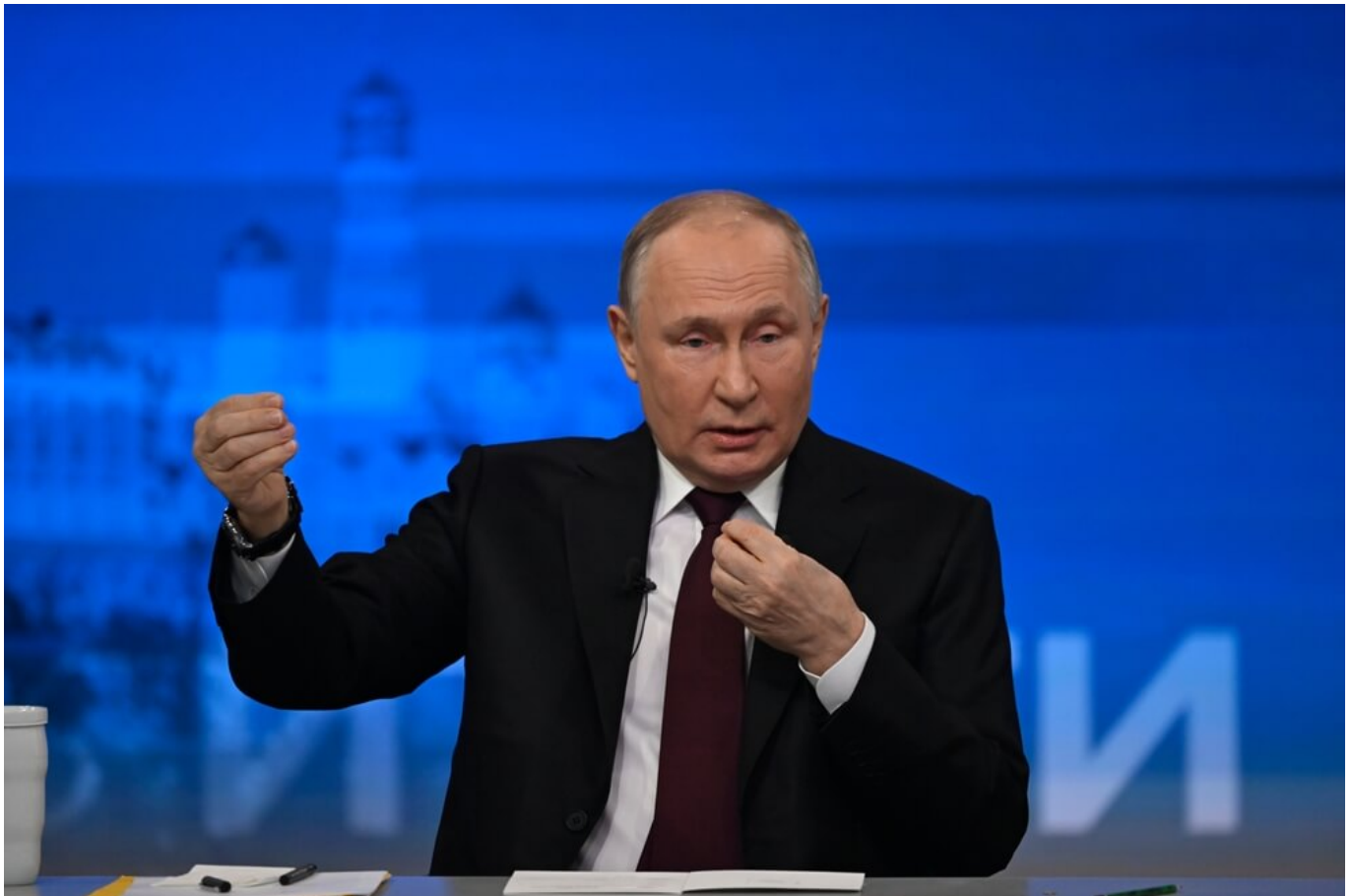




By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

# The Kremlin has flexed its muscles after the talks between Putin and Trump



The mood in Moscow after the telephone **conversation** between President Trump and Vladimir Putin last Tuesday is rather optimistic.

Despite a number of comments made by their American counterparts on Ukrainian nuclear power plants, Moscow is nevertheless enthusiastic about the prospects for the future.

These four points are predominant in Moscow, which the Kremlin finds encouraging:

- The Trump team is super open and longs for business cooperation.
- The real estate background of President Trump and Steve Witkoff can be an advantage for Vladimir Putin and other Russian professional spies at the negotiating table.
- President Trump is concerned about how to attract his voters with quick wins.
- President Trump can help Vladimir Putin install a new leadership in Ukraine that will submit to the new realities set by Vladimir Putin.

