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White House Officials Advise Trump Against Calling Putin Until Ukraine Ceasefire Reached – NBC

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Ukraine's Odesa after a Russian attack. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

White House officials have advised U.S. President Donald Trump not to speak with Russia's Vladimir Putin until the Kremlin commits to a broad ceasefire in Ukraine, NBC News reported Friday, citing two administration sources familiar with the matter.

Trump and Putin have held at least two phone calls since February. The U.S. president said Sunday that he planned to speak with Putin again this week as part of his push for warmer relations with Russia and a possible in-person meeting.

According to NBC, the White House cautioned that Trump could "suddenly" decide to call Putin despite advice that such a conversation would be premature without a clear Russian commitment to a ceasefire in Ukraine.

Trump expressed frustration with Putin earlier this week over his reluctance to accept a broad

ceasefire deal. No formal agreement has been reached, while Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of violating a limited halt in attacks on energy infrastructure.

NBC also reported that Kirill Dmitriev, Putin's special envoy for international economic and investment cooperation, met with Trump administration officials and Republican lawmakers at the White House on Thursday night.

Dmitriev discussed ceasefire terms and Putin's demands with Republican Senators Lindsey Graham and Markwayne Mullin at Trump's request, NBC reported.

"I think there is an understanding for how we can move to finalize the agreement," Dmitriev told CNN on Thursday, though he noted that "lots" of differences remain.

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