

# Trump and Putin Discuss Ukraine War in High-Stakes Call

*A telephone call between the two leaders was the latest chapter in a flurry of diplomatic maneuvering over ending the three-year conflict.*

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New York Times**

President Vladimir V. Putin revealed no breakthroughs after a two-hour call with President Trump on Monday, telling reporters that he was ready to negotiate a peace deal with Ukraine but repeating his demand for broad concessions before Russia stops fighting.

Mr. Putin said he had told Mr. Trump that Russia was “ready to work with the Ukrainian side on a memorandum on a possible future peace agreement.” Mr. Putin said the conversation, the third known call between the presidents since Mr. Trump returned to the White House in January, was “very meaningful and quite frank.”

But the Russian president made it clear that he was not budging from his basic resistance to an immediate cease-fire if it is not accompanied by concessions to Russia. At the end of his three-minute statement, Putin repeated his mantra that a peace deal needs to “remove the root causes of this crisis,” a reference to Russia’s demand for wide-ranging influence over Ukraine.

“Russia is also in favor of a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine crisis,” Mr. Putin said in his brief statement to reporters in Sochi, Russia. “We just need to identify the most effective ways of moving toward peace.”

Shortly after Mr. Putin’s statement, Mr. Trump offered a more optimistic take on the call in a social media post, saying it “went very well,” and that Russia and Ukraine would “immediately start negotiations toward a Ceasefire and, more importantly, an END to the War.”

Mr. Putin said his aides might disclose more details of the call later in the day. The Russian president spoke to reporters at a center for gifted children that he was visiting on Monday and where he held the call with Mr. Trump.

The call was highly anticipated, coming amid growing impatience in the Trump administration with Mr. Putin’s refusal to agree to an immediate cease-fire, despite Ukraine’s readiness to do so.

Mr. Trump took office in January promising to bring a swift end to fighting in Ukraine, but soon encountered the deep and seemingly irreconcilable differences between the warring countries. Mr. Trump has turned to a combination of threats and inducements — most of them unfulfilled — to get Russia and Ukraine stop fighting. But both sides believe that time is on their side.

In his dealings with Mr. Trump, Mr. Putin has tried to appease the U.S. president by appearing to negotiate peace, but without offering any meaningful concessions to Kyiv. Given his repeated claims that Russia has the means to obtain all its goals in the war, making concessions might risk making Mr. Putin look weak.

On Monday, Vice President JD Vance questioned Mr. Putin's position.

"I'm not sure that Vladimir Putin has a strategy himself for how to unwind the war," Mr. Vance told reporters on Air Force Two. "He's got a million men under arms; he's re-engineered his entire economy. What used to be manufacturing facilities making products for people to use in their civilian life, they're now making tank shells and artillery shells and drones."

The inherent contradictions of Mr. Putin's strategy were on display over the weekend. In an apparent show of strength, Russia unleashed deadly [drone strikes](#) on civilian targets in Ukraine on Saturday and Sunday, even though Mr. Trump has criticized such attacks as counterproductive.

On Saturday, Russian attacks killed at least 14 Ukrainian civilians. On Sunday, at least one civilian died after Russia targeted Kyiv with one of the [largest drone attacks](#) of the war.

Mr. Trump has not commented on the latest attacks. In late April, however, [he issued](#) a rare rebuke of Mr. Putin for launching a similar attack.

"I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing," Mr. Trump wrote. "Vladimir, STOP!"

Mr. Trump said in his post on Truth social that after speaking to Mr. Putin on Monday he subsequently spoke to President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine and his European allies.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer of Britain [said in a statement](#) that he spoke with leaders of the United States, Italy, France and Germany on Sunday night to discuss forcing Russia to accept an unconditional ceasefire, and the use of new sanctions "if Russia failed to engage seriously."

The phone calls come amid a series of high-wire diplomatic maneuvers by Ukraine and Russia that have raised hopes for a negotiated solution to a conflict that has killed or maimed more than a million soldiers. These efforts, however, have also exposed just how far apart the two sides remain.

On Friday in Istanbul, representatives from Russia and Ukraine met for the first direct talks in three years. In the brief meeting, the sides [agreed to the largest prisoner exchange](#) of the war, and to detail their conditions for a cease-fire.

On Sunday, Mr. Zelensky met in Rome with Mr. Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, after the three attended Pope Leo XIV's [inaugural Mass](#). The meeting was a win for Mr. Zelensky, who appeared to improve his relations with Mr. Vance after a [contentious White House meeting](#) in February.

Mr. Putin, has been flexing his own [diplomatic muscle](#) this month, in an apparent attempt to show Russia's growing alliances. He has hosted more than 20 heads of state, including the leaders of China and Brazil, for a military parade in Moscow. Since then, he has had a high number of meetings and phone calls with leaders of developing countries.

Ukraine and its European allies have been demanding that Russia accept an unconditional 30-day cease-fire before beginning peace negotiations. Mr. Putin has demanded the opposite, saying that negotiations over what he calls the "root causes" of the war must take place before his forces, who are on the offensive in Ukraine, lay down arms.

Mr. Trump in effect had sided with Mr. Putin. Last week he publicly told Mr. Zelensky to start talks with Russia, precipitating a series of events that led to the meeting in Istanbul.

The Kremlin doubled down on its insistence for negotiations before any cease-fire, hours before the call on Monday, tempering expectations of a breakthrough.

"There's meticulous and perhaps, in some areas, prolonged work ahead," Mr. Peskov told reporters, referring to a diplomatic solution to the war.

Mr. Vance suggested that Mr. Trump on Monday may offer Mr. Putin economic incentives to accept some concessions on Ukraine, and move the peace talks forward.

Mr. Trump also focused on trade after the call. "Russia wants to do largescale TRADE with the United States when this catastrophic 'bloodbath' is over, and I agree," he wrote on Truth Social. "There is a tremendous opportunity for Russia to create massive amounts of jobs and wealth. Its potential is UNLIMITED."

Mr. Putin has dangled potential business deals, including on energy and rare earths metals, as an enticement for dropping sanctions and normalizing the relationship between Russia and the United States. But the Trump administration has said that peace in Ukraine needs to come first.

"We realize there's a bit of an impasse here, and I think the president's going to say to President Putin, look, are you serious? Are you real about this?" Mr. Vance said on Air

Force Two, on his way back to Washington from Rome. “Look, there are a lot of economic benefits to thawing relations between Russia and the rest of the world, but you’re not going to get those benefits if you keep on killing a lot of innocent people.”