

Putin Abandons Peace Talks, Seeks to Destroy Ukrainian State After Kursk Incursion – Report

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Russian Armed Forces in the Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine. **Alexander Polegenko / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin has all but abandoned the idea of peace talks with Kyiv following Ukraine's Kursk region incursion, which dealt a "humiliating" blow to the Russian leader, the independent Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska (Explanatory Note) news outlet [reported](#), citing sources close to the Kremlin.

"The Kremlin has come to a corresponding conclusion that they will destroy Ukrainian statehood. The situation looks like it will end up in no-rules warfare and both sides are considering how to make things harder for the other," the outlet quoted one of its sources as saying.

The source added that Putin would not trade Ukraine-held territory in the Kursk region for Russian-occupied lands in eastern Ukraine.

The outlet's sources said there were hopes this summer that the war could end within six months to a year thanks to factors including softening rhetoric from Kyiv as well as the major prisoner exchange between Russia and the West.

The Russian and Ukrainian militaries were also close to a de-escalation agreement that included a mutual restriction on striking energy facilities, Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska reported, with plans to sign the deal on Aug. 22-23 in Qatar.

"It would have been a win-win situation. Between 15% and 20% of Russia's oil-refining capacity had been knocked out and winter was bearing down on both sides," a source close to those involved in the negotiations told Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska.

A broader de-escalation, including a ban on the use of certain weapons and strikes further than a certain distance from the front line, had also been discussed, the source said.

But all this fell through after Ukraine's Aug. 6 incursion into the Kursk region, which is ongoing after nearly two months.

According to Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska's sources, Putin now believes that Kyiv used the preparations for the meeting in Qatar as a cover for its Kursk operation.

Those in the Russian elite who support peace talks are now the minority, said an official sanctioned by the West.

If the West permits Ukraine to use Western missiles to strike deep inside Russia like Kyiv has been requesting, the prospect of peace talks would be "completely" off the table for the foreseeable future, said another official who regularly meets with Putin.

"It's all gone too far. I don't believe there will be any sort of peace process. Nothing will stop until Ukraine collapses," said the head of a large state-owned enterprise who is in regular contact with Putin.

One of Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska's sources who regularly meets with Putin said that he would only risk using nuclear weapons if Russia entered an all-out war with the West, and that his need to maintain good relations with Moscow's BRICS allies is keeping him from escalating.

But the source said that Putin "will be looking more and more closely at the nuclear button" if his [threats](#) aren't taken seriously.

Meanwhile, according to Poyasnitelnaya Zapiska's sources, the Kremlin is ready to keep fighting for a long time.

"Ukraine's forces are being exhausted," the source said. "The Kremlin can carry on waging war like it is at the moment for decades."

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