# Ukrainian, American & Russian officials meet again in Abu Dhabi

Ukrainian, American, and Russian officials Wednesday in Abu Dhabi.

Ukrainian, American, and Russian officials met again Wednesday and Thursday in Abu Dhabi to continue their discussion of the issues standing in the way of an agreement to end the war in Ukraine. The talks reportedly focused on the most contentious issues that had arisen in the previous bilateral and trilateral discussions – the provision of security guarantees for Ukraine after a ceasefire and, above all, the territorial issue, meaning Russia's insistence that it retain most if not all of the territory it holds in the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson, all of which have been formally annexed and incorporated into the Russian Federation, as was Crimea in 2014.

Last Saturday, the American delegation, consisting of Presidential envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, and Presidential advisor Josh Gruenbaum, met in Florida with Kirill Dmitriev, President Putin's Special Representative for Investment and Economic Co-operation with Foreign Countries and CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund. After the meeting, Witkoff said in a post on X, "Today in Florida, the Russian Special Envoy Kirill Dmitriev held productive and constructive meetings as part of the U.S. mediation effort toward advancing a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian conflict….We are encouraged by this meeting that Russia is working toward securing peace in Ukraine and is grateful for President Trump's critical leadership in seeking a durable and lasting peace."

The talks involving the American, Russian, and Ukrainian delegations had been expected to resume the next day in Abu Dhabi, but early Sunday morning President Zelenskyy said in a post on X they would instead resume there on Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 4-5: "Our negotiating team has just delivered a report. The dates for the next trilateral meetings

have been set – February 4 and 5 in Abu Dhabi. Ukraine is ready for a substantive discussion, and we are interested in ensuring that the outcome brings us closer to a real and dignified end to the war."

The talks took place as scheduled and lasted five and a half hours on Wednesday and three hours on Thursday. On Wednesday evening, Rustem Umerov, the Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council and the leader of the Ukrainian delegation, which also included Kyrylo Budanov, President Zelenskyy's chief of staff, said, "The discussions were substantive and productive, focusing on concrete steps and practical solutions." And on Thursday morning before the second day of talks began, Dmitriev said there had been "positive movement forward." After the talks on Thursday concluded, Budanov said the talks were "really constructive" and Witkoff likewise said they were "detailed and productive." Noting that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to another mutual return of prisoners of war, the first since early October, with each side returning 157 POWs, Witkoff said that "while significant work remains, steps like this demonstrate that sustained diplomatic engagement is delivering tangible results and advancing efforts to end the war in Ukraine. This outcome was achieved from peace talks that have been detailed and productive." He said the trilateral discussions will continue "with additional progress anticipated in the coming weeks."

But in the meantime, the war goes on and, as if to underscore that fact, on Monday night and Tuesday early morning, as the delegations prepared to meet the next day in Abu Dhabi, Russia conducted its largest drone and missile attack of the year against Ukraine. On Jan. 29, President Trump announced he had persuaded President Putin to stop the drone and missile attacks on Ukraine's power infrastructure. But the next day, Putin's Press Secretary, Dmitri Peskov, said that would apply only to Kyiv and only until Sunday, and on Monday night Russia fired 450 drones and 71 missiles, including 32 ballistic missiles, that hit electricity infrastructure, apartment buildings, and other civilian targets in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa and other cities. It was the largest attack of the year and it took place at a time when temperatures were below -10 degrees Fahrenheit in Kyiv. And lest there be any doubt that, notwithstanding the two days of talks in Abu Dhabi, the war continues with no end in sight, last night Russia fired 408 drones and 39 missiles at a number of cities in Ukraine, damaging or destroying important segments of the electricity infrastructure and many large apartment buildings in Kyiv and other cities from Dnipro in the east to Lviv in the west.

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