

Kuleba: We will never see Putin and Zelensky sitting at the same table

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Negotiations with Moscow are possible only if Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine, but they will not be held with Putin.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said this in an interview with Italian newspaper [Corriere della Sera](#), Ukrinform reports.

According to him, Ukraine will be able to negotiate with Moscow only after the invasion forces leave Ukrainian land, but negotiations will not be held with Putin.

"Putin is not a partner [for negotiations]. He has committed too many very serious crimes. There are other diplomatic ways to deal indirectly. But it is clear to us that we will never be able to see Putin and Zelensky sitting at the same table," Kuleba said.

Commenting on Putin's expectation that Donald Trump will win U.S. presidential elections, Kuleba said: "Putin has been counting on someone's elections since 2014, but the results have never helped him. I still think that the time factor is our ally for the simple fact that our military capabilities are growing, while Russia's are decreasing. However, we are counting on the fact that the war will end in our favor at some point."

"This objective can be achieved with a mixture of warfare and diplomacy. Our generals deal with the former, and their job is to push the Russians to retreat and understand that talking is better than fighting. I take care of diplomacy and dialogue when possible," the minister said.

Asked if it is possible to start negotiations before the complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine, Kuleba said that it depends on the circumstances.

"We don't take the word of the Russians, no sane person would believe it. Before reaching [a compromise on the talks] we would like to make sure that he is serious and not a feint and then come back to attack us. I understand these questions and their logic, but I can't give definite answers because they don't exist, the lives of millions of people are at stake," Kuleba said.

He also recalled that last year the Black Sea Grain Initiative was brokered by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Moscow did not comply with its terms.

"There had been two separate agreements with us and with Moscow, never a direct understanding. We need a certain creativity to find solutions. We will look for them by any means, but at the moment the conditions are not there: Russia continues to attack us, she prefers war to peace," the minister said.

Commenting on the ambiguity of China's approach to the war, the minister said that "it was essential that China was at the summit [in Saudi Arabia], present at a multilateral meeting in which the Ukrainian peace plan was discussed."

Oleksandr Panasiuk