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Ukraine Peace Talks 'On Pause,' Kremlin Says

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin said Friday that talks to end the war in Ukraine are on "pause," dimming hopes for a peace settlement just months after direct negotiations between the two sides resumed.

"Negotiators remain in contact, but for now it is probably more accurate to speak of a pause," top spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. He declined to say whether Russian and Ukrainian delegates, who have met in Istanbul twice this year, had scheduled any new meetings.

"You shouldn't wear rose-tinted glasses and expect lightning-fast results," Peskov said, adding that U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly claimed he could secure a quick end to the war, also understood that reaching a peace deal would take longer than expected.

Russia has continued its war against Ukraine even as Trump pushed for an end to the fighting, including by hosting President Vladimir Putin at a summit in Alaska last month. During a visit to China in early September, Putin warned that Russian forces would continue their advance

in Ukraine if diplomacy failed to settle the conflict, now in its fourth year.

Peskov accused Ukraine's European allies of "impeding" negotiations but said Moscow remained committed to "the path of peaceful dialogue."

A coalition of more than two dozen countries, led by France and Britain, announced this month that they were prepared to send a "reassurance force" to Ukraine to patrol and enforce an eventual peace deal with Russia. Ukraine has insisted that security guarantees backed by foreign troops are essential to prevent Russia from renewing attacks on the country.

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Authorities in Moscow have rejected both Western troop deployments and discussions of post-war security guarantees that exclude Russia. Western leaders, meanwhile, have accused Putin of stalling as his forces grind forward in eastern Ukraine.

Tensions over the war escalated further this week after NATO forces shot down Russian drones that had violated the airspace over Poland, an unprecedented episode that officials in Warsaw described as a deliberate attack.

When asked on Friday about the shootdown in Poland, which prompted the Eastern European country to initiate consultations with other NATO members about a possible collective response to Russia's air incursion, Trump appeared to downplay the incident.

"I'm not going to defend anybody. But [the Russian drones] were actually knocked down and fell... but you shouldn't be close to Poland anyway," Trump said during an interview on Fox and Friends.

At the same time, Trump said he was "running out of patience" with Putin as Ukraine peace talks remain stalled.

"It's sort of running out and running out fast," the American president said. "It's amazing. When Putin wants to do it, Zelensky didn't. When Zelensky wanted to do it, Putin didn't. Now Zelensky wants to, and Putin is a question mark."

Trump said the United States would need to "come down very, very strong" on Russia if it did not show a willingness to make peace with Ukraine, including the possibility of new sanctions on Russian banks and oil.

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