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Putin Sees Some ‘Positive Shifts’ in Russia-Ukraine Talks

By AFP

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Putin met his Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko in a televised meeting in Moscow. **kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that there were some "positive shifts" in talks between Russian and Ukraine, two weeks into Moscow's military campaign in the country.

"There are certain positive shifts, negotiators from our side reported to me," Putin told his Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko during a televised meeting in Moscow.

He added that negotiations are "now being held on an almost daily basis."

Russian and Ukrainian negotiators have held several rounds of talks since Putin sent in troops to the country on Feb. 24.

The talks have led to the opening of several humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians from combat areas. Both sides have accused each other of blocking these efforts.

Putin promised to keep his ally Lukashenko "informed" on the negotiation process.

Russian troops entered Ukraine from several directions, including from the territory of Belarus.

Putin said Moscow's actions were aimed at the "demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine."

Russia has been hit by a barrage of international sanctions since Putin sent troops to Ukraine.

But the Russian leader, who is also a former KGB agent, brushed these off Friday.

"The U.S.S.R. really lived in the conditions of sanctions and (still) developed and achieved colossal successes," Putin said.

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