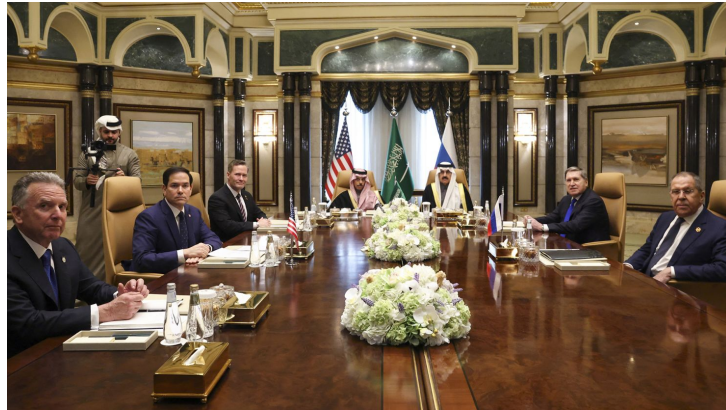

U.S. and Russia begin talks in Saudi Arabia to address Ukraine conflict



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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – Senior officials from the U.S. and Russia met in Riyadh on Tuesday to initiate talks aimed at improving bilateral relations and exploring potential pathways to end the ongoing war in Ukraine. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov led the closed-door discussions at Diriyah Palace, signaling a pivotal shift in U.S. policy toward Russia.

The meeting marked a new phase in President Trump's efforts to re-establish dialogue with Moscow, moving away from the previous strategy of isolating Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. A key outcome was the agreement to create a consultation mechanism to address issues in the U.S.-Russia relationship, including the re-staffing of embassies in Washington and Moscow. While Ukrainian officials were notably absent, U.S. spokesperson Tammy Bruce emphasized that both nations had agreed to work on a path to end the conflict in a manner that would be sustainable and acceptable to all sides. Despite Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's objections about his exclusion from talks, discussions are expected to involve the European Union and other key players at a later stage.

The meeting also underscored the importance of economic cooperation, with Russian businessman Kirill Dmitriev participating to discuss potential investment opportunities following a resolution to the war. This diplomatic engagement marks a significant shift in U.S.-Russian relations, highlighting Saudi Arabia's growing role as a mediator in global diplomacy.

As the war approaches its third year, concerns rise about Ukraine's ability to influence negotiations, with European powers and Ukraine's allies closely monitoring the discussions.