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Russia Says Ultimatums, Threats on Ukraine Are 'Road to Nowhere'

By AFP

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **MFA Russia / flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday that Western threats towards Moscow would do nothing to ease tensions over Ukraine.

"Ideological approaches, ultimatums, threats — this is the road to nowhere," Lavrov said at the start of talks with his British counterpart Liz Truss in Moscow.

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The talks between Lavrov and Truss in Moscow Thursday are the latest round of diplomatic meetings aimed at de-escalating tensions over Ukraine.

Western leaders have accused Russia of massing troops around the borders of their ex-Soviet ally in advance of a possible invasion.

Lavrov accused diplomats in European capitals and Washington of increasingly using threats and ultimatums with Russia and said the approach was undiplomatic.

Lavrov described his meeting with Truss — the first visit of a British foreign secretary to Russia since 2017 — as "unprecedented."

He said that if Britain wants to improve ties with Moscow, "we will, of course, reciprocate," adding that bilateral ties were "at their lowest point in recent years."

The meeting in Moscow comes ahead of another between Britain's Defense Secretary Ben Wallace and his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu in Moscow on Friday.

In her opening remarks, Truss said Britain "cannot ignore" the buildup of troops on Ukraine's border or "attempts to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty."

"There is an alternative route, a diplomatic route that avoids conflict and bloodshed," she said.

"I am here to urge Russia to take that path," Truss added.

The visit by Truss to Moscow is the latest in a flurry of diplomatic efforts from the West this week to prevent a Russian invasion into Ukraine.

Leaders in Western capitals have been warning that Russia is preparing to escalate the conflict after a build-up of some 100,000 troops around its ex-Soviet neighbor.

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