

Russia Ukraine Peace Talks End Without Major Breakthrough



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GENEVA, Feb. 18: Trilateral talks between Russia, Ukraine and the United States aimed at ending the war in Ukraine concluded without a major breakthrough after two days of negotiations, with both sides acknowledging persistent differences on key issues.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russia's chief negotiator Vladimir Medinsky described the discussions as difficult, while U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff had earlier expressed

cautious optimism. Ukrainian negotiator Rustem Umerov said the talks were “substantive and intensive,” noting limited progress on military matters such as front-line positioning and potential ceasefire monitoring mechanisms.

However, no agreement was reached on territorial questions, considered central to any ceasefire. Moscow maintains its demand for full control of the eastern Donbas region, encompassing Donetsk and Luhansk—a position Kyiv continues to reject as incompatible with Ukrainian sovereignty.

Zelensky accused Russia of attempting to prolong negotiations, while Medinsky said another meeting could take place soon. The sides last met in U.S.-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi in January, which resulted in a prisoner exchange, and officials indicated another swap may be under discussion.

Disagreement also persists over the status of the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe’s largest facility located on the front line. Ukraine seeks its return, while Russia has shown no readiness to relinquish control.

Officials from Britain, France, Germany and Italy held parallel consultations with Ukrainian representatives in Geneva. Zelensky stressed European participation would be indispensable to any final settlement as the war approaches its fourth anniversary next week.

