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Trump Envoy Says U.S. Will Not 'Impose' Deal on Ukraine

By AFP

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Retired General Keith Kellogg, the Trump administration's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia **JKTKMM (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

U.S. envoy Keith Kellogg on Monday said that he would not tell Ukraine to accept whatever deal is negotiated by President Donald Trump to end Russia's war, ahead of a visit to Kyiv.

Kellogg is set to arrive in Ukraine on Wednesday for three days of talks that will include a meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky.

His visit to Kyiv will come after top U.S. officials meet Russian negotiators in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for the first time since Trump blindsided allies by agreeing to launch peace efforts with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Kellogg said U.S. officials were engaged in parallel efforts to bring Moscow and Kyiv to the negotiating table — with him spearheading the outreach to Ukraine.

Trump's envoy insisted that it would ultimately be up to Zelensky to decide if Ukraine accepts any deal that the U.S. leader brokers.

"The decision by Ukrainians is a Ukrainian decision," Kellogg told journalists after talks with U.S. allies at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

"Zelensky is the elected leader of a sovereign nation and those decisions are his and nobody will impose those on an elected leader of a sovereign nation," Kellogg said.

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He insisted that his job was to "facilitate" a deal that would "ensure that there are solid security guarantees that Ukraine is a sovereign nation."

European leaders on Monday met in Paris to try to come up with a strategy as fears swirl that they will be left on the sidelines of any talks.

Kellogg reiterated earlier suggestions that Europeans would not directly participate, but insisted they would have an "input."

"I don't think it's reasonable or feasible to have everybody sitting at the table," he said.

Kellogg said that "everything remains on the table" in the negotiations after U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth poured cold water on Ukraine's goals of joining NATO or regaining all its territory.

He did not rule out that broader issues of European and global security would be brought up in negotiations between Washington and Moscow.

"I think what is brought into those discussions are unknowns," he said.

"I wouldn't be surprised if global issues are brought up," he added, pointing to potential efforts to break up Russia's ties with Iran, North Korea and China.

The U.S. envoy said that after nearly three years of all-out war he believed that both Russia and Ukraine were ready to call a halt as neither can score a decisive victory on the battlefield.

"You get the feeling right now that both sides kind of want to tap out," he said.

"When you think about it, this is really unsustainable."

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