



By: TA | AP Insight

Zelenskyy seeks talks with Trump and the Europeans on slow progress of peace efforts with Russia



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukrainian officials want to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump and European leaders next week to discuss recent **developments** in efforts to end the three-year war with Russia.

The proposed meetings appeared designed to add momentum to the push for peace, as Zelenskyy expressed frustration with what he called Russia's lack of constructive engagement in the process while it continues to launch devastating aerial **attacks** on civilian areas.

Trump has bristled at Russian leader Vladimir Putin's stalling on an U.S. proposal for direct peace talks with Zelenskyy, and said a week ago he expected to decide on next steps in two weeks if direct talks aren't scheduled.

Trump **complained** last month that Putin "talks nice and then he bombs everybody." But he has also chided Ukraine for its attacks.

At an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Friday, the United States warned Russia to move toward peace and meet with Ukraine or face possible sanctions.

The meeting was called after a major Russian missile and drone attack on Ukraine overnight from Wednesday to Thursday that killed at least 23 people

John Kelley, the U.S. mission's minister-counselor, said the strikes "cast doubt on the seriousness of Russia's desire for peace" and demanded they stop.

He said Putin and Zelenskyy must agree to meet, and reiterated Trump's warning that the U.S. could impose sanctions on Russia if the war continues.

Zelenskyy's top adviser meets Trump's special envoy in New York

Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, **met** on Friday in New York

with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff to discuss preparations for upcoming meetings.

"The key priority is to push forward real diplomacy and ensure the implementation of all the agreements reached at the Washington summit," Yermak said in a social media post. "We are coordinating our efforts."

Yermak said he had briefed Witkoff on Russia's latest attacks on Ukraine and lamented that Putin had shown no willingness to engage in peace efforts despite his meeting with Trump in Alaska this month.

Russia is failing to fulfill anything necessary to end the war and is clearly dragging out the hostilities - Andriy Yermak

"Unfortunately, Russia is failing to fulfill anything necessary to end the war and is clearly dragging out the hostilities," Yermak wrote in a lengthy post on X. "Ukraine supports President Trump's firm resolve, as well as that of all partners, to achieve a lasting peace as soon as possible. Ukraine welcomes all peace initiatives put forward by the United States. But unfortunately, each of them is being stalled by Russia."

Of the meeting, a White House official said only that Yermak and Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ukraine's ambassador extraordinary, gave Witkoff a status update on the war and Russia's strikes on Kyiv this week.

The official was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Zelenskyy told reporters in Kyiv that he expected "several meetings at different venues" with European leaders next week.

Ukrainian negotiators have been trying to move the peace process forward in talks in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland and the United States, he said.

Ukraine has accepted a U.S. proposal for a

ceasefire and a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy, but Moscow has raised objections.

Ukraine wants leaders involved

Zelenskyy accused Russia of dragging out negotiations, including by putting off a Russia-Ukraine summit with the argument that the groundwork for a possible peace settlement must be thrashed out first by lower officials before leaders meet.

That reasoning, Zelenskyy said, is “artificial ... because they want to show the United States that they are constructive, but they are not constructive.”

“In my opinion, leaders must urgently be involved to reach agreements,” Zelenskyy added.

At this point we can't say that the expert work is in full swing - Dmitry Peskov

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov on Friday reiterated Moscow's long-held position that Putin “doesn't rule out” meeting Zelenskyy, but only after progress is made “at the expert level.”

A summit “must be well prepared so that it can finalize the work that must first be carried out at the expert level,” Peskov told reporters during his daily conference call.

“At this point we can't say that the expert work is in full swing, so to speak. No, unfortunately, not. We maintain our interest and our readiness for these negotiations,” he said.

Zelenskyy says more weapons are crucial for security

Zelenskyy urged swift secondary sanctions on countries that trade with Russia and thereby support its war economy.

He said the possible postwar security **guarantees** being assessed by Western countries to deter another Russian invasion in the future must include a secure supply of weapons for Ukraine, either through domestic production or Western provision, and U.S. weapons paid for by Europe.



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Ukraine **needs** more sophisticated Western air defense systems to counter such attacks.

Kyiv region observes a day of mourning

Authorities in the Kyiv region declared Friday an official day of mourning.

Flags flew at half-staff and all entertainment events were canceled after Russia hammered Ukraine with almost 600 drones and more than 30 missiles overnight from Wednesday to Thursday, including rare strikes on downtown Kyiv.

Rescue workers pulled 17 people from the rubble after the attack, among them four children, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said.

The youngest victim was a 2-year-old girl. Some bodies have yet to be identified, and eight people remain unaccounted for, authorities said. More than 50 people were wounded.

More diplomatic moves lie ahead

Putin is due to attend a **meeting** in China from Sunday that will also include Iran and North Korea, countries that have aided Russia's war effort, according to the United States.

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The Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank, noted that recent U.S. presidents have shied away from taking a tougher line with Putin for fear of a potential nuclear conflict.

"Putin knows that Washington and its allies have more than enough capacity to reverse his gains in Ukraine, but it is nearly certain that he doubts the United States has the will to do so," the Atlantic Council said in an assessment this week.

It added that "the second Trump administration has repeatedly signaled that the United States has no vital interests at stake in this war."