

Russia Expects Security Talks With U.S., NATO in January

By [AFP](#)

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Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. [MFA Russia / flickr \(CC BY-NC-SA 2.0\)](#)

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday he expects negotiations with the United States on Moscow's security demands to begin in January, with concerns mounting over the Ukraine conflict.

His comments come after the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried told reporters Tuesday she also understands talks with Russia will begin January, warning some Russian proposals were "unacceptable."

Moscow presented the West with sweeping security demands in two draft documents last week, one addressed to the NATO and another to the United States.

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"It has been agreed that at the very beginning of next year, the first round (of talks) should be bilateral contact between our negotiators and American ones," Lavrov said in an interview with Russian state-funded news network, RT.

Lavrov said plans were in place for those talks to be followed by negotiations between Russia and NATO, saying "we also want to do this in January."

On Wednesday the European Union appealed to the U.S. and NATO to defend its interests, saying in a statement: "Today, Europe's security is under threat."

Later, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and EU High Representative Josep Borrell spoke to discuss Russia's proposals.

"They agreed that any discussion about European security will happen in coordination and with participation of the European Union," Brussels said in a statement.

Lavrov had cautioned the United States against dragging out any negotiations and reiterated that although Russia did not want conflict it was prepared to take steps to defend itself.

"We hope that no one else views conflicts as a desirable scenario. We will toughly ensure our security by those means that we deem appropriate," Lavrov told a panel of RT journalists.

Russia has been accused by the West of plotting an invasion of Ukraine. It denies the claims and in turn has demanded legal guarantees over its security from the United States and NATO, demanding the alliance stop an eastward expansion.

Last week, Moscow presented its demands to the United States and NATO, saying the alliance must not admit new members or establish military bases in ex-Soviet countries.

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