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U.S. Proposed Ukraine-Russia Talks Next Week – Zelensky

By AFP

March 10, 2026



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The United States has proposed another round of Russia-Ukraine talks next week, mediated by Washington, on ending four years of war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday.

Two rounds of trilateral talks failed to reach a breakthrough to end Europe's worst conflict since World War II, launched by Moscow in 2022.

Zelensky said in an audio message sent to reporters, including AFP, that talks — initially planned for last week in the United Arab Emirates — had been postponed until next week by the U.S.

"This was proposed by the American side, but we'll see what happens in the Middle East, to be honest," Zelensky told journalists, adding that the meeting "could be in Switzerland or

Turkey."

U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff said in an interview with CNBC on Tuesday that "there was supposed to be a trilateral this week."

"I think the trilateral will be shifted till sometime next week, and... we're going to remain positive on that," Witkoff added.

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The Ukrainian leader had earlier held a telephone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who offered to host the talks, Zelensky's office announced.

Zelensky said he had also discussed the war in Iran with Erdoğan, who has maintained ties with both Kyiv and Moscow during the war.

He urged the West not to lift sanctions — including on Russian oil — imposed by Western countries after Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine. Energy prices have soared over the Middle East war.

"How can sanctions be lifted from Russia if it is the aggressor? That would mean that this is acceptable and not only for them," he said.

The EU earlier said it opposes removing oil sanctions on Russia to calm energy prices.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has insisted that Moscow will seize the rest of eastern Ukraine by force if talks to end the war fail.

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