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Finland Should 'Mentally Prepare' to Restore Ties With Russia, President Stubb Says

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Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky and Finland's Alexander Stubb. **president.gov.ua**

Finland should "mentally prepare" to eventually restore relations with Russia after the war in Ukraine ends, Finnish President Alexander Stubb said Monday during talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

"We in Finland must mentally prepare for the fact that at some point, relations with Russia will begin to recover," Stubb told reporters in London, according to the news outlet Ilta-Sanomat. "Nothing removes the fact that Russia is and will always be Finland's neighbor."

However, he stressed that any thaw in Russian-Finnish relations would depend on Russia ending its war against Ukraine and Finland's internal debate on how to proceed.

Stubb, who arrived in London after meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump in Florida, has advocated for Russia and Ukraine to accept a full ceasefire on April 20.

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The Kremlin responded to Stubb's remarks on Tuesday, saying President Vladimir Putin was open to "mutually beneficial and respectful" ties with Finland if Helsinki sought the same.

However, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused Finland and Sweden, which joined NATO in 2023 in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, of "dragging" the U.S.-led alliance's infrastructure onto their territory.

"We had no problem with [Finland and Sweden]," Peskov said, accusing both nations of "reducing relations to zero."

Stubb said in London on Monday that European leaders recently discussed when and how to resume negotiations with Putin but declined to share details publicly.

Finland, which shares the European Union's longest border with Russia at 1,340 kilometers (830 miles), closed its border crossings in December 2023 following a surge in asylum seekers.

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