

Sky News Arabia Interviews Lavrov



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On the 18th, Lavrov sat down for an hour interview that revealed some new aspects to Lavrov I haven't seen before as well as some new descriptions and answers that featured an escalation in the rhetoric applied, thus making the answers a new formulation. Some info about this media outlet:

Arabic 24-hour rolling news channel broadcast mainly operated in the Middle East and North Africa. It is a joint venture between UK-based Sky Group and the UAE-based International Media Investments corporation. IMI is controlled by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates, which is ruled by his brother, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

How much of the interview was aired would be nice to know, but I doubt we'll get that feedback.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): From the Russian capital, Moscow, we will talk with Minister Sergey Lavrov. Thank you for the chance to conduct an interview with Sky News Arabia.

Sergey Lavrov: Thank you for the invitation.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): I am glad to meet with you at this historical juncture, especially considering that more than two years have passed since the start of the special military operation in Ukraine. To what extent is



Sergey Lavrov: *These are not so much our demands as they are of general international law.* Now, when they talk about the need to resolve the conflict on the basis of the UN Charter, they always add "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine." *The UN Charter, in addition to territorial integrity and before it is mentioned, contains a requirement to respect the right of a nation to self-determination. It was the right to self-determination that guided all those who carried out the decolonisation process, primarily on the African continent.* At that time, the Soviet Union was one of the main initiators of this process. On our initiative, a corresponding Declaration was adopted in 1960.

In the last century, the UN General Assembly began to discuss what is more important – territorial integrity or the right of a nation to self-determination. After long negotiations, a Declaration, a voluminous document, was adopted. *In the part that we are talking about now, it is clearly stated that everyone is obliged to respect the territorial integrity of states whose governments respect the right of a nation to self-determination, and therefore represent the entire population living in a given territory.* There is no need to convince anyone that after the bloody anti-constitutional coup d'état in February 2014, *the neo-Nazis who came to power did not represent either Crimea or Donbass.*

Before the right of a nation to self-determination, the UN Charter wrote about the need to respect human rights, regardless of race, gender, language and religion. In Ukraine, the Russian language is prohibited by law in all spheres of life. Recently, a law was adopted banning the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. *Therefore, those who advocate a settlement of the conflict on the basis of the UN Charter should read it more carefully.*

Question (retranslated from Arabic): The starting point of everything was the Orange Revolution. We understand that today Russia plays an important role on the world stage in resolving conflicts. Is the special military operation an important point in the transformation of the world community and the world order? Is Russia ready for broader military action?

Sergey Lavrov: You yourself said that the coup d'état was one of the main stages that ultimately led us all to the situation that we are witnessing now. This coup d'état was stimulated and supported by Western countries. After that, we warned for many years that this should not be done to Russian people who lived all their lives on the lands that ended up under Soviet rule within the framework of the Ukrainian state. This territory, which the Russians have been developing for centuries, should in no case be drawn into the North Atlantic Alliance. We have been warning about this for a long time. *But, having nurtured and educated neo-Nazis, the West unequivocally continued to support them as an instrument of war against the Russian Federation.*

The fact that justice is on our side is obvious to everyone who understands what is happening and what justice is. It is in the right of every person to be who he was brought up and who he wants to be. *The use of the Ukrainian neo-Nazi regime as a tool to fight Russia has alerted the World Majority, the countries of the Global South – Africa, Asia, Latin America. Because everyone began to think about who Washington will direct its dissatisfaction at next time, who it may not like. Anyone.*

In this sense, you are absolutely right. The special military operation is of global importance. *Because it defends a multipolar world order, where all countries without exception are equal.* Let me remind you once again of the UN Charter. It says that the United Nations is based on the sovereign equality of states. Never, in any situation, neither the United States nor its satellites respect or observe this principle. *The world majority is interested in ending the*



When in Kosovo they needed to tear this province away from a referendum. They said that this is the realization of the right, later, after the Nazis seized power in Kiev, the people of Crimea reunification with Russia in front of a large number of foreigners and said that it violated territorial integrity.

