

Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov on Iran, Syria and North Korea

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Sergei Lavrov / Russian Foreign Ministry / Flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [held](#) his annual foreign policy news conference on Monday, speaking for two-and-a-half hours about issues ranging from the Iran nuclear deal to the war in Ukraine and Russia's gas pipelines to Europe.

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Here is a selection of Lavrov's comments:

— On the Iran nuclear deal

“We will not support what the United States is trying to do, changing the wording of the

agreement, incorporating things that will be absolutely unacceptable for Iran."

– On Russia's relations with the United States

"We aren't [throwing](#) ourselves heedlessly into 'a tooth for a tooth, eye for an eye [situation]' but "it is impossible not to react to all those absolutely unlawful actions."

– Does Lavrov ever [wish](#) it were Hillary Clinton in the White House, instead of Donald Trump?

"Diplomats only work with facts."

– On Russia's response to the seizure of Russia's San Francisco consulate

"We are now launching legal proceedings. Preparatory work has already been completed."

– On U.S. plans to [create](#) a border security zone in Syria

"This is a very serious issue, which provokes concerns that a course for the partitioning of Syria has been taken."

– On Ukraine and the Budapest Memorandum

If Western countries had focused on the Minsk accords to secure peace in Ukraine "the Ukrainian crisis would have long ago been settled."

"The only specific requirement in this memorandum was for Russia, the United States and Britain not to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine."

– On Russian military casualties in Ukraine and Russian citizens missing there

"The military often [investigates](#) these cases."

– On Russian mercenaries

"I [think](#) that a legal basis is necessary so that these people are also in a legal sphere and protected."

– On Vancouver talks on North Korea (Russia was not invited)

"With all respect to those who initiated them, I don't expect anything productive to result [from the talks.] If only nothing counterproductive comes out of them, that would already be good, but it's difficult to believe in that."

– On granting WikiLeaks' leader Julian Assange asylum in Russia

"We [treat](#) these issues from a humanitarian point of view... the same was true with [Edward] Snowden. But I cannot comment on Assange, he isn't in Russia."

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