

**U.S. and Ukraine agree on proposal for 30-day ceasefire in war.  
As Russians consider proposal, Europeans discuss security guarantees**



American and Ukrainian negotiators at yesterday's talks in Jeddah.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, accompanied by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, met yesterday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia with Andriy Yermak, the Head of Ukraine's Presidential Office, Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, and Deputy Chief of Staff Pavlo Palisa and agreed on a 30-day ceasefire in the war in Ukraine, subject to Russia's acceptance. Rubio said the proposal will be delivered "directly to Russia through multiple channels." Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, who traveled to Jeddah on Monday, wasn't in the meeting but was of course involved in the discussions.

The text of the proposal agreed by the American and Ukrainian negotiators is as follows: "Today in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – under the gracious hospitality of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman – the United States and Ukraine took important steps toward restoring durable peace for Ukraine. Representatives of both nations praised the bravery of the Ukrainian people in defense of their nation and agreed that now is the time to begin a process toward lasting peace. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated the Ukrainian people's strong gratitude to President Trump, the U.S. Congress, and the people of the United States for making possible meaningful progress toward peace. Ukraine expressed readiness to accept the U.S. proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties, and which is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by the Russian Federation. The United States will communicate to Russia that Russian reciprocity is the key to achieving peace. The United States will immediately lift the pause on intelligence sharing and resume security assistance to Ukraine. The delegations also discussed the

importance of humanitarian relief efforts as part of the peace process, particularly during the above-mentioned ceasefire, including the exchange of prisoners of war, the release of civilian detainees, and the return of forcibly transferred Ukrainian children. Both delegations agreed to name their negotiating teams and immediately begin negotiations toward an enduring peace that provides for Ukraine's long-term security. The United States committed to discussing these specific proposals with representatives from Russia. The Ukrainian delegation reiterated that European partners shall be involved in the peace process. Lastly, both countries' presidents agreed to conclude as soon as possible a comprehensive agreement for developing Ukraine's critical mineral resources to expand Ukraine's economy and guarantee Ukraine's long-term prosperity and security."

In remarks to reporters following the meeting, Rubio said, "The offer is to stop the shooting. The goal here is, the only way out to end this war is to negotiate out of it. There's no military solution to this war. Before you can negotiate, you have to stop shooting at each other. And that's what President Trump has wanted to see, and that's the commitment we got today from the Ukrainian side, their willingness to do that, obviously. Our hope is that the Russians will say yes. The ball is now in their court." Zelenskyy said, "Ukraine accepts this proposal and considers it a positive step. We are ready to take this step, and the United States must now convince Russia to do the same. If Russia agrees, the ceasefire will take effect immediately. Ukraine is ready for peace. Now, Russia must decide whether it is ready to end or continue the war. It is time for complete honesty."

In an interview today in Ireland, Rubio was asked, "Sir, the Russians are still making gains on the battlefield. There's been no public response to the developments in Jeddah. Are you concerned they're playing for time? Have you had any contact with them? What's been their response officially and are they willing to accept the ceasefire unconditionally?" Rubio responded, "We don't know the answer to the last question. That's what we want to know, whether they're prepared to do it unconditionally. We'll have contact with them today. There's already been contacts and different levels with counterparts, different members of the administration, and that'll continue. But as far as the Russian reaction to it, that's really the question here... We're going to bring it to them directly. We're going to say that Ukraine is prepared to stop all battlefield activity and begin the immediate process of negotiating an enduring end to the war, and we'll see what their response is. If their response is yes, then we know we've made real progress and there's a real chance of peace. If their response is no, it'll be highly unfortunate, and it'd make their intentions clear. So that's what we're hoping to hear from them... And so we hope to have a positive answer from them. The ball is truly in their court."

