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Russia’s Lavrov Says West Trying to ‘Block' Ukraine Peace Talks

By AFP

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'They're just looking for a pretext to block negotiations,' Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with state TV station Rossiya aired Sunday on Telegram. **Vladimir Gerdo/TASS**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Western countries on Sunday of trying to “block” peace negotiations to end the Ukraine conflict, after a flurry of diplomatic activity appeared to stall.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been championing a bilateral meeting between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents — but both sides have blamed each other for not wanting the talks to come through.

“They're just looking for a pretext to block negotiations,” Lavrov said in an interview with state TV station Rossiya aired Sunday on Telegram.

He slammed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for “obstinately insisting, setting

conditions, demanding an immediate meeting at all costs" with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Lavrov also accused Ukrainian authorities of "attempts to disrupt the process that was laid down by Presidents Putin and Trump, which has yielded very good results."

"We hope that these attempts will be thwarted," he added.

On Friday, Lavrov said "no meeting" between Zelensky and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin was planned.

Earlier this week, Zelensky for his part said Russia was "trying to wriggle out of holding a meeting."

Zelensky has signaled willingness to meet with Putin, but only after his allies agree on security guarantees for Ukraine to deter future Russian attacks once the fighting stops.

Moscow said there could be no discussion about such guarantees without it, and said any presence of European troops in Ukraine would be "absolutely unacceptable."

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