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'That Frees Up a Few Hours': Russia Reacts to Trump Canceling Meeting With Putin

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U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday said he was canceling a planned meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin at the G20 summit in Argentina this weekend.

In a tweet explaining his decision, Trump cited Russia's seizure of three Ukrainian ships last Sunday as the reason for canceling the previously planned meeting.

Related article: Donald Trump Cancels G20 Meeting With Putin Over Kerch Crisis

The tweeted decision was seen as a sudden turnaround, as roughly an hour earlier, the U.S. President had told reporters he would probably meet with Putin at the summit and said it was "a very good time to have the meeting."

Here is how Russian officials reacted to the news:

– Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov:

“If that’s so, then President [Putin] will have a couple of extra hours on his agenda for useful meetings on the sidelines of the summit.”

"The cancellation means that the discussion of key international isssues is being postponed indefinitely," Peskov added.

– Chairman of the State Duma International Affairs Committee Leonid Slutsky:

“Trump's cancellation of his meeting with Putin is another [example of] Twitter anti-diplomacy, a kind of PR stunt that was once again probably pushed through by Russia’s opponents inside the U.S.”

"Though it was Trump's personal decision and it is entirely consistent with anti-Russian politics."

– Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs Konstantin Kosachev:

“It’s a mistake to assume that the Russian side needs this meeting more... [Trump's] refusal to meet is a missed opportunity to discuss controversial issues and demonstrate the independence of his foreign policy. Not for Putin, but for Trump.”

– First Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs Vladimir Dzhabarov:

“I don’t rule out that the meeting can still take place. Trump’s opinion can still change again, as it did before when it changed three times in one day.”

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