

Trump Says He May Meet Putin 'Shortly After' Middle East Trip in May

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The White House

U.S. President Donald Trump [said](#) Wednesday that he could meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin shortly after his upcoming trip to the Middle East in May.

The White House announced this week that Trump will travel to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates between May 13 and 16. The Kremlin has previously [said](#) Putin does not plan to meet the American president during the Saudi Arabia visit.

Asked by reporters whether he might meet the Russian leader in the Middle East on May 13, Trump replied: "It's possible, but most likely not. I think we'll meet with him shortly thereafter."

Trump did not specify when or where a potential summit might take place.

When asked whether he plans to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Rome, where a funeral for Pope Francis will be held on Saturday, the U.S. president said: "I don't

know.” Both [Trump](#) and [Zelensky](#) have said they will attend the service this weekend.

Related article: [Russian Missile Attack Kills 9 in Kyiv](#)

Since taking office in January, Trump has reversed his predecessor’s policies on the war in Ukraine and relations with Moscow, seeking closer ties with the Kremlin and repeatedly expressing his desire for an in-person meeting with Putin.

The two leaders have spoken by phone at least twice since February, though they have yet to meet in person. Top officials from both countries have held multiple talks in Saudi Arabia in recent months.

Trump has pushed for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine but has made little headway despite ongoing diplomatic efforts.

Just hours before Russian forces launched a deadly [missile strike](#) on Kyiv early Thursday, Trump said he believed Moscow had agreed to its side of a U.S.-brokered peace deal.

Meanwhile, the U.S. president again [clashed](#) with Zelensky over his refusal to accept Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea as part of the agreement, arguing that the Ukrainian leader was endangering peace talks.

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