Most of my interlocutors from Africa, Asia, Latin America under prove to everyone that it is a hegemon and that no one dares to challenge the United States says that it is a question of inflicting a "strategic an existential threat to themselves, a threat to their hegemony. Then they will consider it their defeat, as a loss of reputation, and

Question (retranslated from Arabic): You anticipated my claim that the West wants so much. Today, the West is like children

Sergey Lavrov: No escalation. *You're right, they play. It seems that they really have the mentality of a child.* Although these adults occupy responsible positions: ministers, prime ministers, chancellors, presidents, etc.

For several months now, there has been a discussion about the fact that Russia is only threatening, talking about "red lines". And the West crosses these "red lines" every time, and nothing happens.

Speaking recently in St Petersburg, President of Russia Vladimir Putin commented on this situation. Especially in the context of initiatives to provide Ukraine with American, French, British long-range missiles and allow it to strike at any target on the territory of the Russian Federation. ***This will be a direct NATO war against Russia.***

At least there are some reasonable people in Washington who understand this. ***Now NATO is waging war against Russia. But this is a hybrid war by the hands of Ukrainians.*** If we are talking about long-range missile weapons, then it is clear to everyone that the Ukrainians themselves will not be able to use them. ***Targeting, satellite data, flight missions – all this can only be done by specialists from the country that produces these weapons.***

Speaking of "strategic defeat" on the battlefield. I do not want to quote some Western politicians, but there are people in the United States and in Europe who studied history and remembered it well. Both Napoleon and Adolf Hitler tried to "strategically hit" us. Both of them gathered under their banners more than half of the European countries, which obediently submitted, were captured and handed over their military, armies under the command of both Bonaparte and A. Schicklgruber. All of them ended deplorably. I repeat, those who read and know history understand this very well.

Now, just like during World War II, the entire coalition "under the Americans" (there are about 50 of them) is fighting against us with the hands of the Ukrainian regime, which, like the regime of Adolf Hitler, is openly Nazi.

In such situations, no one should forget about the character of the Russian people. We are now seeing it on the front line. All attempts to "rock" our society always lead to the opposite result. Now our society is more united than ever. ***We see no other way but to defeat the Nazis, who once again encroached on our history, land, and language.***



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the question arises, where do they really lie in the context of nuclear weapons?

Sergey Lavrov: We are talking about "red lines" in the hope that our assessments and statements will be heard by smart decision-makers. To say that if tomorrow you do not do what I demand of you, we will press the "red button" is not serious.

I am convinced that in such situations, those who make decisions have an idea of what we are talking about. ***No one wants a nuclear war. We have said this many times.***

I can assure you that we have weapons that will have serious consequences for the masters of the Ukrainian regime. These weapons are available. They are in a state of full combat readiness.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): I would like to touch on the Middle East – what is happening there, and, in particular, the involvement of the West. There is a lot of talk now about a strategic partnership with the Iranians. There is news that Russia has received missiles from Iran. About the fact that Russia, in turn, provides nuclear technology to this country. They write about it, talk about it. How can you respond to such accusations?

Sergey Lavrov: This is also what they say about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. About the same. Economic, political, military-technical and military cooperation with Iran, North Korea and any other country is carried out strictly within the framework of international law, without violating any international obligations. ***If the United States invents ten tall tales a day, accusing us of all mortal sins, it means nothing. It only means that they do not like Russia itself as a competitor in the international arena.***

I would like to emphasise once again that in our relations with Iran or any other country, we do not violate any norms of international law, including those governing military-technical cooperation.

I believe that Iran and its neighbours (Arab monarchies and other Arab countries) are interested in interacting with each other. These are countries of the same region. It is inevitable that they live together, side by side with each other. I welcome the process that has taken place between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. They normalized their relations. Dialogue on many other issues is developing. ***I am convinced that it is in the interests of both Iran and its Arab neighbours to establish good-neighbourly, normal and good relations. This will make it possible to develop economic cooperation for the benefit of the peoples of all these countries. It is also more effective to interact in the international arena, defending the interests of the countries (as we say) of the Global South, the Global East.***

Question (retranslated from Arabic): During Joe Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia, it was said that China and Russia could fill the vacuum left behind by the United States in the region. How would you comment on this? Is there really a vacuum? What are Russia's relations with local countries? I would also like to touch upon the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Sergey Lavrov: ***Regarding the vacuum that the United States leaves behind. If we look at history over the past 50-70 years, the United States has set itself loudly and proudly numerous goals. First of all, to introduce democracy in various parts of the world.***

Vietnam. What goals were announced? What have they achieved? They killed hundreds of thousands of civilians, used prohibited weapons. They did not achieve any goal. They got on helicopters and flew away.



plane literally crushing the Aignans, who were also trying to fly somewhere with them. They left all those who collaborated with them to the mercy of fate. These are thousands and thousands of people.

