Kremlin readout from the Trump-Putin phone call

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Comment by Aide to the President Yury Ushakov following the telephone conversation between Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump

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Aide to the President Yury Ushakov: President Vladimir Putin has just finished his telephone conversation with President of the United States Donald Trump.

The conversation took place at the US President's initiative. The US President wished to discuss the current developments in the context of the Ukrainian conflict and its potential resolution with the President of Russia. President Trump wished to discuss these matters before his in-person meeting with Zelensky later today at Mar-a-Lago, Florida.

Logically, at the beginning of the conversation that continued for 1 hour and 15 minutes, the presidents exchanged warm Christmas and New Year greetings and, naturally, wished happiness to both nations. The rest of the conversation was similarly friendly, good-natured and business-like, with mutual interest in making progress towards a long-term resolution of the Ukrainian conflict.

Donald Trump paid close attention to Russia's assessment of the realistic prospects for an agreement, and to our President's detailed rationale for the fundamental importance of continuing to build upon the Russian-American understandings established during the Anchorage summit and the numerous subsequent contacts between the two administrations.

Most significantly, the Russian and US presidents share a broadly similar view that the temporary ceasefire proposed by Ukraine and Europe – under the pretext of preparing for a referendum or other such measures – would merely prolong the conflict and risk a renewed escalation on the battlefield. A definitive cessation of hostilities requires, first and foremost, a bold and responsible political decision from Kiev, one that aligns with the ongoing discussions through the Russian-American channel. Given the evolving situation on the front lines, it would be in the Ukrainian regime's interest to make such a decision regarding Donbass without further delay.

Donald Trump repeatedly emphasised the necessity of ending the war as swiftly as possible and spoke of the impressive prospects for economic cooperation between the United States and both Russia and Ukraine that would open up once the hostilities are over. He acknowledged that the Ukrainian crisis has been his most formidable foreign

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policy challenge, stating that he now saw renewed proof of Russia's commitment to a political and diplomatic settlement. It is with this understanding that he intends to frame his forthcoming negotiations with Zelensky.

It is particularly noteworthy that during today's conversation, the Russian President acceded to the American proposal to continue efforts to resolve the Ukrainian situation through two specially established working groups. One will address various security dimensions, and the other, economic matters. The terms for launching these working groups will be finalised in the near future, most likely in early January.

Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump agreed to speak again by telephone promptly after the US President's meeting with the Ukrainian delegation at Mar-a-Lago this evening.

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