Talks of Ukrainian, American & Russian officials on hold. But Russia and Ukraine agree to an exchange of POWs

Ukrainian prisoners of war returning to Ukraine Thursday.

Last week Presidents Trump and Zelenskyy spoke by phone, after which Zelenskyy announced that Ukrainian officials would meet in Geneva with American presidential envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner and prepare for "the next meeting of the full negotiating teams in a trilateral format at the very beginning of March." Following that meeting, Zelenskyy said there was "already more readiness for the next trilateral format" and that the next round of talks involving the delegations of Ukrainian, American, and Russian officials would take place this week in Abu Dhabi.

But on Wednesday evening, Zelenskyy announced that, because of the ongoing war involving the U.S., Israel, and Iran, the talks are on hold.: "Right now, because of the situation around Iran, there are not yet the necessary signals for a trilateral meeting. But as soon as the security situation and the overall political context allow us to resume that trilateral diplomatic work, it will be done. Ukraine is ready for it." In the meantime, however, Russia and Ukraine agreed to each return 500 prisoners of war and did so – 200 on Thursday and 300 on Friday. U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff attributed the POW return to the "sustained and detailed peace discussions" in Geneva, thanked Switzerland for hosting the negotiations, and said, "Discussions remain ongoing, with additional progress anticipated in the weeks ahead." In the meantime, however, Russia's war against Ukraine continues with no end in sight.

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