The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Top Russia Diplomat in China for Official Visit

By AFP

April 08, 2024

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov arriving in Beijing on Monday morning. **Russian Foreign Ministry / Telegram**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was in China for an official visit on Monday, his ministry said, with the two countries looking to strengthen diplomatic ties as Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds on.

Moscow's Foreign Ministry announced Lavrov had touched down in Beijing in a post on X, formerly Twitter, on Monday morning.

He will spend two days in Beijing and meet with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, according to a previous readout from the ministry.

"An in-depth exchange of points of view is expected on a certain number of 'burning subjects'," the statement said, citing "the Ukrainian crisis and the situation in the Asia-

Pacific region."

The ministry added that the two men would "discuss a wide range of questions linked to bilateral cooperation, as well as cooperation on the international scene."

Lavrov last visited Beijing in October for an international forum on Chinese President Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Related article: As Putin Leaves China Empty-Handed, Russian Propaganda Hails 'Triumph Over the West'

China and Russia have deepened diplomacy in recent years, using their burgeoning bonhomie as a counterweight to the U.S.-led West.

Beijing has also become Moscow's leading trade partner in the last two years as the latter has come under tighter Western sanctions for its invasion of its neighbor Ukraine.

Western nations regularly urge China to wield its influence over Russia to bring about peace in Ukraine, but Beijing insists it is a neutral party.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters in Brussels last week that "China continues to provide materials to support Russia's defense industrial base."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who is wrapping up a visit to China on Monday, said she had warned officials of the consequences of supporting Russia's military procurement.

"China is not the creator of nor a party to the Ukraine crisis, and we have not and will not do anything to seek profit from it," foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a regular news conference on Monday.

Beijing would "continue to promote peace talks in our own way (and) maintain communication with relevant parties including Russia and Ukraine," she said.

Mao added that China had "always controlled" exports of dual-use items whose military applications are alleged to have assisted Russian troops.

"Relevant countries should not smear and attack the normal state-to-state relations between China and Russia... let alone shift the blame onto China and provoke bloc confrontation," she said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/04/08/top-russia-diplomat-in-china-for-official-visit-a84761