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Russia's Top Diplomat Scraps Serbia Visit After Neighbors Close Airspace

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The Spokeswoman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova. **Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to Serbia has been scrapped after neighboring countries closed their airspace, his spokeswoman confirmed late Sunday.

Serbian media reported earlier that Bulgaria, Montenegro and North Macedonia had not granted clearance to Lavrov's flight over their territories.

"Just an hour ago the countries surrounding Serbia closed the natural air channel for Sergei Lavrov's plane, which was bound for Serbia," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Italian television.

"The Russian delegation was supposed to hold talks in Belgrade, and the EU and NATO member states closed its airspace," Zakharova said.

An unnamed Russian Foreign Ministry source said earlier that Lavrov's trip to Serbia has been

canceled due to the flight ban.

“Our diplomacy has not yet mastered the art of teleportation yet,” the official told Interfax.

Western countries have imposed sanctions on Lavrov with dozens of high-profile Russian officials and imposed flight bans for Russian aircraft over the invasion of Ukraine.

Serbia, a European Union candidate that maintains close cultural ties to Russia and depends on Russian oil, gas and weapons, has refused to join Western sanctions over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

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