Look at Iraq. What goal did the Americans achieve in Iraq? Now they are asked to get out of there. For more than two years now, the Iraqi government and parliament have been saying that they no longer need Americans. They don't want to leave. What are they trying to achieve there?

Syria. What have they achieved in Syria?

What is happening between Palestine and Israel is shocking. Experts do not recall such a tragedy, a humanitarian catastrophe. Soon, I emphasize, it will be a year. A few months ago, statistics were published in the West. It follows that in the ten months after the start of Israel's operation, Palestinian civilians died twenty times more than in the ten years of war in Donbass after the coup d'état in 2014. In Donbass, both Donbass residents and residents who remained in the territory controlled by the Kiev regime counted. In ten months, more than twenty times more died than in ten years.

The terrorist attack on October 7, 2023 was outrageous. All normal people condemn him. *But responding to a crime with another crime, using the prohibited method of collective punishment of civilians, is unacceptable.*

I remember how you spoke about the vacuum when talking about the policy of the United States in the region. When the terrorist attack took place on October 7, 2023 and Israel launched its brutal operation, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, speaking at the General Assembly, said that he condemned the terrorist attack, but it did not take place in a vacuum. *He meant that for many decades the UN decisions on the creation of a Palestinian state have not been implemented. Almost nothing remained of the territories that were supposed to make up a Palestinian state.*

Look at the reaction of the Israeli leadership when Antonio Guterres said that the terrorist attack did not take place in a vacuum. The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in New York (who was in that position at the time) was hysterical. He demanded that Antonio Guterres be fired from his job.

Impunity is a bad quality. We have said many times with our Israeli colleagues that the Soviet Union, our country, did more than anyone else on this land to save the Jews and defeat those who unleashed the Holocaust. *But it was not only Jews who died in the Holocaust, but a huge number of Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs and other peoples living on the territory of modern Russia and living on the territory of the Soviet Union.*

When some figures are guided by the fact that they, the Jewish people, were victims of the Holocaust, *so they are forgiven for whatever they want, then this is a bad trend. This is a sign of the exceptionalism characteristic of Hitler's Germany and ideology.*

I have many friends in Israel. The overwhelming majority of them understand that the issue of the establishment of a Palestinian State must be resolved and that the natural rights of the Palestinian people cannot be suppressed.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): When we talk about the "export of democracy" (which the Americans are talking about), how does Russia view the democratic process in the United States and the attempts to assassinate Donald Trump (directly related to Ukraine)?



norms of international humanitarian law by the Israeli leadership.

American-style democracy is their invention. If they are satisfied with this system of state power (which sometimes means that another person becomes president, not the one for whom the majority of the population voted), ***let them live and leave others alone.***

Once I spoke with the then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. She criticized the election process in our country. I gave her an example that the United States does not have direct procedures for electing presidents, but two-stage ones. As a result, it happens that the wrong person gets into the White House, for whom the majority of votes were cast. She said they knew about it. This is their problem, and that there is no need to worry, they say, they will deal with this problem themselves. ***Then the same logic should be applied to other countries.***

If the countries, for example, of the Persian Gulf, believe that they are comfortable with the system of monarchical government, and the population lives well, then what problems can there be? China has its own system, we have our own.

When the United States says that it is fighting for democracy, it is misleading. They are fighting only to bring to power people in different countries who will carry out their will. That's all. They do nothing else.

I am sure that if you interview any of the American politicians, ask them about democracy – why do they mean only exporting their model around the world? ***Why not talk about democracy in international relations? They will never discuss it.*** They will tell you that there is a "rules-based order" in international affairs. ***And democracy, enshrined in the UN Charter, is based on the sovereign equality of states.***

After the creation of the UN, and even before its creation, take any crisis situation in which the United States was involved. In their foreign policy activities, they never respect the principle of the sovereign equality of states.

