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Trump Acknowledges Putin Not Ready to End Ukraine War – WSJ

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The White House

U.S. President Donald Trump told European leaders that Russia's Vladimir Putin is not ready to end his war on Ukraine because he believes he is winning, The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday, citing three sources familiar with the conversation.

Trump made the acknowledgement during a call with European leaders following his phone call with Putin on Monday.

It marks a notable departure for Trump, who has repeatedly said he believed his Russian counterpart was genuinely interested in peace and pressured Kyiv to make major concessions, including abandoning its NATO aspirations, to end the war.

The realization does not appear to have motivated Trump to increase U.S. pressure on Russia. Despite previously telling European officials that he would join them in imposing new sanctions on Russia if Putin did not agree to a ceasefire during Monday's call, Trump ultimately declined to do so.

And publicly, Trump said the "tone and spirit of the conversation [with Putin] were excellent."

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According to The New York Times, after his call with Putin, Trump told Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky and other European heads of state that they would need to find a solution to the war themselves.

The Vatican is expected to host the next round of Russia-Ukraine peace talks in mid-June.

Trump told European leaders on Sunday that he would send Secretary of State Marco Rubio and special envoy Keith Kellogg to attend the negotiations, but "appeared to be noncommittal" about the U.S. role in the talks, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Trump vowed to swiftly broker a resolution to Russia's more-than-three-year invasion of Ukraine when he took office in January. But he has voiced growing frustration in recent months as his administration's shuttle diplomacy between Moscow and Kyiv failed to reach a breakthrough.

Russia and Ukraine held their first direct talks in three years in Istanbul on May 16, a meeting that ended without major progress toward peace.

During the talks, the Russian delegation, a junior team led by Kremlin aide Vladimir Medinsky, reportedly demanded that Kyiv fully surrender the four Ukrainian regions that Moscow claims are Russian territory but does not fully occupy. The Russian negotiators threatened to seize more Ukrainian regions if this demand was not met.

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