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Russia Denies Follow-Up Talks With U.S. Officials in Saudi Arabia

February 25, 2025



Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday dismissed reports of a follow-up meeting between U.S. and Russian officials in Saudi Arabia this week, saying no such talks were scheduled.

"There are no meetings in Riyadh with the participation of the Foreign Ministry today," the ministry was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was visiting Tehran on Tuesday for talks with Iranian officials.

The denial comes a week after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Lavrov held discussions in the Saudi capital, marking the first direct talks between high-level American and Russian officials since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

That meeting resulted in an agreement between the two sides to appoint negotiators for potential peace talks on the Ukraine war and to establish a "consultation mechanism" to address disputes.

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Earlier, media reports claimed that lower-level U.S. and Russian officials were set to meet Tuesday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with anonymous diplomatic sources describing it as a "sign of progress" in relations between the countries.

The diplomatic push follows a phone call earlier this month between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which unsettled European leaders and signaled a shift from the previous U.S. administration's policy of isolating Russia.

Trump on Monday expressed confidence in ending the war in Ukraine and said he expected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House within two weeks to sign a deal granting the U.S. access to Ukraine's rare mineral resources.

Putin later said Russia was open to U.S. investment in strategic minerals in Russian-occupied Ukraine and that American and Russian companies were already "in touch" regarding joint economic projects linked to resolving the war.

AFP contributed reporting.

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