Therefore, just as Rice told me that this is their system, leave them alone, so I advise the Americans to apply the same principle to all other countries. ***This is a different system, leave others alone. Don't stick your nose into other people's business.***

Question (retranslated from Arabic): Some say that the world really needs Donald Trump to return to office for four years. This is in the interests of peace.

Recently, President of Russia Vladimir Putin made a joke about the elections in the United States. He said that Russia supports K. Harris. How does Russia calculate its policy towards the future president and how much will it change?

Sergey Lavrov: President of Russia Vladimir Putin was joking. He has a good sense of humor. He repeatedly resorts to jokes during his speeches and interviews.

I do not see any difference either in relation to the current election campaign or in relation to future election campaigns in the United States for a long period of time. Because the notorious "deep state" operates there.

US President Joe Biden is in such a physical condition that he has not been able to lead the country for a long time. ***But the country turns these "gears". It continues its military campaign through the Ukrainian regime, in other parts of the***



China is now being put forward by the Americans as the main threat. A large number of sanctions are applied against the PRC (but not yet as much as against Russia). They cut off the channels for the supply of modern technologies to China, hoping to slow down the development of this sector in China. China will create all the technologies on its own, but it will take a little longer.

And what are the Westerners doing now with regard to Chinese exports, primarily electric vehicles, batteries for electric vehicles and other goods? They introduce 100% duties in Europe, and in the United States. When Chinese President Xi Jinping was on a visit to France, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen flew to Paris and publicly stated that they were imposing 100% tariffs on Chinese electric cars because they were too cheap and European manufacturers were suffering from this. *And where is fair competition, which the West promoted as the main principle? Inviolability of property and much more? All this is a thing of the past.*

I have no illusions about the US leader. (When Donald Trump was president), he spoke with President Vladimir Putin several times. A couple of times I was received at the White House. He was friendly. But sanctions against the Russian Federation were imposed under President Donald Trump on a regular, consistent and quite serious basis.

As a result, we came to the conclusion that we need to rely on ourselves. *We will never again in our history rely on the fact that a "good uncle" will come to the White House or to another Western capital and everything will get better for us.*

Question (retranslated from Arabic): We began our conversation by talking about the importance of the African continent. Russia has achieved some success on this continent through cooperation, including military, with a number of countries. How does Russia see its role in this region?

Sergey Lavrov: We have seen this role for many decades, when we actively supported the struggle of the African peoples for independence, for the overthrow of the colonial yoke, for an end to the policy of apartheid. Our contribution to building a better world and ensuring equality is appreciated by the African peoples and their leaders. We see how the younger generation of Africans is brought up in respect for our common history.

We have never benefited unilaterally from our relations with African countries. Look at how many industrial facilities the Soviet Union built in the Arab Republic of Egypt, which now make up a significant part of its industry and economy. Now we are building a nuclear power plant and creating a Russian industrial zone in the Suez Canal area. We discussed this on September 16 with Egyptian Foreign Minister Benjamin Abdelati during his visit to the Russian Federation.

When the Soviet Union established relations with other African countries, it invariably contributed to the development of the foundations of their sovereign economy and to the creation of an education system. To this day, tens of thousands of Africans study at Russian universities every year. In the respective countries there are associations of graduates of Soviet and Russian higher educational institutions.

Our common historical heritage determines the current level of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation. After the Soviet Union disappeared, the Russian Federation was not in the best position socially and economically. At that time, we paid much less attention to developing cooperation with our African friends. But over the past 15



Two Russia-Africa summits have already taken place (in Sochi in 2019 and in St Petersburg in 2023). In November of this year, the first meeting of Russia-Africa foreign ministers will be held in Sochi. This will be done in accordance with the decision of last year's summit. We plan (together with our African colleagues) to hold the next summit in 2-3 years on the African continent.

