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Zelensky sees Path to Peace as Trump, Putin talks continue



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US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky held an hour-long phone conversation on Wednesday, which both leaders described as constructive. The call followed Trump's discussion with Russian President Vladimir Putin a day earlier, as efforts toward a ceasefire continue.

Trump, writing on Truth Social, said the talks aimed to align Ukraine and Russia "in terms of their requests and needs," while Zelensky called the discussion "positive" and "very substantive." He expressed optimism that a lasting peace could be achieved this year under US leadership.

Despite recent commitments from both Russia and Ukraine to halt attacks on energy infrastructure, both sides have since accused each other of continued strikes. Trump is advocating for a broader truce, but Putin rejected a US-Ukraine-backed 30-day ceasefire during their earlier call.

Following the conversation with Zelensky, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio revealed that Trump pledged to assist Ukraine in acquiring additional air defense systems, particularly from European partners. Both nations also agreed to enhance intelligence-sharing between their defense teams as battlefield conditions evolve.

Technical delegations from Ukraine and Russia are set to meet in Saudi Arabia in the coming days to discuss expanding the ceasefire to the Black Sea, which Rubio described as a crucial step toward ending the war.

Trump also floated the idea of the US taking ownership of Ukraine's power plants, arguing it would offer "the best protection" for the nation's energy infrastructure.

The diplomatic tone of the call contrasts with Zelensky's tense meeting at the White House in February, which led to a temporary suspension of US military aid and intelligence sharing.

However, relations improved in March, culminating in an agreed ceasefire.

While Putin has now agreed to halt Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities, he insisted a full ceasefire would only be possible if Ukraine's allies stopped supplying military aid—a demand Kyiv and its European partners have rejected.

Hours after the Trump-Zelensky call, fresh attacks occurred on both sides. Ukraine accused Russia of targeting hospitals, while a Ukrainian drone strike reportedly ignited a fire at an oil depot in Russia's Krasnodar region.

Despite ongoing hostilities, Kyiv and Moscow proceeded with a prisoner exchange on Wednesday, swapping 175 POWs each. Zelensky hailed the exchange as "one of the largest," noting Russia also

released 22 severely wounded Ukrainian soldiers