Moscow is satisfied with how a phone call between President Trump and Vladimir Putin went because Putin avoided tough commitments, which Moscow sees as a great success.

Some of the nuances of the agreement on a limited ceasefire are even more favourable for Moscow but not as good for Ukraine.

## Ukraine damaged by agreements

The Russian oil refinery and energy infrastructure can now be safer after the phone call. The Black Sea waters, where the Russians were losing, can now be much safer for the Russian fleet.

Ukraine has gained much less, particularly in

the energy infrastructure agreement, because the winter is over. If the Russians continue bombing Ukraine's energy infrastructure, it will not do as much damage as it could have in the winter.

## Ukraine is cornered by the new agreements, which prohibit it from targeting Russian infrastructure

Ukraine, on the other hand, is cornered by these new agreements, which prohibit it from targeting Russian infrastructure.

Vladimir Putin will feel more comfortable knowing that Ukraine's long-range drones and missiles will not jeopardise Russian cities, such as Moscow and Saint Petersburg, as well as oil facilities and refineries in major cities, including Moscow.

## Enthusiasm for joint business projects

Based on the reaction of the Kremlin-controlled media to the phone call and the fact that Kirill Dmitriev, Vladimir Putin's new acting chief merchant, is already preparing for a new meeting with the American side, it appears that Putin is confident that he has successfully lured President Trump with some lucrative programmes.

The general excitement in Moscow about joint business projects with the Trump team is confirmed by the fact that this time the Russian delegation in Riyadh will **include** a notorious FSB operative — General Sergei Beseda. Beseda is a former top FSB official who is now an adviser to Alexander Bortnikov, the head of the FSB.

## Vladimir Putin has a lot to offer those who want land and business

Although General Sergei Beseda was

technically demoted to the position of an advisor after Russia failed to "take Kyiv in three days", he still wears luxurious custom-made suits and handles many commercial projects on behalf of the FSB. In his **book**, "The Back Channel", William Burns compared General Beseda to an investment banker.

Vladimir Putin has a lot to offer those who want land and business.

He is emboldened by the fact that Steve Witkoff is conducting negotiations with Russia from the United States side, while the Russian side consists of professional spies.

It is a firm unofficial belief in Moscow that Steve Witkoff is considered an easy prey for someone like Vladimir Putin, a KGB officer and possibly one of the wealthiest people on the planet (as **reported** by Bill Browder and many scholars).

Mr Witkoff's **delight** after Putin presented him with a portrait of President Trump and told him he was praying for the American president, which he spoke about in an interview with Tucker Carlson, speaks to the influence the Russian leadership has over the American envoy to Ukraine.

## Moscow wants deals regarding valuable land

Vladimir Putin knows the mentality of businessmen. They don't scare him as much as Western military generals or professional spies, for example.

President Trump's recent suggestion in an interview with Breitbart News that Russia possesses extremely valuable land encouraged the Kremlin.

Vladimir Putin is willing to offer President Trump Russian land in exchange for Ukrainian land and sovereignty.

## Moscow believes it can help President Trump achieve quick results in Ukraine

The trade will be far from equal, as the land offered to the Americans will remain under Russian jurisdiction, which is synonymous with Vladimir Putin's property, regardless of who was allowed to use it.

Moscow believes it can help President Trump achieve quick results in Ukraine by further influencing American public opinion on Ukraine.

## Penetration of Russian narratives in the USA

The Kremlin will continue to undermine America's support for Ukraine in various ways, including through unofficial cooperation with conservative media outlets loyal to the Trump team.

Moscow will take advantage of the new American administration's halt to many Russia-related restrictions and task forces. Therefore, it will be much easier for Russian emissaries to spread Russian narratives to the American public.



*The Kremlin assumes that after the phone call, the Trump administration will be ready to quietly press Zelensky with various restrictions and limitations*

Moscow is looking forward to increasingly flooding the conservative media, and thus the

Trump base, with alternative views of reality about Russian-Ukrainian affairs and President Volodymyr Zelensky in particular. According to the Kremlin, this is the easiest and quickest way to end the war on Russia's terms.

Moreover, the Kremlin assumes that after the phone call, the Trump administration will be ready to quietly press President Zelensky with various restrictions and limitations and try to undermine him domestically by cultivating an opposition in Ukraine that will be inclined to give in to Vladimir Putin's terms and surrender.

According to the Kremlin's expectations, the penetration of Russian narratives into American public opinion will enable President Trump to gradually abandon Ukraine or, alternatively, facilitate the removal of President Zelensky and thus the installation of a new president of Ukraine who will sign all the papers Moscow wants.

In the meantime, Russian spies will influence Trump's team through cooperation deals on land, natural resources, joint space programmes, and emotional statements, such as those shared by Steve Witkoff.