We have a large program. There is an action plan calculated by the African Union Commission and the Government of the Russian Federation until 2026 inclusive. It covers all areas of our cooperation, from the economy and investment to the social sphere, education and cultural exchanges. We see the sincere and reciprocal interest of our African friends in developing cooperation.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): The BRICS association is expanding rapidly, strengthening its position and cooperating with a number of countries. There are many states that want to join it. At the same time, there are certain challenges that this association faces. *How do you counter these challenges? How do you see a model of successful cooperation for the whole world?*

Sergey Lavrov: *The recipe is simple – full respect for international law. And first of all (I have already quoted the UN Charter once again) – the principle of sovereign equality of states, non-interference in each other's internal affairs.*

Establishing cooperation based on a balance of interests that needs to be sought. BRICS functions on the basis of consensus, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the League of Arab States, and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. *BRICS is an association based on respect for each other and mutual consideration of each other's interests.*

In the European Union and NATO, such a principle does not exist. There is a hegemon there – the United States, which does not tolerate any objections to its policy. In the European Union, in Brussels, there is a bureaucracy that dictates to sovereign countries what they should do. The peoples did not vote for this bureaucracy. They voted for their presidents, prime ministers. The bureaucracy was then formed by mutual agreement. Look at how absolutely disrespectful the officials in Brussels are behaving now.

In the BRICS, this is impossible. *The principle of consensus operates here, and not artificial, when someone is forced to agree, but a real one, based on finding agreements that reflect the consent of all participants. It's not easy. The more parties, the more difficult it is to seek agreement. Any agreement based on consensus requires more time than a decision based on a vote. But such an arrangement is much more stable and viable than something imposed from the outside. That's the whole secret. It is very simple.*

BRICS is developing cooperation in the field of economy and finance. There is a new development bank that is gaining momentum. There is cooperation in the political, humanitarian, sports, educational and cultural spheres. As the BRICS chairs this year, we have already held 150 events. Several dozen more are planned. All these events arouse keen interest. Relevant delegations, ministries, parliaments and public organisations are coming. We are following the events that are being held in the BRICS countries and see the genuine interest of the citizens of these countries.

This is the strongest pillar for the further development of the strategic partnership within the association. Now there are 10 countries in the BRICS - their number has doubled compared to last year. More than 30 countries have

interact and partner with BRICS.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): We would like to talk about a common problem – overcoming the hegemony of the dollar, as well as the US sanctions imposed on Russia and Iran. This situation was previously predicted. And, in particular, it was said that the dollar would be used as a weapon against Russia and Iran. Now, despite all this, does Russia really want Donald Trump to return to the White House?

Sergey Lavrov: Donald Trump condemned the policy of the current administration, which (as he openly stated) destroys the role of the dollar and undermines the economic power of the United States, which relies largely on the dollar. The U.S. national debt is \$36 trillion. Interest on the US national debt alone is \$1 trillion. per year. This is without the main part of this debt. Donald Trump said bluntly that the sanctions imposed by the Biden administration, using the dollar's potential as a global reserve currency, are disastrous for the US economy.

I agree with him. Moreover, I agree with him not because I want to, but because the overwhelming majority of countries are already cautious about any transactions in the world economy where they will depend on the dollar. The dependence remains. It is huge, including in the People's Republic of China, India, and most of the world's economies. Dependence has already been recognized as a phenomenon that poses a risk to the development of countries. Gradually, the dollar is being replaced by a transition to settlements in national currencies.

At last year's BRICS summit, Brazilian President Lula da Silva proposed thinking about creating an alternative payment platform that could be used by members of the association and other interested countries. This instruction was written down for the summit in Kazan, which will be chaired by President of Russia Vladimir Putin. *We should receive a report from the ministers of finance and central banks of the BRICS countries on how to create alternative payment platforms.* With the People's Republic of China, we carry out more than 90 percent of our trade in national currencies, without using the dollar. In trade relations with India, this figure reaches 60 percent. With most countries, we are starting to switch to such forms of interaction. *It is clear that the United States continues to print dollars and continues its policy of economic pressure on other states at the expense of these low-security banknotes. But this era is already rolling towards the sunset.*

Question (retranslated from Arabic): Of course, politics, the economy and relations with Europe cannot be separated. Why hasn't Russia stopped exporting gas to Europe, despite all the negativity that comes from the other side? Why does gas still go to the European Union?

