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Russian State Media Stays Light on Coverage of U.S.-Backed Ukraine Peace Deal

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Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency

Pro-Kremlin media offered muted coverage of the United States' renewed push to end the war in Ukraine on Wednesday as the Kremlin said it had seen the White House's new peace plan but offered little insight into its thinking.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he was sending officials to meet with Russian and Ukrainian officials in the hopes of finalizing the deal after Kyiv reportedly agreed to an updated peace framework that took more of its concerns into account.

While the draft U.S. peace plan and the diplomacy surrounding it has dominated global headlines, the main Russian state-run TV channels instead opened their Wednesday news bulletins with President Vladimir Putin's visit to Kyrgyzstan and his talks with Kyrgyz counterpart Sadyr Japarov.

State broadcaster Rossia 24 only mentioned the possibility of renewed peace talks 13 minutes into its Wednesday afternoon news broadcast.

Even then, the segment was interrupted with a live feed from Russia's Young Scientists Congress.

A Rossia 24 presenter said that "Europe is throwing a wrench" in the peace process, referring to European leaders' criticism of the White House's original 28-point plan for being heavily weighted in Moscow's favor.

Another Rossia 24 correspondent also suggested that the leak of a phone call between Ushakov and U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, as well as one with Kremlin economic envoy Kirill Dmitriev, was published in an apparent attempt to disrupt the negotiations.

"The recording was published right when the peace plan was beginning to take shape, which means that politicians in London and Brussels are trying to derail Moscow-Washington rapprochement and obstruct peace," the correspondent said, citing experts.

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The message echoed Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov's claim that the leaks were an attempt "to derail the so far modest tendencies toward reaching a settlement through peace talks."

Elsewhere, Russian officials voiced little interest in budging on their earlier hardline demands for ending the war.

Commenting on the revised peace draft, the Kremlin's foreign policy aide Yury Ushakov said Moscow saw some parts of it "positively" but added that "many require special discussions between experts."

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov took a sterner tone, saying that while Russia welcomed Washington's efforts to renew peace talks, "any concessions or any abandonment" of Moscow's war aims were out of the question.

"Various versions of this plan are a bargaining chip. There can be no talk of any concessions or any abandonment of our approaches to the key issues in achieving our goals," Ryabkov said Wednesday.

State-run Channel One on Wednesday also only mentioned progress in the peace talks in the 10th minute of its broadcast.

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Channel One's presenter said that "Washington believes time is clearly not on Kyiv's side" and that "the head of the Kyiv regime [Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky] is not expected in Washington anytime soon."

On Tuesday, Channel One cited Peskov's description of the situation surrounding the U.S. peace plan as an "information bacchanalia."

The Channel One presenter said that "avalanche of disinformation" was partly the result of "the hysteria of Europe's warmongers, who have been sidelined from the talks but are doing everything they can to derail the plan," adding that "Moscow believes the American plan could become a very good basis for negotiations."

The Kommersant business daily put the leaked phone calls between Ushakov, Witkoff and Dmitriev with the headline "Who Framed Steve Witkoff?" at the top of its homepage on Wednesday.

Pro-Kremlin newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets ran an op-ed that criticized Zelensky, saying that he "got so carried away by his own expectations that he started laying out conditions."

"The Kyiv leader was ready to [meet Trump] if European leaders were also present at that same meeting. The calculation is so obvious that there is no point even decoding it in detail: they planned to turn the American president around 180 degrees — toward another 'I am very, very disappointed in Putin!' But getting carried away with one's expectations is not always a good idea," the newspaper said.

"The denouement is approaching. But what it will be — a real conclusion or the beginning of a new cycle — remains shrouded in the darkness of the unknown," it said.

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