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Trump Envoy Witkoff Says He Met With Putin During Trip to Russia

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Steve Witkoff, Marco Rubio and Michael Waltz. **U.S. Department of State**

U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy to the Middle East confirmed in a video that he met with Russia's Vladimir Putin during a recent trip to Moscow, where he secured the release of an American prisoner.

"I spent a lot of time with President Putin, talking, developing a friendship, a relationship with him," Steve Witkoff said in a video from a Miami conference hosted by a Saudi Arabia-linked nonprofit.

The video, first reported by the investigative news outlet Agentstvo, shows Witkoff saying that he "had the support of President Trump, which is really a big deal."

Earlier, Fox News host Sean Hannity claimed that Witkoff held a three-and-a-half-hour meeting with Putin on Feb. 11 while negotiating the release of imprisoned U.S. teacher Marc Fogel.

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The Kremlin declined to comment on the reported meeting between Witkoff and Putin at the time, and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio did not address it directly in a phone interview with Hannity.

The Kremlin's official website only listed a meeting between Putin and a regional governor on the day of Witkoff's visit.

Witkoff's remarks come as Trump seeks to meet Putin in person to fulfill his campaign promise of ending the full-scale war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022.

Meanwhile, Trump has accused Ukraine of starting the conflict and accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of being a "dictator without elections."

On Tuesday, Witkoff, Rubio and Trump's National Security Adviser Mike Waltz met with top Russian officials in Saudi Arabia, where they agreed to begin discussions on ending the war in Ukraine.

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