The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Trump and Putin to Speak Tuesday About Ukraine War

By AFP

March 17, 2025



Top U.S. and Russian diplomats meet in Saudi Arabia on Feb. 18. **Russian Foreign Ministry/TASS**

U.S. President Donald Trump said he plans to speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday about ending the war in Ukraine, adding that discussions are already underway on "dividing up certain assets" between the warring sides.

"I think we'll be talking about land... we'll be talking about power plants," Trump said aboard Air Force One, an apparent reference to the Moscow-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southern Ukraine. "I think we have a lot of it already discussed very much by both sides, Ukraine and Russia. We're already talking about that — dividing up certain assets."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday confirmed that the call would take place.

"There is such a conversation being prepared for Tuesday," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters including AFP on Monday, ahead of the Trump-Putin call, without

commenting on what the two leaders would discuss.

The U.S. and Ukraine are pressing Moscow to agree to a ceasefire, but Putin has not given a clear response, instead listing conditions and raising "serious questions" about the proposal.

Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, who met with Putin for several hours last week, told CNN he expects "the two presidents are going to have a really good and positive discussion this week."

Trump, he added, "really expects there to be some sort of deal in the coming weeks, maybe, and I believe that's the case."

**Related article**: Russia Says Retook 2 More Villages in Border Region

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky has reacted with anger to Putin's statements, accusing him of wanting to prolong the fighting.

On Saturday, Zelensky warned that Moscow wanted to first "improve their situation on the battlefield" before agreeing to any ceasefire.

## 'Waiting for peace'

Moscow has been pressing ahead in several areas of the front for over a year.

On Monday, Russia claimed its forces had captured Stepove — a village in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region — although open-source battlefield maps showed it outside Moscow's control.

Valentyna, a 62-year-old in the eastern town of Kostiantynivka, where evacuations were underway with the Russians advancing, said "everybody is waiting for peace."

She looked after the dogs of neighbors who left the frontline town but, like many elderly people, was reluctant to leave.

"Everyone hopes [for peace]," she told AFP. "People are waiting. People are tired."

The Kremlin, meanwhile, was boasting of its forces ousting Ukrainian troops from Russia's western Kursk region as a major success.

Moscow last week retook the main town that Ukraine seized in its summer 2024 incursion, Sudzha, and swathes of areas around it.

Russia has said it has moved several hundred civilians who were previously trapped in Kyiv-held areas.

## 'I nearly died'

Andrey Klimenko was one of them. He spoke to AFP after leaving his home in the village of Zamostye, outside Sudzha, on Friday as Russian forces pushed to recapture land, and is now

staying in a displacement center.

"Planes were dropping bombs near my vegetable patch. I nearly died because of bombs, mortar fire and drones," the 52-year-old told AFP.

Ukraine has conceded it is in a difficult position in the region but denies its troops are surrounded.

Zelensky replaced his army's chief of general staff last week as Kyiv's front-line troops continued to struggle.

After a brief lull in drone fire last week, both sides appeared to have stepped up attacks on Monday.

Ukrainian forces launched a drone attack on southern Russia, sparking a blaze at an oil refinery, while Moscow launched a barrage of nearly 200 drones against Ukraine.

## Russians see hope in Trump

Putin last week said he would back a ceasefire but only if it led to "long-term peace and addresses the root causes of the crisis."

Among Putin's demands are that Ukraine never join the NATO military alliance, that European peacekeepers not be deployed on Ukrainian territory and that Moscow be allowed to keep all the land it currently occupies.

Since Russia seized Crimea in 2014 and launched its full-scale offensive against Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow now controls around a fifth of Ukraine.

Zelensky has pushed back at Putin's demands, saying the Russian leader does not really want peace.

In the Kursk region, 35-year-old displaced resident Yekaterina Panova said she was hopeful Trump could mediate.

"We really want America to somehow influence Russia's friendship with Ukraine," she told AFP.

"Both Russians and Ukrainians are Slavs. It's just some kind of fratricide going on."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/03/17/trump-and-putin-to-speak-tuesday-about-ukraine-war-a88378