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Russia's Senate Speaker Expects Ukraine Talks in 2025

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Valentina Matviyenko. **Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency**

Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia's upper legislative house, said Monday she expects Russian-Ukrainian peace talks to resume in 2025 when U.S. President-elect Donald Trump succeeds outgoing President Joe Biden.

"The likelihood of a genuine attempt to start such negotiations and meetings in 2025 is much higher than the likelihood that no such attempt will be made," Matviyenko told the pro-Kremlin Argumenty i Fakty newspaper.

"We must not and will not make the subject of negotiations any one-day half-measures, agreements of an unclear status, short-term freezes and so on," the Federation Council speaker said.

Moscow and Kyiv are not known to have negotiated peace since the first months Russian troops invaded Ukraine in early 2022. Trump has pledged to end the war swiftly, raising fears that he would try to force Ukraine to accept a deal on Russia's terms.

Matviyenko accused the Biden administration, which recently gave Ukraine approval to fire long-range ATACMS missiles into Russia for the first time, and the "deep state" of trying to derail the potential talks.

"The leaders of the negotiation process on the other side will have to show certain strong qualities. How ready they'll be, I don't know," Matviyenko, who is third in line for the Russian presidency, said.

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Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday that his country needed security guarantees from NATO and more weapons to defend itself before any talks with Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened last week to strike government buildings in Kyiv with his new Oreshnik missile after Washington decided to allow Ukraine to strike targets inside Russia with Western weapons.

During Monday's interview, speaker Matviyenko said the Oreshnik attack was a message "deciphered by specific people that will determine policy on Ukraine, security policy and Washington's foreign policy after Jan. 20, 2025."

Responding to Matviyenko's comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday, "We are continuing the special military operation," and that, "Russia intends to secure its own interests and achieve its own goals."

AFP contributed reporting.

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