TA Tomorrow's Affairs
Analysis of today
Assessment of tomorrow

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Why is the Kremlin pushing Lavrov to the fore in the lead-up to Trump's arrival?

The Kremlin has dispatched Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to convincingly explain Moscow's expectations of the arrangements regarding the ending of the invasion of Ukraine to the Western and particularly American public.

Lavrov's recent interview with Tucker Carlson and his speech at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Malta are not particularly important in terms of content.

They are important as an indication that the Kremlin is aware that it has not been doing well and that the circumstances that have gradually shifted the crisis to a phase where peace is sought are not in its favour.

Lavrov was clearly targeting those who either know nothing about Russia, Ukraine, or the war Russia has been waging against Ukraine, or those who are willing to consume Russian fabrications.

It was an attempt to gather those still delusional or anti-American-minded individuals around the world who are willing to accept Russia's version of the attack on Ukraine.

Quite possibly Sergey Lavrov was also counting on Vladimir Putin, his suzerain, to carefully watch and listen to his fairy tales.

Reaction to Biden's decisions

Sergey Lavrov is smart enough to know that not only is everything he said about Ukraine and the Russian war absolutely untrue, but he also knows that most people in the Western political class no longer take anything Lavrov says about the war seriously.

Pushing Lavrov to the fore by the Kremlin is one of Moscow's reactions to outgoing US President Joe Biden's decision to allow Ukraine to use long-range missiles against targets on Russian territory.

His interview with Tucker Carlson aims to relay the Kremlin's views to a pro-Trump audience until a new presidential administration takes office, which Moscow hopes will reverse Biden's decisions on Ukraine.

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Vladimir Putin will suffer from any outcome that is not victory. That is what the elites expect from him because of the price they have all paid for his gamble in Ukraine. He is by far stronger than any member of the Russian elite, but not necessarily stronger than all of them combined.

It is unclear which scenario is more undesirable for the Kremlin: if the war on Ukrainian terms stops now or if the war continues until there is inevitable confusion and turmoil among the Russian elites, to whom Vladimir Putin had originally promised a quick and glorious victory over Ukraine and the West.

Lifting sanctions is a priority

Sergey Lavrov, like all members of the Russian ruling kleptocracy, belongs to both the Russian ruling class and the Russian super-rich.

Vladimir Putin and the few who surround him are now preoccupied with trying to save their regime and, above all, their fortunes.

Their strategic plan is to convince the West that Russia is very resilient and that it is in the interest of the West and Ukraine to give in to Russia’s terms for ending the war.

> The Kremlin will ask for the lifting of the sanctions

The Kremlin will most definitely ask for the lifting of the sanctions, which have been extremely painful, particularly for the Russian elites, as they have lost the opportunity to escape from Moscow's reality and spend time

in Western capitals and holiday resorts.

This is why Lavrov has been desperately trying to persuade the West that subjugating Ukraine to Russia and declaring Russia's victory—including Russia's victory over Western sanctions—is the best course of action.

Trump brings uncertainty

The Kremlin swiftly released Sergey Lavrov as a greyhound due to Putin's concerns over the potential shift in the Trump administration from the previous moderate increase of pressure adopted by the outgoing Biden administration.

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The Kremlin learnt how to deal with a gradual and phased increase of pressure until recently applied by the Biden administration but has no idea what to do if President Trump smashes Russia and the Putin regime with an avalanche of pressure even more disastrous than the recent strike by ATACMS permitted by the Biden administration.

Vladimir Putin finds himself unsure how to react if President Trump demonstrates to the Russian elites that he does not intend to hand over to Putin a victory he promised them.

He is now somewhere between the Russian elites on the one side and the Trump administration on the other. Either side could swallow him.