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Putin Apologizes to Serbian Leader for 'Basic Instinct' Post

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Maria Zakharova appeared to walk back her controversial social media post on Sunday. **Alexander Shcherbak/TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov have apologized to Serbia's president for a social media post by Russia's diplomatic spokeswoman that appeared to mock him.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova sparked a rare spat between the allies when she posted a photo of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic in the White House alongside a screengrab of the famous leg-crossing scene from the 1992 thriller "Basic Instinct." Vucic told Serbian television, according to the Russian state-run RIA Novosti news agency, that both Putin and Lavrov spoke with him following the incident this week.

"President Putin has never apologized to me for anything, and neither has Sergei Lavrov. But both did" after the scandal, Vucic said.

"I didn't even mention it and would have never mentioned it as a well-mannered person," he

added.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed Vucic's words to RIA Novosti.

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The image of Vucic that Zakharova posted depicts him sitting opposite U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House last Friday, where he attended a U.S.-brokered signing ceremony normalizing economic relations with Serbia's former province of Kosovo.

Zakharova appeared to walk back her comments Sunday, saying in an updated Facebook post that her comments were misinterpreted. The post still contains the original image.

Later this week, Serbia dropped out of planned "Slavic Brotherhood 2020" military drills with Russia in Belarus after pressure from the European Union, where Belgrade seeks membership. Serbia said it would suspend military drills with all partners for six months.

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