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Zelenskyy Pushes for Direct Talks as Trump Imposes August 8 Deadline for Peace in Ukraine

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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 set a clear deadline for peace in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Trump's announcement was followed by a strategic military move involving the deployment of U.S. nuclear submarines in response to threatening remarks from a top Russian official.

On Friday, Trump stated via the social media platform Truth Social that he had ordered two U.S. nuclear submarines to be repositioned following what he described as “highly provocative statements” made by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who now serves as 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.”

The same day, Acting U.S. Representative to the United Nations (UN) John Kelley announced at a UN Security Council briefing that both Ukraine and Russia must work toward a ceasefire and lasting peace agreement by August 8, by Trump’s directive. “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 support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and defense, distinguishing it from international military assistance provided to Russia. He specifically called on all UN Member States to halt support for Russia’s war efforts and named North Korea, Iran, and China as contributing to Moscow’s military capabilities. While China has not supplied arms directly, Kelley identified Beijing as a “decisive enabler” due to its role in supplying industrial materials to Russia’s defense sector.

Despite diplomatic efforts, Russia appears resistant to peace negotiations. The Russian Mission to the UN maintained that the Kremlin does not seek to destroy Ukraine but instead hopes for cultural coexistence between Russian and Ukrainian communities. Yet, their actions on the ground tell a different story. In the early hours of Thursday, Russian forces launched a massive assault on Kyiv, deploying more than 300 drones and eight missiles, resulting in the deadliest airstrike of the year. According to Reuters, 31 people were killed, including five children, one of whom was just two years old. Over 150 others were injured, among them 16 children.

As the deadline approaches, international attention remains fixed on whether diplomatic negotiations can prevail or if further escalation is inevitable.