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Putin Praises U.S.-Russia Talks as ‘First Step’ Toward Restoring Ties

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President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday praised this week's high-level discussions between U.S. and Russian officials in Saudi Arabia, calling them a "first step" toward restoring relations between the two countries.

Top officials from the United States and Russia met Tuesday for their first direct talks since Moscow's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, with delegates from both sides striking a positive tone while downplaying the chances of an immediate breakthrough in Ukraine peace negotiations.

"I was briefed [on the talks]. I rate them highly — there is a result," Putin said during a visit to a drone factory in St. Petersburg. "In my opinion, we made the first step to restore work in various areas of mutual interest."

The Kremlin leader added that U.S. President Donald Trump was beginning to receive

"objective information," without elaborating, but cautioned that trust between the two sides needed to improve to resolve the war in Ukraine.

"It's impossible to solve many issues, including the Ukrainian crisis, without increasing the level of trust between Russia and the United States," Putin said.

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Since taking office last month, Trump has effectively ended the Biden administration's policy of isolating Russia over the war in Ukraine, with some observers, as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, saying that the White House handed Putin a diplomatic victory.

Russian officials earlier told The Moscow Times that they view Trump's urgency to end the war as a chance to secure key concessions, including sanctions relief, restored diplomatic properties and recognition of Moscow's territorial claims in eastern and southern Ukraine.

However, despite optimism in the Kremlin, some Russian officials acknowledge that Trump's fast-paced diplomacy could lead to unpredictable outcomes, and negotiations may shift if Washington's position evolves.

AFP contributed reporting.

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