

NATO-Russia Council – What Was Discussed

January 13, 2022



(L-R) U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko, Russian Deputy Defence Minister Colonel General Alexander Fomin attend the NATO-Russia Council at the Alliance's headquarters in Brussels. **Olivier Hoslet / EPA / Pool / TASS**

Russia and NATO met for the first time in more than two years Wednesday in a week of high-level negotiations to address Moscow's security demands and try to forestall what the West says is a Russian offensive in Ukraine.

Here's what we know about the NATO-Russia Council talks in Brussels:

'No positive agenda'

– NATO rejected Russia's demand for a new security settlement in Europe, challenging President Vladimir Putin to withdraw troops deployed near Ukraine and join talks on reducing the threat of open conflict.

- The Western allies received no promise that Russia will stand down its forces — which Moscow insists pose no threat to its already partially occupied neighbor — despite the threat of economic sanctions.

Related article: [NATO and Russia Lay Out Stark Differences on Ukraine Crisis](#)

- Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said the “frank, direct, deep, intense” talks revealed “a large number of differences on fundamental issues.”
- He said that Russia and NATO had no “positive agenda — none at all” and warned that the continued deterioration could lead to the “most unpredictable and most dire consequences for European security.”

Arms control

- Grushko told reporters that Russia was ready for dialogue on not deploying intermediate-range missiles in Europe, mutual limits on military exercises and ways to prevent accidental encounters.
- He pointed out that the confidence-building measures are included in Russia’s sweeping list of demands and proposals that forced Western allies to meet Russian envoys this week.
- “The Russian side has repeatedly offered the alliance to take measures to de-escalate the situation. The Russian initiatives have been ignored by [NATO’s] side. This creates conditions for incidents and conflicts and undermines the foundations of security,” the Defense Ministry [said](#) in a statement published by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Ukraine

- Grushko called on NATO to stop sending military aid and arms supplies to Kyiv to de-escalate the current tensions. He maintained that Moscow’s proposals, where a ban on Ukraine’s future NATO membership is a central tenet, could in fact improve security of both Russia and NATO members.
- In response to NATO’s rejection of Russia’s demand to veto Ukraine’s membership aspirations, Grushko said that “the freedom to choose ways of ensuring one’s security mustn’t be implemented in a way that infringes on legitimate security interests of others.”

Future talks

- NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said “both Russia and NATO allies expressed the need to resume dialogue and to explore a schedule of future meetings.”
- He said the U.S.-led alliance was ready to reopen its missions in Moscow four months after Russia suspended them in retaliation to NATO’s expulsion of Russian envoys over spying accusations.

Putin invite

– NATO invited the Russian envoys to return to Moscow and to advise Putin to join them for a series of confidence-building talks on limiting provocative military exercises, arms control and reciprocal limits on deploying missiles.

– Stoltenberg said Russia's envoys did not reject the offer.

“Russia was not in a position to agree on that proposal..., but the Russian representatives made it clear that they needed some time to come back to NATO with an answer.”

AFP contributed reporting.

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