

# Russia Warns of Direct Clash with NATO If Peacekeepers Sent to Ukraine

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned of a “direct clash” between Moscow and NATO forces if peacekeepers from the military alliance are deployed to Ukraine.

Lavrov made the remarks on Wednesday while speaking to students and staff at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in response to Polish proposals for a NATO and international “peace mission.”

“Our Polish colleagues have already stated that there will be a NATO summit now, we need to send peacekeepers. I hope they understand what is at stake,” Lavrov said, according to Russian state-owned news agency TASS.

“This will be the direct clash between the Russian and NATO armed forces that everyone has not only tried to avoid but said should not take place in principle,” the foreign minister said.

The comments came amid the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has seen NATO members provide humanitarian and military aid to the country while imposing harsh sanctions on Russia.

On March 15, Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of Poland’s ruling party, called for NATO peacekeepers to be sent to Ukraine.

“I think that it is necessary to have a peace mission – NATO, possibly some wider international structure—but a mission that will be able to defend itself, which will operate on Ukrainian territory,” Kaczyński said at a news conference.

“It will be a mission that will strive for peace, to give humanitarian aid, but at the same time it will also be protected by appropriate forces, armed forces,” he said.

The following day, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said his country would propose a peacekeeping force at the next NATO summit.

The U.S. and NATO have previously ruled out imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine despite repeated requests from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky because of concerns about a potential confrontation between NATO and Russian forces.

President Joe Biden has also ruled out U.S. troops on the ground in Ukraine and it remains unclear how NATO leaders will approach the Polish proposal.

The Russian foreign minister also suggested on Wednesday that the Polish government may want to “make headquarters” in the Ukrainian city of Lviv and “stay there.”

“Why not, they had such thoughts, and not only thoughts, this was in the past,” Lavrov said.

Lviv is about 40 miles from the Polish border and was once part of Poland before the German and Soviet invasion of the country in 1939. It was occupied by Germany during World War II, after which it became part of the Soviet Union

Newsweek has asked NATO for comment.

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