



13.11.2025 00:21

№ 1901-13-11-2025

**Responses by Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, to questions from the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, which the newspaper refused to publish in full without cuts or censorship, Moscow, November 13, 2025**

**Question:** It has been reported that Vladimir Putin's next meeting with Donald Trump in Budapest did not happen because even the US Administration realised that you are not ready for talks on Ukraine. What went wrong after the Anchorage summit that inspired hope for the launch of a genuine peace process? Why does Russia remain adherent to the demands that Vladimir Putin put forward in June 2024 and on what issues could you make a compromise?

**Sergey Lavrov:** The understandings reached in Anchorage was an important milestone in the search for a long-term peace in Ukraine through overcoming the consequences of the violent anti-constitutional state coup in Kiev organised by the Obama administration in February 2014. The understandings are based on the existing reality and closely bound to the conditions of just and lasting resolution of the Ukrainian crisis proposed by President Putin in June 2024. As far as we know, those conditions were heard and received, including publicly, by the Trump administration – mainly the condition that it is unacceptable to drag Ukraine into NATO to create strategic military threats to Russia directly on its borders. Washington also openly admitted that it will not be able to ignore the territorial issue following the referendums in Russia's five historical regions whose residents unambiguously chose self-determination apart from the Kiev regime that labelled them as “sub-humans,” “creatures,” and “terrorists,” and chose reunification with Russia.

The American concept that, at the US President's instruction, his Special Envoy Steve Witkoff brought to Moscow the week before the Alaska summit was also built around the issues of security and territorial reality. President Putin told

Donald Trump in Anchorage that we agreed to use this concept as a basis while proposing a specific step that opens a way for its practical implementation.

The US leader said that he should consult with his allies; however, after the meeting with his allies that took place in Washington the next day, we did not receive a reaction to our positive response to the proposals that Steve Witkoff delivered to Moscow before Alaska. No reaction was communicated during my meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio in September in New York when I reminded him that we were still expecting it. To help our American colleagues decide on their own concept, we set forth the Alaska understandings in a non-paper and delivered it to Washington. Several days later, at Trump's request, he and Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation and reached a preliminary agreement to meet in Budapest after thorough preparations for this summit. There was no doubt that they would discuss the understandings in Anchorage. After a few days, I spoke with Marco Rubio over the phone. Washington described the conversation as constructive (it was indeed constructive and useful) and announced that, after that telephone conversation, an in-person meeting between the Secretary of State and the Russian Foreign Minister in preparation for the top-level meeting was unnecessary. Who and how submitted covert reports to the American leader after which he either postponed or cancelled the Budapest summit, I do not know. But I have described the general timeline strictly based on the facts for which I am responsible. I am not going to take responsibility for bluntly fake news about Russia's lack of readiness for talks or sabotaging the outcomes of the Anchorage meeting. Please speak to The Financial Times that, as far as I know, planted this misleading version of what happened, distorting the sequence of events, to put the blame on Moscow and lead Donald Trump off the road he suggested – a road to a lasting steady peace rather than the immediate ceasefire where Zelensky's European masters are pulling him due to their own obsessive intention to get a repose and inject the Nazi regime with more weapons to continue the war against Russia. If even the BBC produced a fake video that featured Trump calling for assaulting the Capitol, The Financial Times is capable of something similar. In Russia, we say, "they would not scruple to tell a lie." We are still ready to hold another Russia-US summit in Budapest if it is genuinely based on the well-elaborated outcomes of the Alaska summit. The date is not set yet. Russia-US contacts continue.

**Question:** Units of the Russian Armed Forces are currently controlling less territory than in 2022, several weeks into what you call a special military operation.

If you are truly prevailing why can't you deliver a decisive strike? Could you also explain why you are not publicising official losses?

**Sergey Lavrov:** The special military operation is not a war for territories but an operation to save lives of millions of people who have lived on those territories for centuries and whom the Kiev junta seeks to eradicate – legally, by prohibiting their history, language and culture, and physically, by using Western weapons. Another important goal of the special military operation is to ensure Russia's security and to undermine the plans of NATO and the EU to create a hostile puppet state at our western borders that, by law and in reality, relies on Nazi ideology. It is not the first time we have stopped fascist and Nazi aggressors. That happened during World War II and it will happen again.

Unlike Westerners who have wiped out entire neighbourhoods, we are sparing people – both civilians and military personnel. Our armed forces are acting extremely responsibly and delivering high-precision strikes exclusively at military targets and associated transport and energy infrastructure.

It is not customary to publicise battlefield losses. I can only say that this year, Russia has transferred over 9,000 bodies of Ukrainian personnel in repatriation. We have received 143 bodies of our fighters from Ukraine. You can come to your own conclusions.

**Question:** Your appearance at the Anchorage summit in a sweatshirt saying "USSR" raised many questions. Some regarded it as a confirmation of your ambition to recreate, if possible, the former Soviet space (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, the Baltic countries), if not to restore the USSR. Was that a coded message or just a joke?

