

Germany's Scholz Speaks With Putin for First Time in Nearly 2 Years

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TOBIAS SCHWARZ / AFP

President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz spoke over the phone on Friday, Moscow and Berlin announced, coming at a moment of great uncertainty about the West's continued support of Ukraine.

Scholz [said](#) Sunday he was interested in talking with the Kremlin leader about possible solutions to end the war in Ukraine, which is nearing the third-year mark. The pair last spoke in December 2022, when the German chancellor urged Putin to withdraw his troops from Ukraine.

“The Chancellor urged Russia to be prepared to negotiate with Ukraine with the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace,” a German government spokesperson [said](#) in a written statement published Friday.

According to the spokesperson, Scholz notified Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before calling Putin and intended to call Zelensky again afterward.

Scholz was said to have reiterated Berlin's condemnation of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, called for the withdrawal of troops and emphasized "unwavering determination to support Ukraine in its defensive struggle against Russian aggression for as long as necessary."

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Russia's state-run news agency TASS, citing an anonymous German government official, [reported](#) that Scholz and Putin agreed to maintain contact with one another. Germany also plans to brief "allies and partners" on Scholz's talks with Putin, it added.

Later on Friday, the Kremlin confirmed that the phone call had taken place, [describing](#) it as "detailed and frank." Putin was said to have repeated his claims that NATO was to blame for the war in Ukraine, adding that Russia "remains open to resuming negotiations that were interrupted by the Kyiv regime."

He was also said to have spelled out Russia's "well-known" negotiating stance, including the country's security interests, its current positions on the front lines and "most importantly, eliminating the root causes of the conflict."

Putin lamented the "unprecedented all-around degradation" in Russian-German relations due to Berlin's "unfriendly course," the Kremlin said, adding that Moscow is ready for energy cooperation "if there is interest" from Berlin.

Russia and Germany plan to maintain contacts at lower levels, the Kremlin added.

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Friday's phone conversation comes at a precarious moment, both for the prospects of continued Western support for Ukraine and for the German chancellor's own political future. Scholz is grappling with a government crisis following last week's collapse of the German parliament's "traffic light coalition," and he faces a vote of confidence in mid-December.

Ukraine criticized Scholz's call to Putin, calling it an "attempt at appeasement."

Meanwhile, Donald Trump's historic re-election as president of the United States has raised concerns among Washington's European partners about whether the U.S. will maintain its leadership role in supporting Ukraine's defense against Russia's rapidly advancing forces.

Germany, Ukraine's second-largest supplier of military aid after the United States, has pledged continued support under Scholz's leadership.

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