



Russian FM: West directly involved in Ukraine conflict

Description

Sergey Lavrov slams the West for expecting the entire world to live by the “rules of liberal democracy” and for its “reckless enlargement of NATO”.



Russian foreign minister says Moscow’s strikes on key Ukrainian infrastructure are intended to derail the shipments of Western weapons.
(Reuters)

Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has accused the West of becoming directly involved in the conflict in Ukraine by supplying it with weapons and training its soldiers.

“You shouldn’t say that the US and NATO aren’t taking part in this war, you are directly participating in it,” Lavrov said in a video call with reporters on Thursday.

“And not just by providing weapons but also by training personnel. You are training their military on your territory, on the territories of Britain, Germany, Italy and other countries.”

The Russian foreign minister further said Moscow’s strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities and other key infrastructure that have left millions without power, heating and water were intended to weaken Ukraine’s military potential and derail the shipments of Western weapons.

He added that the barrage of Russian missile strikes was intended to “knock out energy facilities that allow you to keep pumping deadly weapons into Ukraine in order to kill the Russians”.

“The infrastructure that is targeted by those attacks is used to ensure the combat potential of the Ukrainian armed forces and the nationalist battalions,” Lavrov said.

Ukraine and the West have been accusing Russia of targeting key civilian infrastructure in order to reduce morale and force Ukraine into peace talks on Moscow’s conditions.

Lavrov, meanwhile, insisted that Moscow remains open for talks on ending the conflict. “We never

asked for talks but always said that we are ready to listen to those who are interested in a negotiated settlement,” Lavrov said.

‘Reckless enlargement of NATO’

The Russian foreign minister also slammed the West for expecting the entire world to live by the “rules of liberal democracy” and for its “reckless enlargement of NATO”.

Lavrov spoke on Thursday ahead of the annual meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council held in Lodz, Poland this year.

At the start of a news conference in Russia, he accused the West of hindering Russia’s influence in Europe and elsewhere, citing the “reckless expansion” of NATO as evidence.

“16 countries were members of NATO in 1991, now there are 30, with Sweden and Finland on the brink,” Lavrov said.

“They want to keep Russians out of Europe, they have the whole Europe under their control,” he added, saying the West was counting on Russia to not regain its position in Europe or in the world.

He said that big problems had accumulated in the OSCE, accusing the US of spurning the chance to make it a real bridge with Russia after the Cold War.

“Taking advantage of its numerical superiority in this organisation, the West has been trying for many years to, if you like, privatise it,” Lavrov said.

“Or perhaps it’s more correct to say it is trying to carry out a takeover raid on the OSCE, to subjugate this last platform for regional dialogue,” Lavrov added.

Russia’s OSCE membership

The OSCE session brings together foreign ministers of 57 participating states to review and assess the organisation’s activities and strengthen the dialogue on security issues.

On Wednesday, OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid said in a tweet that the organisation “kept delivering on a range of topics throughout our region & is back in Ukraine to support the country & its people”.

However, last week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called into question Russia’s continued membership in the OSCE given Moscow’s attacks on his country.

“We see various international platforms finding the necessary solutions to help stop Russian terror, isolate the terrorist state as much as possible, and find a way out of the brutal global crises created by Russia,” Zelenskyy said.

“But why is there still no OSCE among these platforms? Why, in particular, is a terrorist state — even after nine months of its continuous crimes — still a member of your Parliamentary Assembly?”

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