Vladimir Putin comments on the Russia-Ukraine peace process

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Kirill Tokarev: Thank you very much.

Mr President, since we are talking about the APEC summit, allow me to briefly digress, with your permission, before we return to the economy, the revitalisation of the economic cycle, and so forth.

Last night (or, I am not sure, this morning, Moscow time) the President of the United States, Mr Trump, said he was ready to meet with you, for example, at the APEC summit, but only if a peace deal for Ukraine had been agreed. Meanwhile, you have previously said that the negotiation process, the peace process, is essentially frozen.

I won't even mention the "spirit of Anchorage"; it seems to have been completely buried. I don't know whether you agree with that or not, but behind the scenes, it is being discussed in precisely those terms. Russian assets around the world are under attack – even the Professor Molchanov, a Roshydromet vessel, a civilian ship, I believe, was detained – and so on.

In your opinion, is there even a minimal prospect of peace talks – constructive peace talks, not just empty ones – regarding the Ukrainian conflict at this time? Because the American side seems to be saying: we are ready, but only after everything has already been agreed by someone else, that is, without their involvement.

Mr Bessent also indicated that, from the American side, economic cooperation could only resume once an agreement on Ukraine had been reached. Is something possible now, right now?

Thank you.

Vladimir Putin: Is this the wrong approach? I believe it is the right one. Russia and Ukraine must first reach an agreement between themselves. All other countries, not just the United States, but also the countries represented here, are ready to support and assist. The People's Republic of China, for example, constantly brings this up and does everything it can to ensure that the problem is resolved, primarily by peaceful means. President Xi Jinping, whenever we meet, also consistently raises this issue.

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But first and foremost, this issue should be dealt with by the countries involved in the conflict, Russia and Ukraine. This is the right approach. But we are thankful to everyone who is trying to make a contribution to solving this issue.

Is there a chance? I believe that we do have a chance of finding a solution.

The hijacking of civilian ships, the attacks on civilian merchant vessels that you brought up – and, more importantly, the threats to attack civilian aircraft that we have now heard about – all of this is, of course, a manifestation of state terrorism, and it undoubtedly complicates the prospects for bilateral peace talks.

Incidentally, those who remain silent, those who ignore this – meaning primarily Ukraine's Western allies – are becoming accomplices to international terrorism. Well, how could it be otherwise? It cannot be interpreted in any other way.

As for our contacts with the US Administration, they are ongoing. We are in contact with the US Administration now, to this day. I hope these contacts will continue. We are committed to restoring full-fledged relations with the United States, but this does not depend solely on us; it also depends on the American side.

President Trump, as far as I understand, feel, and see, is committed to positive, constructive work. Everyone already knows about the contacts between intelligence agencies and the Administration representatives whom President Trump is appointing to continue the dialogue with Russia. It is all working. I hope it will ultimately lead to a positive outcome.

We have many friends in the United States. One of them in this room is Mr Steven Seagal – I trust you will give him a warm welcome. He is the best ambassador for peace – well-known worldwide not only as an actor but also as a great friend of Russia in our country.

Kirill Tokarev: I have never met Mr Seagal in the United States, but in the Far East, particularly in Vladivostok, for several years now he has been a regular part of our forum.

You mentioned earlier that you still have contacts in Ukraine. How constructive are they, and how much do they contribute to ending the conflict and moving towards a peace agreement?

Vladimir Putin: You know, it is difficult for me to say right now how much they actually contribute to a peace agreement, given the statements we have heard recently from Ukraine's top officials. But contacts are indeed maintained, and they continue – primarily through security services.

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