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‘Zelensky’s Dead End’: Russian Media Downplays Ukraine-Trump White House Meeting

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on Monday. **president.gov.ua**

Russian state television and pro-Kremlin media downplayed the results of Monday’s meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump, Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky and European leaders, saying Kyiv and Europe were powerless to influence U.S.-Russia talks on the war in Ukraine.

The talks at the White House, swiftly organized following President Vladimir Putin’s meeting with Trump in Alaska, saw leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Finland, the EU and NATO gather to discuss their plan to end the war.

But for Russian media, the fact that Trump interrupted the talks to call Putin appeared more noteworthy than the meeting itself.

State television opened its Tuesday newscasts by describing the Putin-Trump call as

productive, while portraying Zelensky's meeting with European leaders and Trump as one where "there was hardly any room for smiles."

State-run broadcaster Rossia 1 opened its news bulletin with remarks from Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov on the Putin-Trump call, which he said was aimed at "beginning arrangements" for a meeting between Putin and Zelensky.

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Putin and Trump "expressed support for the continuation of direct negotiations between the delegations of Russia and Ukraine," Rossia 1 quoted Ushakov as saying.

State broadcaster Channel One also led its daytime broadcast with coverage of the Putin-Trump call, which took place just days after the summit in Alaska between the two presidents.

Putin and Trump "agreed to maintain close contact on Ukraine and other pressing issues," the host quoted Ushakov as saying.

Describing the White House meeting between Trump, Zelensky and European leaders, Rossia 1's correspondent said that "the decisions Western countries will have to make in the coming days promise nothing good either for themselves or for Kyiv."

Referencing the disastrous February meeting in which U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance criticized Zelensky for "not saying 'thank you' once," Channel One said: "Zelensky was so afraid of angering Trump that he thanked him almost without pause."

But while TV coverage appeared more newsy and restrained, the pro-Kremlin outlet Moskovsky Komsomolets ran the headline: "'At Least They Didn't Fight': Ukraine Reacts to the Outcome of White House Talks," describing the meeting between Trump and Zelensky.

Pro-Kremlin tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda published an article titled "Zelensky's Dead End: Trump Clashed Hard with [German Chancellor Friedrich] Merz Over Ukraine at the White House and Called Putin."

"In the group photo, everyone looked gloomier than a thundercloud," the piece said.

"Zelensky occasionally flashed a 'diplomatic' smile, which gave off a rather unsettling impression," it added.

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Between his talks with Putin and Monday's meeting, Trump had pushed Kyiv to give up annexed Crimea and abandon its goal of joining NATO, two of Moscow's key demands.

He had also said there needed to be discussions on "the possible exchanges of territory" between Russia and Ukraine.

Ukraine, 20% of whose territory is occupied by Moscow, has repeatedly rejected any territorial concessions.

State-run news agency RIA Novosti published an op-ed with the headline "We'll Have to Go as Far as Lviv: In Washington, Europe Got What It Wanted," referring to the western Ukrainian city located near Poland's border.

"No delegations from Brussels and no attempts to reverse the process will work: serious actors [Putin and Trump] have agreed on serious matters and will move forward together step by step, cutting off any attempts by third parties — not only to put a gun to their heads but even simply to add extra chairs at the table," wrote columnist Kirill Strelnikov.

"If the message from the two presidents is not heeded, Europe and Kyiv will have to forget about truly generous compromises from Russia," he continued.

"It could even happen that, for example, the Lviv region might strongly wish to reunite with its fraternal people," he said.

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