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U.S. ‘Strongly Urges’ Russia to Accept Ukraine Ceasefire Proposal

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Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. National Security Advisor Mike Waltz. **U.S. Department of State**

The United States is urging Russia to accept its proposed 30-day ceasefire in Ukraine, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday, adding that Washington would initiate contacts with Moscow later in the day to gauge its response.

“We eagerly await the Russian response and urge them strongly to consider ending all hostilities,” Rubio told reporters during a stopover in Ireland.

Ukrainian officials endorsed the month-long truce — on the condition that Russia also agrees — after talks with Rubio and National Security Adviser Mike Waltz in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled on the day of Donald Trump’s inauguration in January that he would not accept a “temporary ceasefire” and would continue pursuing Moscow’s stated interests in Ukraine.

Likewise, in June, Putin demanded Ukraine withdraw from four partially occupied regions and abandon its bid for NATO membership aspirations. He also called on the West to lift sanctions.

Related article: Kremlin Awaits U.S. Briefing on Ukraine Ceasefire Plan, Top Spokesman Says

Earlier on Wednesday, Reuters quoted a senior Russian source as saying that it would be "difficult for Putin to agree to [the ceasefire] in its current form" given the Russian military's recent successes on the battlefield. "Putin has a strong position because Russia is advancing," the source said.

During the stopover in Ireland, Rubio said U.S. and Ukrainian officials discussed territorial concessions during their talks this week but did not provide details.

The Kremlin said it was waiting for a briefing from Rubio and Waltz on the U.S. proposal.

Rubio emphasized that Washington wants to determine whether Russia is prepared to accept the ceasefire "unconditionally."

"If the response is 'yes,' then we know we've made real progress, and there's a real chance for peace. If the response is 'no,' it would be highly unfortunate, and it'll make their intentions clear," he said.

Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, is set to meet with Putin in Moscow on Thursday, according to Axios.

AFP contributed reporting.

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