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Zelenskyy Urges Direct Talks as Trump Sets August 8 Peace Deadline in Ukraine Conflict

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his call for direct negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, coinciding with former United States (US) President Donald Trump's declaration of an August 8 deadline to reach a peace agreement in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Trump's announcement was accompanied by a show of military strength, as he ordered the repositioning of US nuclear submarines in reaction to recent statements from a top Russian official.

Posting on the social media platform Truth Social on Friday, Trump said he had instructed the redeployment of two US nuclear submarines after what he called “highly provocative statements” made by Dmitry Medvedev, former Russian President and current Deputy Chairman of Russia’s Security Council. “Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences,” Trump warned. “I hope this will not be one of those instances.”

Later that day, Acting US Representative to the United Nations (UN), John Kelley, addressed the UN Security Council, reiterating the call for a ceasefire and peace agreement by Trump’s stated deadline. “President Trump has made clear this must be done by August 8. The United States is prepared to implement additional measures to secure peace,” Kelley stated.

He reaffirmed US support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and its right to self-defence, while making a clear distinction between legitimate international assistance to Ukraine and support being provided to Russia. Kelley urged all UN member states to cease military cooperation with Moscow, explicitly naming North Korea, Iran, and China. While China has not provided arms directly, Kelley identified the country as a “decisive enabler” due to its industrial support for Russia’s defence sector.

Despite these efforts, Russia has shown little sign of entering direct negotiations. The Russian Mission to the UN maintains that the Kremlin’s objective is not the destruction of Ukraine, but a future of cultural coexistence between the two nations. Nevertheless, actions on the ground suggest otherwise. In the early hours of Thursday, Russian forces carried out their deadliest air assault on Kyiv this year, launching over 300 drones and eight missiles. As reported by Reuters, 31 civilians were killed, including five children, the youngest just two years old. More than 150 people were injured, including 16 children.

With the August 8 deadline fast approaching, the global community remains focused on whether diplomacy can take hold or whether the conflict will continue to escalate.