

U.S.-Russia Talks Begin in Saudi Arabia

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U.S.-Russian talks in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. **Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service**

Top Russian and U.S. officials met in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to discuss bilateral relations, possible solutions for ending the war in Ukraine and preparations for a potential summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Russian state media [published](#) videos of the meeting as it began, with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff seated across from Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and senior Putin aide Yury Ushakov.

Before the talks, cameras also [captured](#) Russian Direct Investment Fund CEO Kirill Dmitriev as part of the Russian delegation. Dmitriev, who was previously involved in backchannel communications with U.S. counterparts during both Trump terms, praised the current U.S. administration as "swift, efficient and very successful" in an [interview](#) with CNN.

Dmitriev [said](#) later on Tuesday he believed that progress in the U.S.-Russia talks could emerge within two to three months. "We have a series of proposals, which our colleagues are thinking about. And I think that there will, possibly, be progress in the not-so-distant future, in the

next two–three months,” he told state TV.

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The Washington Post, citing an anonymous Russian academic close to senior diplomats, reported that the Kremlin’s priorities in the Saudi Arabia talks [include](#) lifting some Western sanctions. However, Dmitriev [told](#) CNN that sanctions relief was “not at all” part of the agenda.

On Monday, the Kremlin said the talks would focus primarily on restoring the “full scope” of U.S.–Russia relations, a point reaffirmed in the Washington Post report. Ushakov told state media the discussions would cover “how to start negotiations on Ukraine.”

Both Moscow and Washington have played down expectations of a breakthrough, though Trump has pushed for a swift resolution to the war while Russia sees his outreach as an opportunity to gain concessions.

This week, Lavrov ruled out any Russian territorial concessions to Ukraine as part of ceasefire negotiations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv was not invited to the discussions in Saudi Arabia. In a social media post, he insisted that any peace deal must include “robust and reliable” security guarantees for Ukraine.

Related article: [Trump Envoy Says U.S. Will Not 'Impose' Deal on Ukraine](#)

European leaders, meanwhile, fear Trump is negotiating a peace deal with Russia that excludes both Kyiv and the EU. A group of EU leaders held emergency talks in Paris on Monday to coordinate a response to the Trump administration’s rapid push to directly engage with the Kremlin.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun welcomed “efforts toward peace” in Ukraine but emphasized that “all parties and stakeholders should participate” in discussions.

AFP contributed reporting.

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