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Lavrov Says U.S. Not 'Objective Mediator' in Ukraine

By AFP

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Sergei Lavrov. **Dmitry Belitsky / Moskva News Agency**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday that the United States was no longer an "objective mediator" in its efforts to broker an end to the Ukraine war.

U.S.-led talks on ending Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II remain effectively frozen as U.S. President Donald Trump has shifted his attention toward the Middle East after ordering strikes on Iran in late February.

"As for the United States, judging by their actions, they appear to be abandoning any claim to the role of an objective mediator and are instead pursuing a course of escalating sanctions pressure on Russia," Lavrov told foreign envoys in Moscow.

At the G7 summit in France earlier this month, leaders including Trump agreed to increase pressure on the Russian "war economy" by strengthening sanctions, including on energy.

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Since returning to the White House in 2025, Trump — who had pledged he would end the Ukraine war within a day of taking office — has been pushing both sides to engage in negotiations.

There has been little progress in the U.S.-brokered shuttle diplomacy, with Kyiv refusing to give in to Moscow's demands to cede territory, limit the size of its army and renounce Western support.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and millions in Ukraine forced from their homes since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

In recent months Moscow has grown increasingly critical of Europe's role in supporting Ukraine and trying to stop Trump pushing Kyiv to accept a Russia-friendly peace.

Speaking separately on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Europe was "openly" preparing for war through its massive rearmament program — which is being urged on by Trump.

"Now in the West they openly say that they are preparing for war with us, and are increasing their military, offensive budgets," the Kremlin chief told a ceremony of newly qualified military and law enforcement officials.

In hawkish remarks, he repeated Russia's call for Ukraine to fully withdraw from the eastern Donbas region and said his troops were on the brink of capturing the key fortified town of Kostiantynivka.

Putin also said an escalating wave of Ukrainian retaliatory hits on Russian infrastructure was designed to "shake up society" and was being done with Western support — his first such comments since a massive attack on Moscow set an oil refinery ablaze last week, pouring black smoke over the Russian capital.

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