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Putin Believes Key Ukraine War Goals Achieved – Reuters

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Residents of occupied Mariupol watch Putin's broadcast. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin believes Russia has achieved its key objectives in the war against Ukraine, but he has also grown increasingly concerned about the conflict's economic impact on the country, Reuters reported Thursday, citing anonymous sources.

One source familiar with Kremlin thinking reportedly said Russia had weakened Ukraine's military and secured territorial control connecting mainland Russia to annexed Crimea.

Putin initially launched the invasion in 2022 with the stated goals of "denazifying and demilitarizing" Ukraine. Following intense resistance from Ukrainian forces, Russia shifted its focus to capturing southeastern regions of the country.

Reuters reported that Putin was "visibly displeased" during a recent meeting with top economic officials, where he learned that high borrowing costs aimed at curbing inflation have simultaneously stifled private investment.

The economic strain has reportedly prompted some members of Russia's elite to advocate for negotiating a settlement to the ongoing conflict.

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The Kremlin has not commented on the Reuters report, and it remains unclear whether Putin's economic concerns could influence any decision to withdraw troops from Ukraine.

In 2023, Putin reportedly assured Chinese President Xi Jinping that the war would last at least five more years, though the situation appears to have changed since Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election in November.

Trump, who campaigned on bringing a swift end to the war in Ukraine, has sought to increase pressure on Moscow in recent days. On Wednesday, he wrote on social media: "I'm going to do Russia, whose Economy is failing, and President Putin, a very big FAVOR. Settle now, and STOP this ridiculous War! IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE."

After being sworn in for a second term as U.S. president on Monday, Trump said he expects to meet with Putin "soon."

Putin, in a congratulatory message to Trump, expressed openness to dialogue for a "lasting peace" in Ukraine. However, a senior Kremlin aide told Reuters on Tuesday that Moscow had yet to receive specific proposals for negotiations.

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