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U.S. Pulled Out of Embassy Talks Over Venue Dispute, Putin Adviser Claims

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Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

Russia blamed a venue dispute for the cancellation of a planned third round of talks with the United States last week, which officials in Moscow previously said would be focused on restoring the operations of each side's diplomatic missions.

"There was an agreement to meet at a specific location. For certain reasons, that location didn't suit [U.S. officials]," Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporter Pavel Zarubin in the weekly television news program "Moscow. Kremlin. Putin," which aired on Sunday.

"Above all, it's a question of location," Ushakov said, adding that he now expects Washington to propose an alternative location for the meeting, which the U.S. has not publicly confirmed despite Russian officials saying it would happen "soon."

Russia's new ambassador to the United States, Alexander Darchiev, said earlier this month that a third round of embassy talks would be held in Moscow, claiming the sides had agreed to

alternate between Moscow and Washington for future negotiations.

Officials from both countries met on Feb. 27 and April 10 in Istanbul, following a February meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Saudi Arabia. The February meeting marked the first direct talks between Russian and U.S. officials since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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Earlier this month, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei 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 in the war.

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

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