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Kremlin to Ukraine: Negotiate With Us, Not Washington

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. **Natalia Shatokhina / NEWS.ru / TASS**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday that Ukraine should engage directly with Moscow on peace negotiations rather than rely on U.S. mediation.

"America is trying to mediate, and we're grateful to the United States for these truly intense efforts," Peskov told reporters. "[But] a peace agreement should be signed with Ukraine, not with America."

Peskov suggested that ending the war according to Washington's exceedingly short timeline would be "too complicated, with many issues and details still to be resolved before settlement."

"President Putin's mission is to achieve the goals he set when he began the special military operation. We must safeguard our national interests," he said. "We don't hear any reaction from Kyiv. The process continues."

U.S. President Donald Trump had previously vowed to end the Ukraine war "within 24 hours" of taking office, but his push for peace in Ukraine has so far produced few results.

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On Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that Washington could drop its mediation efforts unless both Russia and Ukraine offer "concrete proposals."

On Monday, Putin announced a 72-hour ceasefire next week to coincide with Russia's Victory Day celebrations, a plan Kyiv has dismissed as a symbolic gesture aimed at buying time on the battlefield. Earlier, the Kremlin leader rejected a 30-day ceasefire proposed by the U.S. and supported by Ukraine.

Kremlin officials have argued that Kyiv must "undertake efforts" toward resuming peace negotiations with Moscow, adding that "they [in Ukraine] have a legal ban on negotiations," a reference to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's 2022 decree that rules direct talks with Russia "impossible" as long as Putin remains in power.

However, Zelensky said in February that he was ready for direct talks with Russia once Kyiv reached a common stance with its Western allies on how to end the war.

Trump also called for direct talks between Zelensky and Putin, though the Russian president ruled out speaking directly with his Ukrainian counterpart in January over concerns about his "legitimacy."

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