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Next Round of Ukraine Talks Set for Next Week in Switzerland, Kremlin Says

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Vladimir Medinsky. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian, Ukrainian and American officials will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, next week for a third round of trilateral talks focused on ending the war, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday.

Peskov told reporters that officials would meet next Tuesday and Wednesday. Kremlin adviser and chief peace negotiator Vladimir Medinsky will lead Russia's delegation, he added.

The previous two rounds of trilateral talks took place earlier this year in Abu Dhabi. At those meetings, Admiral Igor Kostyukov, who heads Russia's GRU military intelligence agency, served as Moscow's chief representative.

While the Abu Dhabi negotiations ended with Ukraine and Russia agreeing to a new prisoner exchange, during which each side released more than 300 POWs, delegates did not appear to come any closer to signing a peace agreement than at previous rounds of talks.

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President Vladimir Putin has demanded that Ukraine withdraw all of its troops from the partially occupied Donbas region, which Russian forces still do not control nearly four years after the full-scale invasion began.

Ukraine's Zelensky has rejected the idea outright despite coming under pressure from the Trump administration to sign a peace deal with Moscow as soon as possible.

Anonymous European and U.S. officials told Politico on Friday that Washington had informed Ukraine that it would not finalize a deal on security guarantees until it signs a peace agreement with Russia.

That would represent a major setback for Zelensky, who has sought to tie a settlement to end the war with Western security guarantees.

Meanwhile, the Atlantic, citing two anonymous advisers to the Ukrainian president, reported that Kyiv might be ready to cede control of the eastern Donetsk region, which, together with the Luhansk region, makes up the Donbas.

The advisers suggested that Ukraine could potentially hold a referendum on a peace plan this spring that would give Ukrainians themselves to vote on whether they support an agreement that includes giving up territory.

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