Trump commends Zelensky ahead of White House talks



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US President Donald Trump has said he has a "lot of respect" for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, on the eve of their talks at the White House. if he would apologise for recently calling him a "dictator", he said he could not believe he had said this. He also called Zelensky "very brave".

Trump was speaking after talks with UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer about ending the war between Ukraine and Russia.He predicted a "very good meeting" with Zelensky on Friday, saying efforts to achieve peace were "moving along pretty rapidly".This week's meetings come after the Trump administration shocked its Western partners by holding the first high-level US talks with Moscow since Russia invaded Ukraine just over three years ago.

America's new president had appeared to blame Zelensky for the war and chided him for not starting peace talks earlier.You've been there for three years," he had said last Tuesday. "You should have ended it... You should have never started it. You could have made a deal."But this Thursday, speaking after meeting Sir Keir, Trump told reporters asking about his forthcoming talks with Zelensky: "I think we're going to have a very good meeting tomorrow morning. We're going to get along really well."Zelensky will be hoping to win some kind of security guarantees for his country that would underpin any peace deal that may be negotiated.

Asked about these on Thursday, Trump only said he was "open to many things" but he wanted to get Russia and Ukraine to agree a deal before deciding what measures might be put in place to enforce it.On his visit on Friday, Zelensky is expected to sign a deal that will give the US access to Ukraine's rare earth mineral resources.Trump suggested that the presence of US mining concerns in Ukraine would act as a deterrent against future Russian attacks on Ukraine.

"It's a backstop, you could say," he said on Thursday. "I don't think anybody's going to play around if we're there with a lot of workers and having to do with rare earths and other things which we need for our country."