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Russia’s Lavrov Says No Point in Inviting European Leaders to Ukraine Talks

By AFP

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Artiom Geodakian / TASS**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Monday that he saw no reason for European leaders to take part in negotiations on ending the war in Ukraine and accused Brussels of wanting to prolong the conflict.

Lavrov's comments came ahead of his visit to Saudi Arabia to meet with top U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Meanwhile, European leaders were convening in Paris for an emergency summit on Ukraine amid alarm at Washington's diplomatic outreach to Moscow.

"I don't know what they [European officials] would do at the negotiating table... if they are going to sit at the negotiating table with the aim of continuing war, then why invite them there?" Lavrov said at a press conference in Moscow.

The veteran foreign minister argued that Brussels had failed to help bring a resolution to the conflict since 2014, when Moscow first annexed the Crimean peninsula and backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

Washington insists that it wants both Russia and Ukraine to make concessions if ceasefire talks ever materialize.

But Lavrov insisted that Moscow would not compromise on Ukrainian territory it has forces have seized over years of fighting, saying there could not even be a "thought" of that during negotiations.

The Kremlin claims to have annexed the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia despite not having full control of them.

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