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Trump Says He Spoke to Putin Again After White House Summit

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Donald Trump in the Oval Office. **AP Photo/Alex Brandon**

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that he has spoken again with Russia's Vladimir Putin following last week's multilateral talks in Washington with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European leaders.

"Every conversation I have with him is a good conversation. And then, unfortunately, a bomb is loaded up into Kyiv or someplace, and I get very angry about it," Trump told reporters when asked about the outcome of the phone call.

Before Monday, Trump's most recent call with Putin had been known to take place on Aug. 18. The president did not provide any details about the latest conversation with the Kremlin leader.

Trump had announced after hosting Zelensky and European leaders at the White House last week that preparations were apparently underway for a face-to-face meeting between the Ukrainian and Russian leaders, to be followed by a trilateral summit that would include him.

However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said since then that no such meeting is planned and accused Zelensky of refusing to make concessions in peace talks, even as Moscow continues to push its own maximalist demands.

Asked on Monday why Putin refuses to meet with the Ukrainian president, Trump said: "Because he doesn't like him." Still, the president insisted he believed a peace settlement was within reach, telling reporters that "I think we're going to get the war done."

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Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Monday he had spoken jointly with Ukraine's foreign minister and his counterparts from Britain, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland and the EU. According to the State Department, the ministers pledged to continue working toward "a lasting negotiated settlement."

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, whose government has pushed for closer U.S.-European alignment on Ukraine, reiterated calls for binding security guarantees for Kyiv. He said Italy was prepared to contribute to demining efforts on land and sea, and stressed that bolstering Ukraine's defense industry would be critical.

Trump has repeatedly said Ukraine should not be admitted to NATO and should consider making territorial concessions as part of a peace deal with Russia. However, conflicting statements about a possible Putin-Zelensky meeting and about Western security guarantees for Ukraine have fueled speculation of a disconnect between U.S. and Russian officials.

Zelensky, who had earlier expressed a willingness to meet Putin, said on Thursday that he wanted more clarity on Western security guarantees before committing to a summit with Putin.

AFP contributed reporting.

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