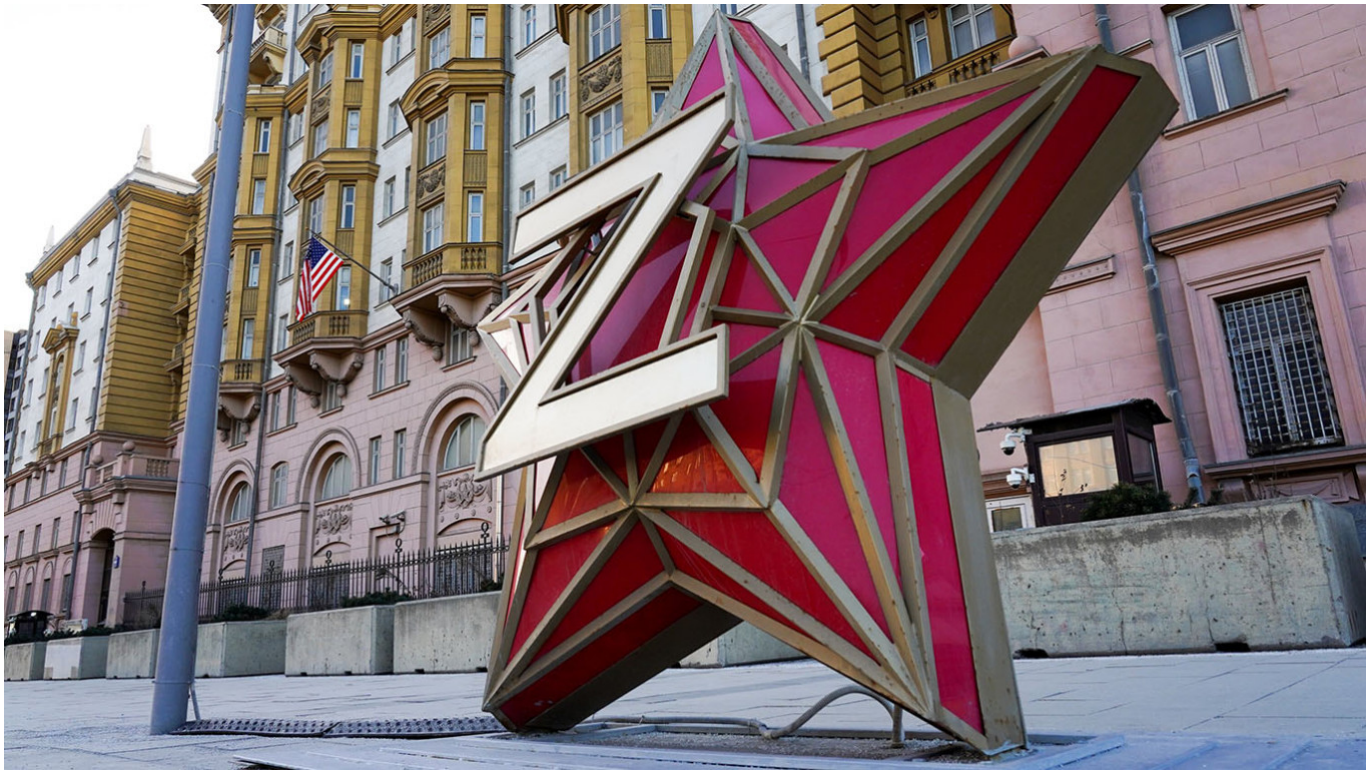
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Russian MFA Claims U.S. Canceled Next Round of Embassy Talks

June 16, 2025



The U.S. Embassy in Moscow. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

The United States has canceled an upcoming round of talks with Russia aimed at restoring the operations of each side's diplomatic missions, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Monday.

Officials from both countries previously met on Feb. 27 and April 10 in Istanbul, following an earlier meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Saudi Arabia.

"As of today, the next round of bilateral consultations aimed at resolving complications and normalizing the work of both countries' diplomatic missions has been canceled at the initiative of the American negotiators," Zakharova said in a brief statement on the Foreign Ministry's website.

"We hope that the pause they have taken won't last too long," she added.

Zakharova's statement came a week after Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the talks would take place "very soon." Washington never confirmed the meeting.

The U.S. State Department has not yet commented on the Russian Foreign Ministry's statement about the canceled talks.

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Last week, Ryabkov said Moscow would seek "clearer answers" from Washington on its proposal to resume direct flights between Russia and the United States, as well as to return six Russian-owned diplomatic properties seized between 2016 and 2018 in response to alleged election interference.

According to the Kremlin, U.S. officials have made the resumption of direct flights contingent on progress toward a ceasefire in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin has so far rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to broker a truce.

Russia first proposed restoring air travel during talks in Istanbul on Feb. 27 as the incoming Trump administration sought to ease tensions with Moscow.

Ryabkov said the next round of talks would also address worsening tensions in the Middle East, as well as Iran's nuclear program.

On Friday, Israel launched strikes on Iran, prompting retaliatory attacks by Tehran. Hundreds of civilians have since been killed in both countries amid the air war.

Trump said over the weekend that he received an offer from Putin to mediate between Israel and Iran. Putin condemned the Israeli strikes and warned of "dangerous escalation" in the region.

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