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## Zelenskyy Renews Push for Direct Talks as Trump Sets 8 August Peace Deadline in Ukraine War

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has once again called for direct negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as former United States (US) President Donald Trump set a firm deadline of 8 August for a peace deal to be reached in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Trump's announcement was paired with a strong military signal, involving the repositioning of US nuclear submarines in response to provocative remarks by a senior Russian official.

In a post on Truth Social on Friday, Trump revealed he had ordered the redeployment of two US nuclear submarines following what he described as “highly provocative statements” by Dmitry Medvedev, the former Russian President and now Deputy Chairman of Russia’s Security Council. “Words are very important and can often lead to unintended consequences,” Trump cautioned. “I hope this will not be one of those instances.”

That same day, Acting US Representative to the United Nations (UN), John Kelley, addressed the UN Security Council and echoed Trump’s call for a ceasefire and peace agreement to be finalised by 8 August. “President Trump has made it clear that this must be accomplished by 8 August. The United States stands ready to take further action to help secure peace,” Kelley said.

Kelley reiterated Washington’s support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and its right to defend itself. He also differentiated between legitimate support for Ukraine and military backing provided to Russia, urging all UN member states to halt any defence cooperation with Moscow. North Korea, Iran, and China were explicitly named. While China has not supplied weapons directly, Kelley labelled it a “decisive enabler” of Russia’s war effort due to its provision of industrial supplies and materials to the Russian defence industry.

Despite these diplomatic overtures, Russia has shown little interest in entering direct peace talks. The Russian delegation at the UN continues to insist that Moscow is not seeking to destroy Ukraine but instead aims for peaceful coexistence between the two nations. However, recent developments on the ground paint a different picture. In the early hours of Thursday, Russian forces launched their deadliest airstrike on Kyiv so far this year, using more than 300 drones and eight missiles. According to Reuters, the attack killed 31 civilians, including five children, the youngest just two years old, and injured more than 150 people, including 16 children.

With the 8 August deadline drawing near, international attention is turning to whether these renewed diplomatic efforts will succeed or if further escalation is imminent.