After Putin-Witkoff meeting, Putin & Trump may meet next week

President Putin and President Trump's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff in Moscow yesterday.

Yesterday, Steve Witkoff, President Trump's Special Envoy, met with President Putin in Moscow. After the meeting, which lasted three hours, Witkoff spoke with President Trump, who subsequently said the meeting was "highly productive." In a phone conversation with a number of European leaders, including President Zelenskyy, Trump said he would meet in person with Putin, possibly as soon as next week, and would later meet with both Putin and Zelenskyy. Subsequently, in an interview, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "An opportunity will present itself very soon for the president to meet both with President Putin and President Zelenskyy at some point here, hopefully in the near future." But, he added, "a lot has to happen before than can occur."

A brief summary of the Putin-Witkoff meeting was posted yesterday on Putin's presidential site by Yury Ushakov, his foreign policy advisor. Today a more extensive commentary by Ushakov was posted on the site. Most importantly, it notes that Witkoff had proposed, and there was a "principled agreement" to hold, a Trump-Putin meeting in the coming days: Here is the full commentary: "This meeting took place in a business-like atmosphere and was quite constructive. Both sides can be satisfied with the outcomes of this conversation. The discussion focused on matters dealing with future efforts to work together in the context of resolving the Ukraine crisis. Once again, it was noted that Russia-US relations could be placed on a totally different, mutually beneficial footing, which would be in stark contrast with the way these relations have evolved in recent years."

"Regarding the Ukraine agenda, at the proposal of the United States, there was a principled agreement to hold a top-level bilateral meeting in the coming days, which means a meeting between presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. Together with

our American colleagues, we are about to start working on the specific parameters of this meeting and its venue. Basically, the venue has also been coordinated, and we will communicate on this point a little later."

"As for the option of holding a trilateral meeting [i.e. a meeting of Presidents Putin, Trump, and Zelenskyy], which for some reason became a subject of speculation yesterday in Washington, the US representative simply mentioned it during the meeting at the Kremlin. However, there was no specific discussion on this topic. Russia has not commented on this option in any way. Our suggestion primarily focuses on preparing for a bilateral meeting with Donald Trump. It is our belief that ensuring this meeting is a success and yields tangible results is what matters most."

"Everyone already knows that Donald Trump spoke to several of his European partners on the phone to discuss these issues after Steve Witkoff reported back to him. It is worth noting in this regard that we have also been updating our close partners and friends through the relevant communication channels to inform them about the topics discussed during the meeting with Steve Witkoff."

"Next week was suggested as a possible timeframe [for holding the meeting], but since the effort to prepare for this important event is only just beginning for both parties, it is hard to say how long the preparations will take. That said, the option of holding this meeting sometime next week was on the table, and we hold quite a positive view in this regard."

Today, while walking in the Kremlin with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Putin was asked by a journalist, "Given the recent news about your upcoming meeting with President Trump, who initiated it?" Putin said, "Both sides expressed interest. At this point, who reached out first is no longer relevant." Another journalist asked, "Could you clarify please? Your Aide Yury Ushakov mentioned that the meeting will likely happen next week. Do you have any details on the location – even just a hint?" Putin said, "We have many friends willing to help organize such events. One of them is the President of the United Arab Emirates [standing beside him] …. The exact venue is still being decided, but the UAE would be one of the suitable options." Another journalist asked, "What about Zelenskyy? Will you be meeting with him?" Putin said, "I have said repeatedly that I have no objection to meeting with him in principle – it is possible. But certain conditions must be in place first. Unfortunately, we are still far from that point."

The last time the American and Russian Presidents met was more than four years ago, when Presidents Biden and Putin met in Geneva in June 2021. Hopefully, Presidents Trump and Putin will meet soon – perhaps next week – and take the important first steps toward ending the war.

David R. Cameron
August 7, 2025.