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Rubio and Lavrov Held ‘Frank Exchange’ on Sidelines of ASEAN Summit, Moscow Says

By AFP

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Marco Rubio and Sergei Lavrov. **Russian Foreign Ministry**

Russian and American top diplomats held a “frank exchange” during talks in Malaysia on Thursday, Moscow said, as U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio revealed ерфе his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, had presented a “new idea” on resolving the war in Ukraine.

The meeting, which took place on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers’ summit in Kuala Lumpur, came just hours after Russia launched a second consecutive night of strikes on Kyiv, killing two peopleю

Despite the renewed bombardment, Moscow denied that peace negotiations with Kyiv had reached an impasse.

“A substantive and frank exchange of views took place on the settlement of the situation in

Ukraine," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the talks.

Rubio told reporters that Lavrov had put forward something "new" related to the conflict, though he did not disclose details.

"It's not a new approach. It's a new idea or a new concept that I'll take back to the president to discuss," he said.
Rubio added that it was not something that "automatically leads to peace, but it could potentially open the door to a path."

Moscow did not comment on the nature of the idea.

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Rubio also said he had conveyed Trump's anger over the continued war, now in its fourth year since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

"I echoed what the president said, both a disappointment and frustration at the lack of progress," Rubio said.

Earlier this week, Trump accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of talking "a lot of bulls***" when it comes to Ukraine peace talks and pledged to send more American weapons to Kyiv.

While the U.S. president has grown increasingly critical of Putin, he has also voiced frustration with Kyiv, as hopes dim for a quick end to Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II.

Rubio and Lavrov last met in February in Saudi Arabia as the Trump administration sought to begin mending ties with Moscow and to launch peace talks for ending the war in Ukraine. The two diplomats have also spoken by phone multiple times in recent months.

After the summit in Malaysia, Lavrov is scheduled to travel to North Korea this weekend, the latest in a string of high-level visits as Moscow and Pyongyang expand their military cooperation.

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