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Putin, Scholz Begin Talks in Moscow Over Ukraine Security

By AFP

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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday traveled to Kyiv, where he vowed that Berlin and its Western allies would maintain support for Ukraine's security and independence and urged Russia to take up "offers of dialogue." **Kay Nietfeld / dpa/picture-alliance / TASS**

Talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz began in Moscow Tuesday, the latest meeting in weeks of diplomatic efforts to defuse tensions over Ukraine.

"Unfortunately, we will devote a significant portion of our time to issues related to the situation in Europe and to security," including Ukraine, Putin said during opening remarks at the beginning of the talks.

Scholz's meeting with Putin comes a day after he traveled to Kyiv to shore up support for Ukraine during talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

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The meeting also follows a visit to Russia from French President Emmanuel Macron last week.

"It's clear that we now have to talk about the difficult situation regarding security in Europe," the German leader said at the onset of talks with Putin.

The Russian president said that energy issues would also be on the agenda.

Western countries have warned Moscow that they could impose sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 — a controversial pipeline set to double supplies of Russian gas to Europe — if Russia attacks Ukraine.

The Kremlin earlier Tuesday confirmed a pullback of some Russian forces from Ukraine's borders but said the move was planned and stressed Russia would continue to move troops across the country as it saw fit.

Western countries for weeks have been sounding the alarm over a build-up of Russian troops around Ukraine and a potential invasion, saying any military action would be met with sweeping economic penalties.

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