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## Zelenskyy Calls for Direct Talks as Trump Sets August 8 Deadline for Ukraine Peace Deal

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called for direct negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as former United States (U.S.) President Donald Trump imposes a firm deadline of August 8 for a peace agreement to be reached in the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war. The diplomatic push comes as battlefield tensions continue to escalate.

On Friday, Trump announced on the social media platform *Truth Social* that he had ordered the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines in response to “highly provocative statements” made by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, now Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. “Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences,” Trump wrote. “I hope this will not be one of those instances.”

That same day, Acting U.S. Representative to the United Nations (UN), John Kelley, confirmed at a UN Security Council briefing that both Ukraine and Russia are expected to reach a ceasefire and peace agreement by August 8, as directed by Trump. “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.

Kelley reiterated America’s continued support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and right to self-defense, sharply contrasting this with rising military assistance to Russia from abroad. He urged all UN Member States to halt their support for Moscow’s war efforts and singled out North Korea, Iran, and China. Although China has not supplied arms directly, Kelley identified

Beijing as a “decisive enabler” due to its provision of industrial materials aiding Russia’s defense sector.

Despite mounting international pressure, Russia’s official position remains unchanged. The Russian Mission to the UN stated that it does not seek to destroy Ukraine but instead promotes cultural coexistence between Russian and Ukrainian communities. However, actions on the ground continue to contradict that claim. Early Thursday morning, Russian forces launched what has been described as the deadliest airstrike on Kyiv this year, deploying more than 300 drones and eight missiles. According to *Reuters*, the attack killed 31 people, including five children, one of them just two years old, and injured over 150 others, among them 16 children.

With the August 8 deadline fast approaching, the focus now shifts to whether diplomacy can prevail or if further military escalation is on the horizon.