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Putin Open to Speaking With Trump, Kremlin Says

By AFP

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The Kremlin said Friday that President Vladimir Putin is open to meeting with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, following Trump's comments the day before that preparations for such talks were underway.

"The president has repeatedly stated his openness to contact with international leaders, including the U.S. president, including Donald Trump," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Trump, set to be inaugurated in less than two weeks, has pledged to bring a swift end to the war between Russia and Ukraine, though he has yet to present a detailed plan.

On Thursday, the president-elect said during a meeting at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida that Putin "wants to meet, and we're setting it up... We have to get that war over with, that's a

bloody mess."

The Kremlin welcomed Trump's "readiness to solve problems through dialogue," with Peskov adding that "no conditions are required. What is required is mutual desire and political will to solve problems through dialogue."

Trump's criticism of U.S. military aid to Ukraine and the outgoing Biden administration's policy on the conflict has stoked concerns in Kyiv that Ukraine may be forced to accept a peace deal on terms favorable to Moscow.

Washington has delivered tens of billions of dollars in aid to Ukraine since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that without such support his country would have lost the conflict.

He is pushing Trump to back his "peace-through-strength" proposal, seeking NATO protections and concrete Western security guarantees as part of any settlement to end the fighting.

Ukraine's foreign ministry dismissed Trump's comments on any forthcoming meeting with Putin.

"Trump has talked about plans for such a meeting before, so we see nothing new in this," said spokesman Georgiy Tykhy.

"Our position is very simple: we all in Ukraine want to end the war fairly for Ukraine, and we see that President Trump is also determined to end the war," he said, according to the Interfax Ukraine news agency.

Tykhy said Ukraine was preparing for high-level discussions between Kyiv and Washington "immediately" after the inauguration, including between Trump and Zelensky.

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