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Trump Says Zelensky Ready for Talks With Russia, U.S. Minerals Deal

By AFP

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Presidents Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky meet at the White House. **The White House**

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky told him he was ready to negotiate with Russia and finalize a U.S. minerals deal, just days after their tense White House meeting.

The fallout from Trump's and Zelensky's Oval Office clash led to the dramatic unraveling of the wartime alliance between the U.S. and Ukraine, with Washington suspending crucial military aid to the war-torn country.

Zelensky has since attempted to mend ties, posting on social media that their dispute was "regrettable" and that he wanted "to make things right."

During his address to Congress later Tuesday, Trump read aloud from a letter he said he had received from Zelensky, which mirrored the Ukrainian leader's online statement.

“The letter reads: ‘Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians,’” Trump told lawmakers in his first congressional address since returning to office.

“We do really value how much America has done to help Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and independence.”

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Trump added that, “regarding the agreement on minerals and security, Ukraine is ready to sign it at any time that is convenient for you.”

The minerals deal was at the center of the pair’s dispute in the Oval Office on Friday, where Vice President J.D. Vance accused Zelensky of being ungrateful for U.S. aid, and Trump berated the wartime leader for having “no cards” to play.

Zelensky left Washington without signing the agreement, which would give the U.S. control over Ukrainian mineral resources.

Trump was widely expected to outline a plan for ending the three-year war in Ukraine during his address but offered little detail beyond saying he had engaged in “serious discussions with Russia.”

His rapprochement with Moscow and Monday’s decision to halt military assistance to Ukraine have shocked allies.

Like Ukraine, the European Union has been excluded from U.S.-Russian negotiations over a potential ceasefire, raising concerns that any deal would be on Russia’s terms.

The Kremlin welcomed Trump’s decision to cut military aid, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov calling it a “solution which could really push the Kyiv regime toward a peace process.”

The U.S. pause affects hundreds of millions of dollars in weapons that was in the process of being sent to Ukraine, The New York Times reported.

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