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Russia Says West Wants Ukraine Ceasefire To Rearm Kyiv

By AFP

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Olaf Scholz and Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. **president.gov.ua**

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday accused Western countries of wanting a ceasefire in Ukraine so they could rearm Kyiv with advanced weapons.

Talk of negotiations for a ceasefire or peace deal in the three-year conflict has come to the fore following Donald Trump's victory in last month's U.S. presidential election.

The West is "starting to talk about a ceasefire as a means to give Ukraine a respite, and give themselves the opportunity to once again pump Ukraine up with modern long-range weapons," Lavrov said during a meeting in Moscow with his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjarto.

"This, of course, is not a path to peace," he added.

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Lavrov was speaking as German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was on a surprise visit to Kyiv, where he held talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Scholz became the first major Western leader to hold direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in more than a year last month, in which he urged the Kremlin to be open to striking a deal with Kyiv.

Putin has publicly demanded that Ukraine cede swathes of territory across its east and south as a precondition to halting the fighting.

Zelensky has repeatedly ruled out giving up land for peace throughout the conflict, though he said Sunday that his country needed security guarantees from NATO and more weapons to defend itself before any talks with Russia.

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