# Putin and US billionaire Steve Witkoff hold unusual peace talks amid Ukraine conflict



A series of recent meetings between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Steve Witkoff, a billionaire New York real estate developer and close associate of former US President Donald Trump, have attracted considerable attention in Moscow and beyond. These engagements represent an unconventional approach to high-level diplomacy between the United States and Russia, particularly in the context of attempts to negotiate peace amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The Kremlin released brief footage capturing the atmosphere at their latest meeting, showing a decidedly amicable encounter. Witkoff was visibly pleased to see Putin, greeting him warmly with the remark, "It's so good to see you." This marked their fourth meeting in just over two months—a frequency that has given Witkoff more face time with Putin than any other American figure in recent months. The dynamic at the negotiation table was notable: Putin was accompanied by several senior members of his team, including veteran foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov and Kirill Dmitriev, a special envoy for foreign investment, alongside an interpreter. Witkoff, meanwhile, was clearly outnumbered, accompanied only by a translator.

This unusual diplomatic arrangement highlights a departure from traditional statecraft, reflecting the unconventional style of both Putin and Trump. As reported by BBC Russia editor Steve Rosenberg, Witkoff’s role as a deal-maker resembles the transactional approach both men are known for professionally.

Following the latest talks, Yuri Ushakov addressed the media via a conference call, describing the discussions as "constructive and very useful." When questioned by Rosenberg about the main obstacles to achieving peace in Ukraine, Ushakov abruptly ended the call with the words, "Thank you. We'll end it there."

Despite the optimism suggested by official comments, numerous sticking points remain in negotiations. These issues include the extent of Ukrainian territorial concessions, the nature of security guarantees, the lifting of sanctions against Russia, and the sequencing of obligations—all of which have been subjects of various leaked peace proposals.

Notably, discussions have been overshadowed by violence. On the day Witkoff arrived in Moscow, a car bomb killed a senior Russian general, Yaroslav Moskalik, who was deputy head of the Main Operations Directorate of the Russian General Staff. The Kremlin accused Kyiv of orchestrating the assassination, a development signifying the intensification of the conflict and its proximity to the Russian capital.

Observers have expressed uncertainty regarding the ultimate outcome of the talks between Putin and Witkoff and whether they will lead to a resolution. Concerns have also been raised in Kyiv and Europe that crucial stakeholders were not directly engaged in these negotiations.

Nonetheless, the meetings underscore a shared intent between Putin and Trump to strengthen ties between Russia and the United States. This renewed focus on co-operation emerges amid the complex and ongoing efforts to address the situation in Ukraine, highlighting the evolving nature of international diplomacy in the current geopolitical landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://tass.com/politics/1949403> - This article confirms the meetings between Vladimir Putin and Steve Witkoff, highlighting their recent talks in the Kremlin. It also mentions the complexity of their discussions on Ukrainian settlement.
2. <https://abcnews.go.com/International/video/trump-envoy-putin-meet-potential-peace-talks-121178311> - This video report discusses the potential for peace talks in Ukraine facilitated by Steve Witkoff's meetings with Vladimir Putin. It emphasizes U.S. efforts to bring Ukrainian officials into the discussions.
3. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/04/25/us-envoy-witkoff-and-putin-discuss-direct-russia-ukraine-talks_6740629_4.html> - This article provides more details about the discussions between Witkoff and Putin, noting the timing and context of their meetings amid rising tensions in Ukraine.
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECokaLA15JM> - This YouTube video reports on Steve Witkoff's meeting with Vladimir Putin, focusing on the U.S.-brokered peace plan for Ukraine and the role of Trump's envoy in these negotiations.
5. <https://themoscowtimes.com/2025/04/25/us-envoy-witkoff-meets-putin-as-peace-talks-continue-a58317> - Unfortunately, this specific URL was not available in the search results. To provide an equivalent explanation, one could look for reports discussing recent peace initiatives involving the U.S. and Russia in the context of Ukraine.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-crisis-russia-putin-us-envoy-witkoff-2025-04-26> - Similarly, this URL was not directly available in the search results. However, it would ideally discuss the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the diplomatic efforts between Russia and the U.S., potentially involving Steve Witkoff.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0kxrlypg6vo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data