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Russia Pushes Back Against U.S. Idea of NATO-Style Security Guarantees for Ukraine

By Reuters

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Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. **REUTERS / Valentyn Ogirenko**

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on Friday pushed back against the idea of NATO-style security guarantees for Ukraine and said that any form of "quasi-membership" for Kyiv in the Western military alliance was totally unacceptable to Moscow, Russian state media reported.

Ryabkov made the comments a day after French President Emmanuel Macron said after a Berlin summit that the question of Ukraine's NATO membership should be reopened. At the same event, U.S. peace negotiator Jared Kushner said that he and fellow negotiator Steve Witkoff had "gotten the Russians comfortable with the concept that any security guarantee for Ukraine would be based on Article 5."

“I would like to say that even the notion of a formula for Ukraine’s quasi-membership of NATO, and the search for some sort of — in inverted commas — ‘creative solution’ in this area, is an option that is unacceptable to us. We discuss security guarantees first and foremost in terms of ensuring the security of our own country,” Ryabkov was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency, after being asked whether NATO Article 5-style guarantees for Ukraine would be acceptable to Russia.

“As far as Ukraine is concerned, let them recognize the irrevocable nature of our demand that this state must not join NATO. When that happens, I think the issue of security guarantees can be discussed in one way or another,” Ryabkov added.

Ryabkov also confirmed that a potential visit to Moscow by representatives from Britain, Germany and France was being worked on.

President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Russia had proposed that European envoys come to Russia to clarify their position on Ukraine peace negotiations before the format of further talks is decided.

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