



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on April 20, 2024

Russia Says Kyiv Regime Untrustworthy, no Ceasefire in Ukraine

On April 19, during an interview with Russian radio stations Sputnik, Komsomolskaya Pravda, and Govorit Moskva, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that his country had no plans to end tensions with Ukraine even if both sides come to the negotiation table, as Kyiv has proven itself to be untrustworthy.

“As [Russian] President [Vladimir Putin] constantly reminds us, we always prefer negotiations to fights and wars,” Lavrov said.

“We have said that we are ready for the negotiations, but — unlike the Istanbul story — we will not make any pauses in the fighting during the negotiations. The process must go on,” Russia’s top diplomat added, referring to the April 2022 Istanbul peace talks.

Moreover, Lavrov pointed out that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s ban on talking with the present Moscow leadership was a key barrier to any peace process with Ukraine, alluding to a decree that Zelensky signed in 2022 that prohibited the Kyiv government from engaging in any talks with Putin.

Furthermore, battlefield realities have altered “significantly” since the Istanbul negotiations took place, and “those realities must be taken into account,” Lavrov noted.

Regarding changing realities on the ground, news outlet Russia Today (RT) [reported](#) that Russian forces have recently been making military progress against Ukraine. Also, the People’s Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, and the Kherson and Zaporozhye Regions, opted to join Russia following referendums in the fall of 2022.

“Everybody should understand this very well,” Lavrov underscored, adding that it is “absolutely clear” to Moscow that Kyiv and the West “do not understand this and ... are not even ready to look for any hypothetical compromises.”

“We are absolutely convinced that we need to continue the special military operation,” Lavrov elaborated, as [cited](#) by Sputnik News. Lavrov then added that Russia is treating Ukraine as such due to the perceived threat Ukraine poses to Russia and Russia’s lack of trust in the current Kyiv regime.



AP Images
Sergey Lavrov



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Besides, Russia's top diplomat noted that the [so-called "Zelensky Formula"](#) cannot be a basis for tackling the Russia-Ukraine conflict as it ignores Russia's demands as part of the peace process.

Zelensky's "peace formula" namely calls for Russia to back out from all territories claimed by Kyiv and pay reparations. To boot, Zelensky also urged for a [war crimes tribunal](#) to be set up to prosecute the current Moscow leadership.

"Ukraine has been working ... for the creation of an international special tribunal which will try all the top leaders of the Russian Federation for the military aggression against our state," said Andriy Yermak, head of Zelensky's Cabinet in 2022, according to Reuters reports.

In light of Ukraine's demands, Lavrov indicated that "this means that we should not start with the 'Zelensky Formula' at all, it should be completely put aside.... If they want, as the president said, let's discuss the principles on which we are ready to negotiate." Previously, Lavrov also slammed Zelensky's so-called "peace formula" as an ["ultimatum"](#) that had no room for alternative solutions.

In the same interview on April 19, Lavrov also [divulged](#) some details about Russia's Istanbul agreement with Ukraine. In a post on X, Sputnik News reported:

Lavrov added that the agreements stated that any foreign military bases were not to be deployed in Ukraine. "It was said that there would be no military maneuvers, exercises of armed forces with the participation of third countries in Ukraine, except in cases when all guarantor countries agree: including us, including China," Russia's foreign minister said.

Elaborating, Lavrov stated that the security guarantees detailed in the Istanbul agreements were "extremely serious" and were almost equivalent to [Article 5](#) of the North Atlantic Treaty, which obliges each member state to regard an attack on another member state as an attack upon all member states.

"Ultimately, we were ready to accommodate the Ukrainian delegation's aspiration that these guarantees were to be extremely serious. The fifth article of the Washington Treaty, which pertains to the [establishment of NATO](#), was considered the limit of seriousness," Lavrov admitted.

Nevertheless, Lavrov posited that at the eleventh hour, Kyiv opted to make "minor" changes to the section of the Istanbul deal regarding military exercises with foreign participation, implying that the peace process might have been sabotaged. In Lavrov's words:

"For example: 'the prohibition of military exercises involving armed forces of third countries' except if all guarantors agree,' let's replace it with 'except in cases when the majority of guarantors agree.' That's all. It was such a signal that either they were already prohibited overnight, or someone said, 'Let's mess with these Russians some more.'"

In February this year, Russian ambassador to the U.K. Andrei Kelin [reiterated](#) that former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had derailed a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine in March 2022 at the behest of the United States.

At that time, Kelin disclosed to Turkish broadcaster TRT World that Johnson "blocked the peace efforts with Washington's blessing."

During an [interview](#) with former Fox New host Tucker Carlson earlier this year, Putin outlined Moscow's plans to revert to the 2022 Istanbul agreements, according to present ground realities.



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Earlier this month, news outlet RT [reported](#) Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko as saying that it was pointless for Russia to sign a peace deal with Zelensky, as the Ukrainian leader's term was nearly over.

"A situation may arise when Putin says: 'Guys, who should we sign an agreement with?' The powers of the president of Ukraine have expired," Lukashenko said, adding, "Today we will sign with him, let's say, some kind of agreement, tomorrow you will come to power, become president, you won't like it.... You will discard this: it was signed by an illegitimate president, and I don't condone this at all, the new president will say."



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