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Rubio Marks Russia Day With Call for 'Durable Peace' in Ukraine

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U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio. **Freddie Everett / U.S. Department of State**

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday congratulated Russians on Russia Day, marking the first time a senior U.S. official has done so since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

"The United States remains committed to supporting the Russian people as they continue to build on their aspirations for a brighter future," read a statement published by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

"We also take this opportunity to reaffirm the United States' desire for constructive engagement with the Russian Federation to bring about a durable peace between Russia and Ukraine," it added.

Russia Day, observed annually on June 12, commemorates the country's 1990 declaration of sovereignty and the start of constitutional reforms in the final years of the Soviet Union.

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Rubio's message was the first Russia Day greeting issued by the U.S. State Department since 2021, when then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Russians on the holiday.

Since U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January, his administration has made efforts to begin mending ties with Russia, which had fallen to an all-time low over the war in Ukraine.

In addition to pushing for a negotiated peace in the war, Washington and Moscow have opened talks aimed at restoring the regular operations of their diplomatic missions.

"It is our hope that peace will foster more mutually beneficial relations between our countries," Rubio said Thursday.

The Kremlin later on Thursday called Rubio's congratulatory message "very positive news."

"It shows once again that the current administration in Washington is completely different from the Biden administration," spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by state media.

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