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Russian Diplomat Praises Rappers Ye, Oxxxymiron as U.S. Security Talks Fall Short

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Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. **Eloi Rouyer / AFP**

Will hip-hop actually save the world?

A senior Russian diplomat hinted that it might as well as he sang the praises of Kanye West, known simply as Ye, and the influential Russian rapper Oxxxymiron.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov divulged his musical tastes at the end of a week of security talks with the United States, NATO and Europe's top security body OSCE that ultimately fell short of resolving deep-rooted geopolitical tensions.

"If Oxxxymiron's rap could be layered on Mr. West's music, that would probably be good," Ryabkov said in an interview with the Russian-language international broadcaster RTVI on Thursday.

"Oxxxymiron's lyrics are amazing in their depth, in my view they're better listened to and

studied without the musical background," he elaborated.

"And Mr. Ye — he was always experimenting with music," the Russian diplomat added. "Even now, there's harmony in his compositions, if you remove some aspects of modern processing... If you listen to Mr. West abstractly, there are some things you can play on the balalaika, the piano and the harp."

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> One other unexpected bit of news from this Ryabkov interview: turns out he is a huge fan of Lady Gaga, Russian rapper @norimyxxxo, and Kanye West, who he refers to as "Mister Ye" in a detailed discussion of his work pic.twitter.com/p8Ex8G8E9F
>
> — max seddon (@maxseddon) January 13, 2022

TikTok users immediately took up the challenge and created a mashup of Oxxxymiron's lyrics and Ye's music.

In the RTVI interview, Ryabkov also revealed that his favorite artist was Lady Gaga.

"I think she is unique in every way — as a composer, as a singer, and as an actress," he gushed.

Ryabkov's unexpected appreciation for popular music follows the footsteps of former Kremlin aide Vladislav Surkov, who has openly shared his affinity for the poetry of the late rapper Tupac.

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But the pop culture digression did not distract from the bleak reality that Russia and the West remained at odds over European security.

Following three sessions with the U.S., NATO and the OSCE in three European capitals, Ryabkov told RTVI he sees no reason to "gather again and start the same discussions." He did not rule out Moscow sending troops to Cuba and Venezuela in response to what the Kremlin perceives as the U.S. threatening its security with troops and missiles near Russian borders.

The United States and NATO rejected Moscow's demands to withdraw their troops from Eastern Europe and for ex-Soviet Ukraine and Georgia never to be admitted into the U.S.-led military alliance.

The West has warned that an estimated 100,000 Russian troops and equipment amassed at the border with Ukraine signaled an "imminent" invasion, which the Kremlin denies.

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