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Russia Sends Security Proposals to U.S. as Ukraine Tensions Soar

December 15, 2021



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (L) and Russian presidential aide Yury Ushakov. **Mikhail Metzel / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin said Russia has sent the United States its proposals on mutual security guarantees amid high tensions between the countries over Ukraine, Interfax reported Wednesday.

Russia's Foreign Ministry passed the offer to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karen Donfried, who is in Moscow after visiting Kiev amid fears of Russia invading Ukraine.

Putin reiterated his request to "immediately launch negotiations" with the U.S. and NATO on international legal guarantees for Russia's security. Putin previously informed his Finnish counterpart of the offer.

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“The president expressed hope that the Americans and NATO members will respond positively to this,” Interfax quoted Putin’s senior foreign policy aide Yury Ushakov as saying.

Putin’s demands include stopping NATO from expanding east, including closing Ukraine's door to membership, and halting its deployment of weapons in neighboring states.

Ushakov said Putin informed Chinese President Xi Jinping of the U.S. and NATO security guarantee proposal during virtual talks Wednesday.

“The Chinese president stressed that he [...] fully supports our initiative to develop appropriate security guarantees for Russia,” Interfax quoted him as saying.

Putin’s aide added that the Russian leader agreed to keep Xi informed “about how negotiations develop on this matter with American and NATO partners.”

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has previously warned that Moscow could act militarily if the talks it demands do not materialize.

U.S. President Joe Biden last week warned Putin of "sanctions like he's never seen" should the Russian troops massed on the Ukrainian border launch an attack.

Putin denies planning an invasion, blaming the Western security alliance for the rise in tensions and demanding "legal guarantees" the alliance won't expand eastward.

Putin also accuses the West of provoking tensions in the Black Sea, decrying U.S.-led military exercises there.

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