Today Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said Russia has been studying the statements made after the talks in Jeddah and was waiting to hear from U.S. officials about the proposed ceasefire. When pressed by a reporter for details, he said the

Kremlin was awaiting details from Rubio and Waltz: “We expect, as was said yesterday in Jeddah, Secretary of State Rubio and National Security Adviser Waltz to inform us through various channels about the details of the negotiations and the understanding reached in the coming days. Rubio and Waltz said that they would pass on detailed information to us through various channels about the essence of the conversation that took place in Jeddah. First, we must receive this information.”

Yesterday, following the nine-plus hours of talks, Rubio said the ceasefire proposal would be presented to Russia after Ukraine agreed to the plan and immediate peace negotiations with Moscow. On Monday, it was reported that Witkoff, who met with Putin for more than three hours in February while negotiating the release of Marc Fogel, would travel to Moscow after the Jeddah meeting. Today a source indicated that he'll meet tomorrow with Putin. And yesterday, Trump said he'll talk with Putin later in the week about the proposed ceasefire.

Obviously, for Russia the major question in regard to the proposed ceasefire is whether the obvious advantages of a ceasefire – perhaps most notably, preventing further losses of troops, losses the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense estimates, as of today, at 889,000 killed or wounded and removed from battle – outweigh the failure thus far to take all of the territory of the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia that have been formally annexed and incorporated into the Russian Federation. But the obvious disadvantage, of course, is that Ukraine would presumably immediately invite a number of European states to provide the “reassurance force” that Prime Minister Starmer, President Macron, and other European leaders are now discussing as a way to prevent Russia from suddenly and unilaterally terminating the ceasefire and resuming its attacks in those regions. And that, of course, could put Russia in a situation, in the event it resumed the war, of attacking troops of one or more NATO member states, which could lead to the invocation of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, which states an attack on one is an attack on all.

Yesterday, in a meeting in Paris, President Macron called upon the military leaders of more than 30 countries – most of them from Europe and from countries that are NATO members – to draw up a plan “to define credible security guarantees” for Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire. Macron has said any European troops in Ukraine would be deployed only “once a peace deal is signed, to guarantee that it is fully respected.” Most of the military leaders came from European states and NATO members, but Australia, New Zealand and Japan were also represented. “This is the moment when Europe must throw its full weight behind Ukraine,” Macron said at the meeting. “In view of the acceleration of peace negotiations,” it was necessary to start planning to “define credible security guarantees” to make a lasting peace in Ukraine a reality. According to his office, the military leaders from European and NATO members, including the UK and Turkey, agreed that the security guarantees “should not be separated from NATO and its capabilities, should be credible and long-term, and should be accompanied by unfailing support for the Ukrainian army.” Today, the defense ministers of France, the

UK, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Ukraine met in Paris along with EU and NATO representatives to discuss, a French official said, the “necessary rearmament of Europe” and military support for Ukraine.

On March 2, Starmer, coordinating with Macron, hosted a summit meeting in London of European leaders and officials to discuss how to bring about an end to Russia’s war in Ukraine and guarantee Ukraine a lasting peace. The meeting was attended by Macron, Zelenskyy, and the leaders of Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Canada, and a number of other states as well as the foreign minister of Turkey, NATO Secretary General Rutte, European Commission President von der Leyen, and European Council President Costa. Following the meeting, Starmer said, “Together, we reaffirmed our determination to work for a permanent peace in Ukraine, in partnership with the U.S. Europe’s security is our responsibility above all.... We will work with President Trump to ensure a strong, just, and lasting peace that ensures Ukraine’s future sovereignty and security.... We have agreed that the UK, France, and others will work with Ukraine on a plan to stop the fighting which we will discuss further with the US and take forward together. We also agreed that Ukraine must have robust security arrangements in place at the time of any future peace deal so that Russia does not invade again....In addition, many of us expressed readiness to contribute to Ukraine’s security, including through a force consisting of European and other partners, and will intensify our planning. We will continue to work closely together to drive forward next steps and will take decisions in the coming weeks.”

On Saturday, Starmer will host virtual talks with the leaders of the countries that are willing to help support the ceasefire. Macron has said that any European troops would be deployed in Ukraine only once a peace deal is signed, to guarantee it is fully respected.

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