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putin has dashed global hopes for reviving the Ukraine grain deal. This is why it matters

путін розбив глобальні сподівання на поновлення зернової угоди з Україною. Ось чому це важливо

Президент Туреччини Р. Т. Ердоган зустрівся із в. путіним, сподіваючись переконати російського лідера приєднатися до угоди, яка дозволяє Україні безпечно експортувати зерно. Але путін дав зрозуміти, що зараз ініціативу не відновлять, заявивши, що Захід має спочатку задовольнити його вимоги щодо сприяння російському сільськогосподарському експорту. Міністерка закордонних справ Німеччини Анналена Бербок відреагувала на відмову президента РФ відновити "зернову угоду", заявивши що гра путіна із зерновою угодою цинічна. Генеральний секретар ООН Антоніо Гутерреш направив міністру закордонних справ росії с. лаврову конкретні пропозиції, однак лавров заявив, що москва не задоволена цим листом.

<https://nationalpost.com/pmnl/news-pmnl/whats-at-stake-when-turkeys-leader-meets-putin-in-a-bid-to-reestablish-the-black-sea-grain-deal>

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Vladimir Putin on Monday, hoping to persuade the Russian leader to rejoin a deal allowing Ukraine to safely export grain. Moscow withdrew from the agreement in July. But Putin made it clear that the initiative would not be restored right now.

Here's what's at stake:

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS?

Putin poured cold water over hopes for a revival of the grain initiative, saying the West must first meet its demands on facilitating Russian agricultural exports.

The West has dismissed those complaints before and said there is nothing stopping those exports.

WHY DID RUSSIA LEAVE THE GRAIN DEAL?

The Kremlin refused to renew the grain agreement when it expired in July, claiming that a parallel deal promising to remove obstacles to Russian exports of food and fertilizer had not been honored.

Moscow complained that restrictions on shipping and insurance hampered its agricultural trade, even though it has shipped record amounts of wheat since last year. Some companies have been wary of doing business with Russia because of sanctions, though Western countries have made assurances that Russian food and fertilizer exports are exempt.

The original deal — brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July 2022 — allowed nearly 33 million metric tons (36 million tons) of grain and other commodities to leave three Ukrainian ports safely despite Russia's war.

WHY IS TURKEY A BROKER?

Putin and Erdogan — both authoritarian leaders who have been in power for more than two decades — are said to have fostered a close rapport in the wake of a failed coup against Erdogan in 2016, when Putin was the first major leader to offer his support.

The Turkish president has maintained those close ties during the 18-month war. Turkey hasn't joined Western sanctions against Russia following its invasion, emerging as a main trading partner and logistical hub for Russia's overseas trade.

At the same time, NATO member Turkey has also supported Ukraine, sending arms, meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and backing Kyiv's bid to join the Western alliance.

Since Putin withdrew from the initiative, Erdogan has repeatedly pledged to renew arrangements that helped avoid a food crisis in parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Ukraine and Russia are major suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other goods that developing nations rely on.

RUSSIA-TURKEY TIES HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN ROSY

Traditional rivals, Turkey and Russia have been on opposing sides in conflicts in Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite that, relations between the countries in fields such as energy, defense, diplomacy, tourism and trade have flourished.

But since Erdogan's reelection in May, Putin has faced domestic challenges that may make him appear a less reliable partner, most notably following the short-lived armed rebellion by late mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin in June.

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Erdogan angered Moscow in July when he allowed five Ukrainian commanders to return home. The soldiers had been captured by Russia and handed over to Turkey on condition they remain there for the duration of the war.

COULD A BREAKTHROUGH STILL COME?

Erdogan said Turkey and the United Nations had prepared a new package of proposals.

"We believe that we will reach a solution that will meet the expectations in a short time," Erdogan said following Monday's talks in Russian resort of Sochi.

Putin also held out hope the deal could be renewed — if its demands were met.

But earlier, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock lashed out, saying Putin's "game with the grain agreement is cynical."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently sent Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov "concrete proposals" aimed at getting Russian exports to global markets and allowing the resumption of the Black Sea initiative. But Lavrov said Moscow was not satisfied with the letter.

Morton reported from London. Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed to this report.