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Ukraine Launched Drone Attack on Putin's Valdai Residence, Lavrov Claims

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Kremlin.ru**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed Monday that Ukraine launched a large-scale drone attack on President Vladimir Putin's residence in northwestern Russia, allegations that were swiftly dismissed by Kyiv as an attempt to derail peace negotiations.

Lavrov, who does not usually report drone strikes since they fall within the purview of the Defense Ministry, asserted that Ukraine used 91 long-range drones to target Putin's residence on Lake Valdai in the Novgorod region between Sunday night and Monday morning.

He said there were no injuries or damage and that Russian air defenses destroyed all of the drones before they reached the site.

"Such reckless actions will not go unanswered," Lavrov said in an audio message published on the Foreign Ministry's Telegram channel. "Targets for retaliatory strikes and the timing of their execution by the Russian Armed Forces have been determined."

Lavrov said Russia would "revise" its negotiating position in Ukraine peace talks following what he described as a "terrorist attack," but added that it does "not intend to withdraw from the negotiation process with the United States."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called Lavrov's allegations "fake" and "extremely dangerous," arguing that Moscow was trying to sabotage diplomatic efforts to end the war and justify continued strikes on Ukraine.

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Lavrov's statement was unusual as Russia's Defense Ministry and regional authorities typically report on Ukrainian drone attacks, not the foreign minister.

Earlier on Monday, the Defense Ministry said it had downed 89 Ukrainian drones nationwide, only 18 of which were reported over the Novgorod region.

The incident, if confirmed, would not be the first time Ukrainian drones have reached areas where Putin lives.

Two drones previously struck the roof of the Kremlin's Senate Palace in May 2023 during a broader attack on Moscow. At the time, Russian authorities called the incident an attempted assassination of the president.

The alleged drone attack on Putin's Valdai residence came a day after Zelensky met with U.S. President Donald Trump in Florida as part of ongoing efforts to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine.

Shortly after Lavrov issued his statement, the White House said Trump concluded a "positive" phone call with Putin about Ukraine.

Trump then criticized the alleged Ukrainian drone attack, saying it was "not the right time" given the ongoing talks to end the war.

"You know who told me about it? President Putin, early in the morning, he said he was attacked. It's no good," he told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, adding that he was "very angry about it."

"It's a delicate period of time. This is not the right time. It's one thing to be offensive because they're offensive. It's another thing to attack his house. It's not the right time to do any of that," Trump said.

AFP contributed reporting.

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