Sergey Lavrov: *We are decent people. Long-term contracts were concluded with Europe. We always fulfill our obligations, unlike Europe and the United States.*

For many decades, since the days of the Soviet Union, since the 1970s, we have been establishing mutually beneficial cooperation in gas supplies. Due to this affordable, reliable source of gas supply, European, primarily German, energy and the economy as a whole lived.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an interview that Russia itself had cut off gas supplies to Europe. He is an adult. Why lie? Everyone is well aware of how it all happened. Under Chancellor Angela Merkel, the United States forced Germany not to turn on the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines and to use the more expensive (much more expensive) American liquefied natural gas. Now Europe meets its basic needs at the expense of liquefied natural



pipeline system remains, including through Ukraine, Turkey and the Black Sea. *If it's mutually beneficial, why shoot yourself in the foot"? Let the beautiful Europe "shoot" at its feet.*

A year ago, I read a statement by French Minister of Economy Benjamin Le Maire, who said that industry in Europe (in France in particular) pays four times more for energy supplies than industry in the United States. *This is what the United States has sought and achieved.*

They always remove competitors. They saw a competitor in Russia, organized an anti-Russian, Russophobic, Nazi regime in Ukraine, and set it to war against our country. The European Union was also a competitor to the United States. Now it is no longer a competitor and will not be one, if I understand the trends in the development of the European continent correctly.

Deindustrialization is taking place. When one of Germany's main assets – the automotive industry – begins to transfer its production to other countries, and Volkswagen simply closes factories, lays off thousands of people, this says a lot.

The European bureaucracy obediently follows the course set by the United States. But an increasing number of countries that are members of the European Union are beginning to understand that this path is not in the direction of their interests, but in the direction of the interests of an overseas partner.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): To fully describe the situation, I cannot help but ask you about China. When will the relations of strategic partnership be "elevated" to the level of a coalition? Will this happen? Military exercises were held, in particular, in the Sea of Japan. Relations between Russia and China are actively developing. Can we say that there will be a tight coalition between the two countries?

Sergey Lavrov: These relations are the best in the history of relations between Russia and China. They are strategic.

We are often asked when we will create a military alliance. *We don't have to do that.* We regularly conduct military exercises, including naval and land exercises, air forces. Our armies cooperate, make friends, develop the ability to act together, train together. All this without any military alliance like the North Atlantic Alliance. Of course, we will continue our strategic cooperation in all areas, without exception.

We have a record trade turnover in the economy. In 2023 - about \$230 billion. Now there is a trend towards its further increase. We have the closest and most mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector and in terms of gas supplies and nuclear energy.

Humanitarian, educational and cultural cooperation is developing. The Russian language is becoming more and more popular in China, and Chinese in the Russian Federation. *We are two great states, two great peoples, immediate neighbors. We have common interests in ensuring our security. Especially in conditions when the United States is trying to "drag" the NATO architecture into the Asia-Pacific region and is creating bloc organizations such as AUKUS, other "fours" and "threes" there. Of course, all this is being done with the openly declared goal of containing China and Russia. We must be vigilant, this brings us even closer together. We are natural partners.*



Ukraine in the return of military personnel in captivity. This is an extremely important role. How would you comment on it?

Sergey Lavrov: Relations with all Arab countries without exception, including the six Gulf states, are based on regular meetings of our leaders and signed agreements. These relations cover all spheres without exception. *I would like to note in particular our cooperation within the framework of OPEC Plus and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum. This is a good material, objective basis for our strategic partnership with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Gulf countries.*

Indeed, our Emirati, Saudi and Qatari friends are contributing to resolving humanitarian issues arising in connection with our special military operation. Including, as you mentioned, the exchange of prisoners of war. We highly appreciate this cooperation. It is done not for advertising, not for self-promotion, but out of sincere motives to help decide the fate of ordinary people.

Question (retranslated from Arabic): The last question is about Lebanon. The Russian Foreign Ministry has issued a statement regarding the events in Lebanon. This refers to pager bombings targeting Hezbollah members. This is an escalation. Since you and Vladimir Putin are in contact with all parties to the conflict, what do you think about this situation?

