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Russia Shouldn't Negotiate With 'Vassal' Ukraine, Ex-President Medvedev Says

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Dmitry Medvedev served as Russian president between 2008-2012, swapping roles with Vladimir Putin who served a term as prime minister. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russia cannot negotiate with the "vassal" leadership of Ukraine, former President Dmitry Medvedev said in an expletive-laden article published Monday — pushing back against Ukraine's attempts to secure a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has offered to meet Putin to discuss the return of annexed Crimea and resolve the seven-year conflict with pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine. But the Kremlin has rebuffed Zelenskiy's request, refusing to negotiate the status of Crimea and saying that two sides' agendas for a face-to-face meeting do not align.

Writing in the Kommersant business daily, Medvedev criticized Zelenskiy as "weak," "ignorant" and "unreliable" — without referring to him by name — and attacked the country's "complete dependence" on the United States.

"How can you negotiate and strike deals with him?" wrote Medvedev, who was demoted last

year from the post of prime minister to the newly created position of deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council.

"It's pointless for us to deal with vassals."

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Medvedev also accused the Ukrainian leader of working with neo-Nazi and fascist groups, and made references to Zelenskiy's Jewish roots. Medvedev slammed the Ukrainian president for "serving the most rabid nationalist forces in Ukraine" and warned that "at some point, when the political situation changes, they'll sew a yellow star on your back."

Russia has for years criticized what it sees as a powerful fascist element behind various anti-Russia policies and movements in Ukraine.

"Appeasing these attitudes clearly disgusts him, since his and his family's whole history stands against such vileness," Medvedev said. "But, alas, he has to. Otherwise, they'll smear his brains against the wall. So he is forced to preach their ideology."

The former prime minister recommended Moscow wait for "sane" figures to replace Zelenskiy and other Ukrainian leaders before the Kremlin considers opening negotiations.

"Russia knows how to wait. We are patient people," Medvedev wrote.

The Kremlin said later Monday that Medvedev's article "runs in unison" with Russia's view of the current Ukrainian government.

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