

'In what capacity?' Putin puzzled as Zelensky invites outgoing PM May to chaperon their talks

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Russian President Vladimir Putin offered a tongue-in-cheek approval for a proposed multilateral meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky, but questioned his choice of the outgoing British PM as a participant.

On Monday, Zelensky's office released a [video address](#) to Putin, in which he claimed that the two leaders needed to talk in person. *"We do not change or reject any diplomatic format. We suggest talking. We need to have a talk, don't we?"* Zelensky said.

Putin, who was asked for a response during a press conference on Thursday, agreed that a meeting with Zelensky *"may be interesting,"* but chided the Ukrainian president over the list of proposed attendees. Zelensky wants the leaders of the US, the UK, Germany and France to chaperon him during the talks with Putin, and referred to them all by name in the address. The Russian leader said that the inclusion of the outgoing British Prime Minister Theresa May seemed strange to him.

*"As far as I know, in a couple of weeks she resigns from the office of the prime minister of Britain. In what capacity is she being invited to the meeting? It's not clear. Did she even agree to it or not?"* Putin remarked.

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The Russian president said that such details should be worked out before he and Zelensky could have a productive meeting. He expects that a serious, top-level Russian-Ukrainian summit will only be possible after snap parliamentary elections are held in Ukraine later this month, and the new legislature appoints a new government.

Putin and Zelensky have been trading rhetorical barbs through the media for months. The Ukrainian leader draws on his artistic talent and sense of comedy for inspiration, while his Russian opponent has the benefit of decades of experience as a world leader in his armory.

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