

'Not Pleasant' That Trump Called Putin First, Zelensky Says

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. president.gov.ua

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Thursday that it was "not very pleasant" that U.S. President Donald Trump spoke with Russia's Vladimir Putin before calling him.

Zelensky said Trump had told him he had wanted to speak with both leaders simultaneously, though he did not elaborate on why that did not happen. He said he believed that Ukraine remains a priority for Washington.

The remarks came as Zelensky and senior Ukrainian officials held meetings this week with Trump allies in Kyiv, Brussels and at the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

"The Ukraine-America meetings are a priority for us," the Ukrainian president said. "And only after such meetings, after a plan to stop Putin has been worked out, I think it is fair to talk to the Russians."

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On Wednesday, Trump said that he held a "lengthy and highly productive phone call" with Putin, adding that the two agreed to begin ceasefire negotiations for the war in Ukraine.

That phone call, along with Trump's remarks that Ukraine is unlikely to reclaim all of its lost territory or achieve NATO membership as part of any potential settlement, have stunned European officials and raised concerns that Kyiv may be sidelined in discussions about its own future.

Zelensky said he had also spoken with Trump on Wednesday, describing the call as "meaningful" and broad discussion. He added that he had warned the U.S. leader that without security guarantees, Russia was likely to attack Ukraine again.

On Thursday, the EU's top diplomat slammed the White House for sidelining Ukraine and engaging with Russia's Vladimir Putin without consulting Kyiv or Europe.

"There's an agreement being made behind our backs that simply will not work," said Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief. "For any kind of agreement, you need Europeans to implement it, you need Ukrainians to implement it."

AFP contributed reporting.

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