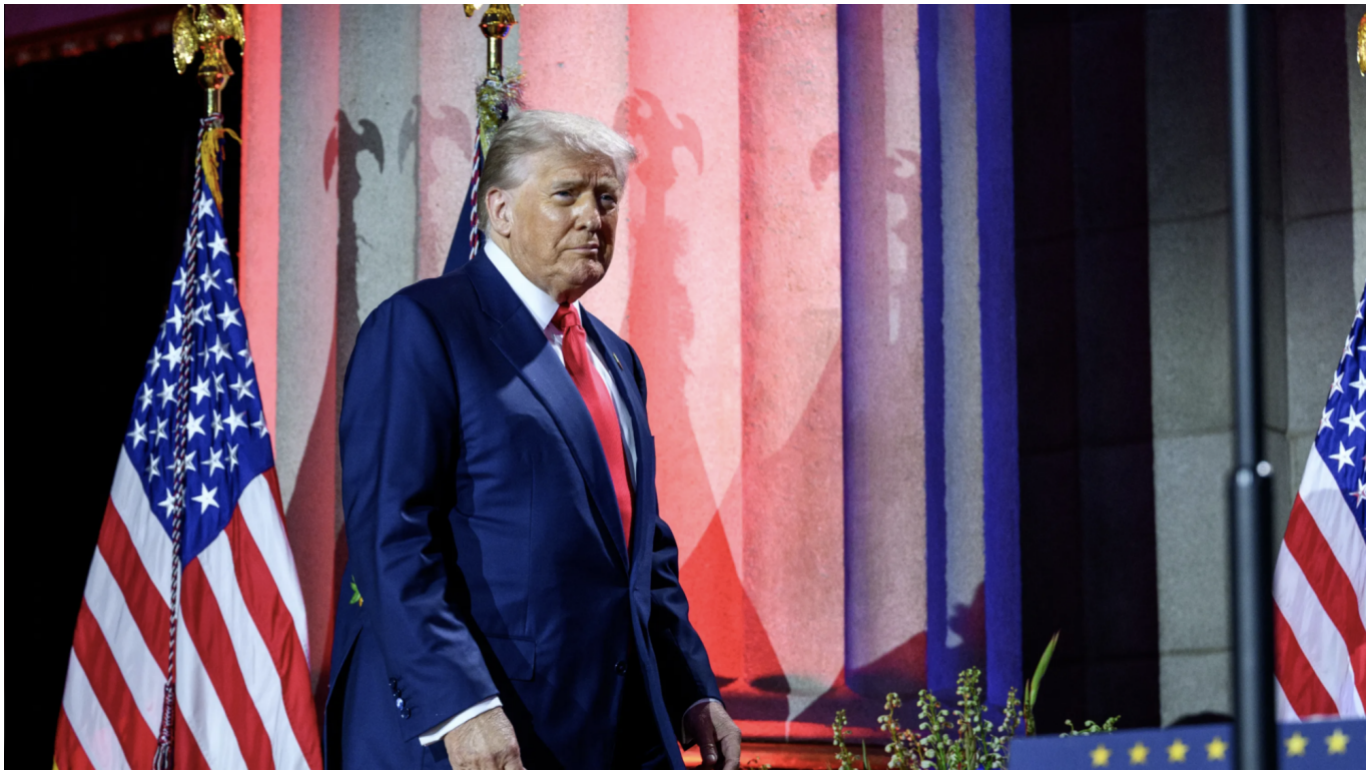
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Trump Says Wants 3-Way Meeting With Putin, Zelensky

By AFP

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whitehouse.gov

U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday he was planning a second meeting with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin soon after Friday's Alaska summit — this time with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky included.

Trump is due to sit down with Putin in Anchorage on Friday, the first meeting between the Russian leader and a sitting U.S. president since 2021.

"If the first one goes okay, we'll have a quick second one," he told reporters.

"I would like to do it almost immediately, and we'll have a quick second meeting between President Putin and President Zelensky and myself, if they'd like to have me there."

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The high-stakes talks come with Trump seeking to broker an end to Russia's nearly three-and-a-half year war in Ukraine, and Zelensky and his European allies have urged the Republican to push for a ceasefire.

A stepped-up Russian offensive, and the fact Zelensky has not been invited to the Anchorage meeting Friday, have heightened fears that Trump and Putin could strike a deal that forces painful concessions on Ukraine.

Trump said Russia would face "very severe consequences" if Putin did not agree to end the war after Friday's meeting, without elaborating.

The U.S. leader promised dozens of times during his 2024 election campaign to end the war on his first day in office but has made scant progress towards brokering a peace deal.

He threatened "secondary sanctions" on Russia's trading partners over its invasion of Ukraine but his deadline for action came and went last week with no action announced.

Trump told reporters he'd had a "very good call" with European leaders including Zelensky as he took questions from reporters at an arts event at Washington's Kennedy Center.

"I would rate it at 10. You know — very, very friendly," he said.

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