Sergey Lavrov: We oppose any escalation. But, *unfortunately, there are those who want to heat it up to the limit, and in particular, provoke the intervention of the United States armed forces in the region.* This is quite obvious. Remember the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the funeral ceremony for the deceased President Raisi. *I can't imagine more cynicism.* I highly appreciate the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran did not "break down," as they say, and did not slide into full-scale military responses. *The calculation was that Iran would do something that would oblige the United States to intervene with its armed forces.*

Probably, what is happening now around Lebanon is from the same area. I think that Hezbollah is behaving with restraint compared to what capabilities it has. *They want to provoke it for the same purpose – to make the intervention of the United States in the war inevitable.* It seems to me that the Biden administration understands this danger. Of course, we want a big war not to take place.

But the most important thing at this stage is that there is a full-fledged ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and in the Palestinian territories in general. Urgent resolution of humanitarian issues, resumption of assistance in the necessary volumes. And of course, as the third necessary step, the beginning of a serious conversation about the creation of a Palestinian state. *Without this, the recurrence of "outbreaks" of violence in the Middle East will not stop.*

Question (retranslated from Arabic): At what level are relations between Israel and the Russian Federation today?

Sergey Lavrov: Personally, I have good relations with many Israeli colleagues, including former ones. Speaking about the Middle East policy, President Vladimir Putin stresses our full commitment to the security and fundamental interests of the State of Israel.

It is not for nothing that I said that it is necessary to implement the resolutions demanding a two-state solution to the Middle East problems. So that two states – Israel and Palestine – independent, sovereign, exist as good neighbors in terms of security in relation to each other and in terms of the security of the entire region. *I don't even know why I need to explain the importance of such an approach. It is in the interests of both Israel and Palestine.*



I've expressed my disagreement with Russia's Palestine policy many times and will do so again using the Ukraine conflict's history as a foil. The roots of both conflicts lie in the 19th Century and are the result of Imperialist policies—Britain and France in the Levant and Germany, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Galicia. Here at the Gym the Ukraine portion has been deeply investigated so most readers have a good grasp of the why, while some of the historical intervention into the Levant has only been somewhat cursorily examined. If space and time allows later, I'll parse and republish this extraordinary interview that digs very deeply into the Mandate-Era colonial history of Palestine, Tariq Ali's interview of Rashid Khalidi, "[The Neck and the Sword](#)." Just beyond the interview's outset is this Q&A exchange that's just one of many vital points made:

What if there had been no Judeocide in Europe and the German fascists had been ordinary fascists without the obsession to wipe out the Jews?

What a might-have-been. But look at the situation in 1939. There was already a Zionist project, with strong British imperial support, for reasons that had nothing to do with Jews or Zionism. It had to do with strategic interests. The Balfour Declaration was made by the man responsible for shepherding through the most antisemitic bill in British parliamentary history, the Aliens Act of 1905. The British ruling class didn't care for the Jews per se. They may have cared for their reading of the Bible, but what they cared about most was the strategic importance of Palestine and the Middle East as a gateway to India, long before 1917. That was what concerned them, from the beginning to the end. When they were forced to leave in 1948, they could do so because they'd already quit India in 1947 and didn't need Palestine in the same way. Had Hitler been assassinated, there would still have been a Zionist project, with British imperial backing. Zionism would still have tried to take over the entirety of the country, which was always its objective, and would still have tried to create a Jewish majority through ethnic cleansing and immigration. I couldn't speculate beyond that.

The British trained the Zionist Terrorists, and the project was overtly imperialist from the outset, yet somehow Soviet Russia was blind to all that? Was Soviet Russia's aide provided because of a sense of historical guilt without thinking what would become of those being colonized by the Zionists? (Yes, there's info prior to the above citation that's also key to understanding.) Was Soviet Russia too concerned about Hitler's rise and the attempts to create a defense pact with France and England to not challenge their behavior in the Levant? Russia and Lavrov always seem so proud that they were first to recognize a state that should never have been allowed to exist based on the legally established parameters at the time—TWO states were supposed to be made at the SAME TIME, not one. And the Americans surely understand that if the Zionist state vanishes as it should that their position in West Asia will no longer be tenable, which is why they're abetting the genocide and while attempting to keep the wider war they want from erupting before the November election. The Congressional standing ovations given to today's Hitler tells you all you need to know about the Outlaw US Empire's policy stance and direction in that region. It needs the Zionists as much as it needs the Ukrainian Nazis and the Taiwanese Fascists to advance its war against BRICS.

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