

U.S. Disbands Group Focused on Pressuring Russia in Peace Talks – Reuters

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U.S. President Donald Trump. **The White House**

Washington has quietly disbanded a previously unreported working group created to explore ways of pressuring Russia into peace talks with Ukraine, Reuters [reported](#) Tuesday, citing three anonymous U.S. officials familiar with the matter.

The short-lived group was said to have been formed sometime between March and April, with its goal being to develop policy options for U.S. President Donald Trump if he chose to take a harder line on Russia amid his push to end the war in Ukraine.

Some Trump advisers had reportedly grown skeptical of the Kremlin's willingness to negotiate a ceasefire, while the president's own rhetoric at the time suggested he might be stepping back from an "accommodating stance" toward Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Coordinated by the White House National Security Council, the group was said to include

officials from the intelligence community and the departments of State, Treasury and Defense.

The working group's proposals reportedly ranged from covert actions to curb Russian influence to diplomatic pressure on countries like Kazakhstan to enforce sanctions more strictly.

It remains unclear whether Trump was fully aware of the group's existence, Reuters said.

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The dismissal of key NSC personnel in late May — including Andrew Peek, the top official for Europe and Russia, as well as Ukraine-focused staff — rendered the group defunct.

“It lost its steam toward the end because the president wasn't there. Instead of doing more, maybe he wanted to do less,” one official told Reuters.

Trump, who promised to broker an end to Russia's war against Ukraine on the campaign trail last year, has drawn criticism from European allies for striking a conciliatory tone toward Moscow and blaming both sides for the conflict.

Earlier this year, Reuters reported that the Trump administration [halted](#) a multi-agency effort to counter Russian hybrid warfare and [disbanded](#) two Justice Department task forces focused on Russian sanctions enforcement and foreign influence.

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