

Russia and U.S. Delegations Arrive for Embassy Talks in Istanbul

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The arrival of Russian diplomats at Russia's Consulate General in Istanbul. **TASS**

U.S. and Russian delegations [met](#) Thursday in Istanbul for a second round of talks aimed at normalizing the operations of their diplomatic missions, following years of tit-for-tat expulsions amid strained bilateral ties.

Reuters [reported](#) that several vehicles were seen entering the Russian consulate in the Turkish city ahead of the [closed-door meeting](#) between Russia's new ambassador to the United States, Alexander Darchiyev, and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Russia and Central Europe Sonata Coulter.

A source close to the Russian delegation [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency that the atmosphere was "positive" and that Thursday's meeting was [expected](#) to last "several hours, but likely not as long as the last meeting in Istanbul" on Feb. 27, which lasted six hours.

The decision to launch the [embassy talks](#) came after Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met in Saudi Arabia on Feb. 18 — the first high-level

meeting between the two countries since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

The U.S. State Department emphasized this week that the discussions in Istanbul are focused solely on the functioning of diplomatic missions and not on broader political or security issues.

“There are no political or security issues on the agenda, and Ukraine is not — absolutely not — on the agenda,” State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce told reporters.

U.S. President Donald Trump has pushed to reset relations with Moscow since taking office in January and has initiated several rounds of talks with Russian officials.

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