



Russian Diplomats Issue Dire Warnings that War with US Is Close

Description

The Kremlin's top diplomat has warned that Western involvement in Ukraine is nearing "the point of no return," accusing the United States and the NATO bloc of attempting to transform the country into a "Russophobic military stronghold." Meanwhile, Moscow's UN envoy declared that all of Russia's "red lines" have already been crossed.

Addressing lawmakers at Russia's State Duma on Wednesday, **Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** outlined the causes of the current conflict in Ukraine and the deterioration of US-Russia relations, saying Washington has a "maniacal desire to revive the neo-colonial unipolar world order."

"An integral part of this policy is the long-term containment of Russia, including through the expansion of NATO towards our borders, as well as the transformation of fraternal Ukraine into a Russophobic military stronghold," he [said](#). "In recent years, this line of Washington and its European satellites has reached the point of no return."

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Washington and several other Western states gave assurances to Moscow that the NATO alliance would not expand beyond Germany. However, in the years since, **Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump** have each allowed new members to join the alliance, all of them inching closer to Russia's borders.

Starting in 2008, NATO has repeatedly declared its intention to someday allow Ukraine to become a member, again reiterating that pledge at a recent alliance summit. The move would cross the "brightest of all red lines" for Moscow, as was previously noted by then-State Department official and current CIA **Director William Burns**, who penned a 2008 memo warning of the geopolitical perils of extending membership to Kiev.

Still, **President Joe Biden** has refused to change course, insisting it is up to Ukraine whether it would like to join the US-led military bloc while effectively making Kiev a de facto member in the meantime.

In an interview with Newsweek on Tuesday, Russia's UN envoy **Dmitry Polyanskiy** argued that the West has not respected Moscow's core security concerns, and has become directly involved in the conflict in Ukraine.

"All the red lines have already been crossed by Western countries. There is already semi-direct involvement of NATO in the conflict because it's not only weaponry but it's intelligence," he said. "It's the situation when the targets of certain artillery systems, in particular HIMARS, these targets can be hit only with the coordination with Washington."

Last week, the Washington Post reported that Ukraine relies on American intelligence for selecting targets. Since the start of the year, the White House has authorized the shipment of main battle tanks and long-range rockets to Kiev. Additionally, NATO appears to be preparing to send Western-made warplanes to Ukraine.

"It means that NATO is not only providing weapons but also are choosing the targets for Ukrainian strikes," Polyanskiy continued.

He went on to allege that citizens from NATO countries are already fighting – as well as getting captured and killed – in Ukraine.

"We know this from the people that we capture and from the bodies that we see on the battlefield."

The ambassador said Western weapons would only escalate the conflict, even warning that foreign intervention could eventually trigger a nuclear war.

"It's absolutely clear that any deliveries of weapons to the zone of conflict, of course, is like pouring oil into the fire," he said, adding "If you are dealing with a nuclear power and if you are citing the goal of inflicting defeat to this nuclear power, you should have all the options in mind of our possible response."

In their remarks, both diplomats also pointed to potential American involvement in the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines. Last week, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh published a bombshell report claiming that Washington planned to bomb the pipelines. The White House has denied that it had any part sabotaging the line, though Senator Mike Lee later acknowledged that it was possible.

On Wednesday, Polyanskiy said that Moscow requested a UN meeting next week to address Hersh's reporting.

Lavrov rejected denials from the Biden administration, saying the West is "lying, hiding the truth about the terrorist attacks on the Nord Stream and Nord Stream-2 gas pipelines, just as they lied about the Minsk agreements."

Former German **Chancellor Angela Merkel** [claimed](#) the Minsk agreement, which ostensibly was meant to end the civil war in Ukraine, was really intended to give Kiev time to build up its military. In a December 1 interview with Der Spiegel, Merkel said that she believes that during the Minsk talks, she was able to buy the time Ukraine needed to better fend off a Russian attack.

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Kyle Anzalone and Will Porter host Conflicts of Interest along with Connor Freeman.

Featured image: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin are seen during a meeting with Germany's foreign minister in Moscow, Russia, March 23, 2016. (Credit: Kremlin)

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