**Sergey Lavrov:** I am proud of my country where I was born and raised, got a decent education, started and continued my diplomatic career. As is well known, Russia is the successor to the USSR, and in general, our country and civilisation dates back a thousand years. The Novgorod Veche emerged long before the West started playing democracy. By the way, I also have a T-shirt with the national coat of arms of the Russian Empire but it does not mean that we want to restore it. One of our greatest assets, of which we are rightly proud, is the continuity of developing and strengthening our state throughout its great history of uniting and consolidating Russian and all other peoples of the country. President Putin recently highlighted that in his remarks on National Unity Day. So, please do not look for any political

signals in this. Maybe the feeling of patriotism and loyalty to one's Motherland is fading away in the West but to us, it is part of our genetic code.

**Question:** If one of the goals of the special military operation was to return Ukraine under Russian influence, as, for example, it may seem based on your demand to be able to determine the number of its armaments, don't you think that the current armed conflict, whatever the outcome, gives Kiev a very specific international role and identity that is increasingly distant from Moscow?

**Sergey Lavrov:** The goals of the special military operation were determined by President Putin in 2022 and remain relevant to this day. It is not about spheres of influence but about Ukraine's return to a neutral, non-aligning and non-nuclear status, and strict observance of the human rights and all the rights of the Russian and other national minorities – this is how these obligations were stipulated by Ukraine's Declaration of Independence of 1990 and in its Constitution, and it was precisely in view of these declared obligations that Russia recognised the independence of the Ukrainian state. We are seeking and we will achieve the return of Ukraine to the healthy and stable origins of its statehood, which implies that Ukraine will no longer subserviently offer its territory to NATO for military development (as well as to the European Union, which is quickly turning into a military block of similarly aggressive military bloc), sweep out the Nazi ideology prohibited in Nuremberg, return of all their rights to the Russians, Hungarians and other national minorities. It is indicative that, while dragging the Kiev regime into the EU, the Brussels elites remain silent about the outrageous discrimination of “non-indigenous ethnicities” (as Kiev contemptuously calls Russians who have lived in Ukraine for centuries) and praise Zelensky's junta for defending “European values.” This is just another proof that Nazism is resurging in Europe. It is something to think about, especially after Germany and Italy together with Japan recently began to vote against the General Assembly's annual resolution on the unacceptability of glorifying Nazism.

The Western governments do not hide the fact that in reality, they are waging a proxy war against Russia through Ukraine and this war will not be finished even “after the current crisis.” NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Brussels bureaucrats Ursula von der Leyen and Kaja Kallas, and US President's Special Envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg have spoken about it on many occasions. It is evident that Russia's determination to protect itself from

the threats created by the West using the regime under its control, is legitimate and reasonable.

**Question:** The US also supplies weapons to Ukraine, and there was a recent discussion on the possibility of delivering Tomahawk cruise missiles to Kiev. Why do you hold different views and assessments of the US' and Europe's policy?

**Sergey Lavrov:** Most of the European capitals currently make up the core of the so called "coalition of the willing" whose sole desire is to keep hostilities in Ukraine running for as long as possible. Apparently, they have no other way of distracting their voters from sharply deteriorating domestic socioeconomic problems. They sponsor the terrorist regime in Kiev using European taxpayers' money and supply weapons which are used as part of a consistent effort to kill civilians in Russian regions and Ukrainians who are trying to flee the war and the Nazi henchmen. They undermine any peace efforts and refuse to have direct contacts with Moscow; they impose more and more sanctions that have a boomerang effect for their economies; they are openly preparing Europe for a new big war against Russia and are trying to talk Washington into rejecting an honest and fair settlement.

Their key objective is to compromise the position of the current US administration that has from the outset advocated dialogue, looked into Russia's position and showed willingness to seek a lasting peace. Donald Trump repeatedly said in public that one of the reasons for Russia's action was NATO's expansion and the advancement of the alliance's infrastructure to our country's borders. That is what President Putin and Russia have been warning against for the past twenty years. We hope that common sense prevails in Washington, that it will hold onto its principled position, and will refrain from actions which can propel the conflict to the next level of escalation.

With all that in view, whether the weapons are coming from Europe or the US makes no difference for our military, and they immediately destroy all military targets.

**Question:** You were the one who pressed the "reset" button together with Hillary Clinton, even if the events then took a different turn. Can relations with Europe be reset? Can common security serve as a platform for improving the current relations?

**Sergey Lavrov:** The confrontation which has arisen from the European elites' thoughtless and stillborn policy is not Russia's choice. The present situation does

not meet our people's interests. We would like to see the awareness of such a disastrous policy sink in with European governments most of whom are pursuing a rabid anti-Russia agenda. Europe already waged wars [against us] under Napoleon's flags, and last century also under the Hitler's Nazi banners and colours. Some European leaders have a very short memory. When this Russophobic obsession – I am at a loss for a better phrase for that – fades away, we will be open for contacts, ready to hear if our former partners are going to do business with us further. And then we will decide if there are prospects for building fair and honest ties.

