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## Zelenskyy Seeks Direct Talks as Trump Urges Ukraine Peace Deal by 8 August

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeal for direct negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as former United States (US) President Donald Trump calls for a peace agreement to be reached by 8 August. The push comes amid rising tensions following a deadly Russian airstrike on Kyiv and a warning signal from Washington involving the redeployment of US nuclear submarines.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump announced the repositioning of two US nuclear submarines in response to what he described as “highly provocative statements” made by Dmitry

Medvedev, Russia's former president and current Deputy Chairman of its Security Council. "Words are very important and can often lead to unintended consequences," Trump wrote. "I hope this will not be one of those instances."

On the same day, Acting US Representative to the United Nations (UN), John Kelley, addressed the UN Security Council, backing Trump's peace deadline. "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 stated. He reaffirmed support for Ukraine's sovereignty and underscored the importance of distinguishing between support for Ukraine and assistance to Russia's military efforts.

Kelley also called on all UN member states to end military cooperation with Moscow, naming North Korea, Iran, and China specifically. While Beijing has not supplied weapons directly, Kelley described China as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war effort due to its continued provision of industrial goods and materials to the Russian defence sector.

Despite these diplomatic efforts, Russia has shown little interest in direct peace talks. The Russian delegation at the UN has continued to assert that its aim is not to destroy Ukraine, but to achieve peaceful coexistence. However, recent military activity suggests otherwise. In the early hours of Thursday, Russian forces carried out their deadliest airstrike on the Ukrainian capital so far this year, according to Reuters. More than 300 drones and eight missiles struck Kyiv, killing 31 civilians, including five children, and injuring over 150 people.

With Trump's proposed deadline fast approaching, global attention is focused on whether this latest diplomatic initiative will result in meaningful negotiations or signal a new escalation in the war.