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Kremlin Says Open to Working With Britain Over 'Tragic' Ex-Spy Incident

By Reuters

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Sergei Karpukhin / Reuters

The Kremlin said on Tuesday it was ready to cooperate if Britain asks it for help investigating an incident involving a former Russian double agent who fell ill after exposure to an unknown substance.

Sergei Skripal, once a colonel in Russia's GRU military intelligence service, was critically ill in hospital on Tuesday after he was exposed to an unidentified substance in southern England.

"Nobody has approached us with such a request," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a conference call with reporters, when asked if the British authorities had been in touch seeking help. "Moscow is always open for cooperation."

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When asked to respond to British media speculation that Russia had poisoned Skripal, Peskov said: "It didn’t take them long."

Calling the incident "a tragic situation," he said the Kremlin did not have information about what had happened.

"We don’t have information about what the reason (for the incident) could be, what this person was doing, and what it could be linked to," said Peskov.

He said he did not know whether Skripal was still formally a Russian national.

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