The West's efforts have totally discredited and dismantled the Euro-Atlantic security system in its pre-2022 form. In that regard, President Putin came up with an initiative to set up a new architecture of equal and indivisible security in Eurasia. It is open for all the nations of the continent including its European part, but it requires a polite behaviour devoid of neo-colonial arrogance, on the basis of equality, mutual respect and balance of interests.

**Question:** The armed conflict in Ukraine and the subsequent international isolation of Russia might have made it impossible for you to act more effectively in other crisis areas, such as the Middle East. Is that so?

**Sergey Lavrov:** If the "historical West" decided to fence itself off from someone, it is called self-isolation. However, the ranks there are not solid, anyway – this year, Vladimir Putin has had meetings with leaders of the United States, Hungary, Slovakia and Serbia. Clearly, today's world cannot be reduced to the Western minority. That is an age gone by since multipolarity emerged. Our relations with the Global South and Global East nations – which make up 85 percent of the Earth's population – keep progressing. In September, the Russian President paid a state visit to China. In the past few months alone, Vladimir Putin took part in the SCO, BRICS, CIS, and Russia-Central Asia summits, whereas our high-level government delegations attended the APEC and ASEAN summits and are now preparing for the G20 summit. Summits and ministerial meetings in the Russia – Africa and Russia – Gulf Cooperation Council formats are held regularly. The Global Majority countries are guided by their core national interests rather than instructions from their former colonial powers.

Our Arab friends appreciate Russia's constructive participation in settling regional conflicts in the Middle East. Ongoing discussions at the UN on the Palestine problem confirm that capabilities of all influential external actors must be

pooled together, otherwise nothing lasting will come out save for colourful ceremonies. We also share close or convergent positions with our Middle East friends which facilitates our interaction at the UN and within other multilateral platforms.

**Question:** Do you not think that in the new multipolar world order that you promote and support, Russia has become more dependent on China economically and militarily, which created an imbalance in your historical alliance with Beijing?

**Sergey Lavrov:** We do not “promote” a multipolar world order as its emergence results from an objective process. Instead of conquest, enslavement, subjugation or exploitation, which was how the colonial powers built their order and went on to bring about capitalism, this process implies cooperation, taking into account each other’s interests, and ensuring the smart division of labour based on the comparative competitive advantages of the participating countries and integration structures.

As for Russia-China relations, this is not an alliance in the traditional sense of the word, but rather an effective and advanced form of interaction. Our cooperation does not imply creating any blocs and does not target any third countries. It is quite common for Cold War-era alliances to consist of those who lead and those who are led, but these categories are irrelevant in our case. Therefore, speculating about any kind of imbalance would be inappropriate.

Moscow and Beijing have built their ties on an equal footing and made them self-sufficient. They did so based on their mutual trust and support, which are rooted in many centuries of neighbourly relations. Russia reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs.

Russia-China cooperation in trade, investment, and technology has benefited both countries and fosters steady and sustainable economic growth, while also improving the wellbeing of our people. As for the close military-to-military ties, they ensure that we complement each other, enabling our countries to assert their national interests in terms of global security and strategic stability while also effectively countering conventional and new challenges and threats.

**Question:** Italy carries the label of an unfriendly country, as you have said so many times, including in November 2024. You made a special point about it. However, in recent months the Italian government has been demonstrating its solidarity with the US administration, even on the Ukraine topic, while Vladimir Putin used the word partner to refer to the United States, even if he did not go as far

as call it an ally. Considering the appointment of a new ambassador to Moscow, there are reasons to believe that Rome is seeking some kind of a rapprochement. How would you assess the level of our bilateral relations?

**Sergey Lavrov:** For Russia, there are no unfriendly nations or people, but there are countries with unfriendly governments. And since this is the case for Rome, the relations between Russia and Italy are going through the most serious crisis in post-war history. We were not the ones who got the ball rolling. The ease and swiftness with which Italy joined those who placed their bets on inflicting what they called a strategic defeat on Russia, and the fact that Italy's actions run counter to its national interests, really surprised us. So far, we have not seen any meaningful moves to change this aggressive approach. Rome persists in providing its all-round support to the neo-Nazis in Kiev. Its resolute effort to sever all cultural ties and civil society contacts is equally perplexing. The Italian authorities have been cancelling performances by outstanding Russian orchestra conductors and opera singers, and have been refusing to authorise the Verona Dialogue on Eurasian cooperation for several years now, despite the fact that it was established in Italy. Italians have a reputation of art lovers who are open to promoting people-to-people ties, but these actions seem quite unnatural for them.

At the same time, there are quite a few people in Italy who are seeking to get to the bottom of what caused the Ukrainian tragedy. For example, Eliseo Bertolasi, a prominent Italian civil activist, presented documentary evidence of the way in which the authorities in Kiev have been violating international law in his book *The Conflict in Ukraine Through the Eyes of an Italian Journalist*. I would like to recommend you that you read this book. In fact, finding truth about Ukraine in Europe has been quite a daunting task these days.

The people of both Russia and Italy stand to benefit from equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries. If Rome is ready to move towards restoring dialogue based on mutual trust and taking into consideration each other's interests, they must send us a signal since we are always ready to hear what you have to say, including your ambassador.



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