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US Secretary of State Kerry traveling to Russia, set to meet Lavrov, Putin

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The trip has been confirmed by Russian and US officials.

*"This trip is part of our ongoing effort to maintain direct lines of communication with senior Russian officials and to ensure US views are clearly conveyed,"* State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf [said](#) in a written statement.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said that Moscow is ready for the dialogue with Washington.

*Russia is "open for cooperation [with the US] on the basis of equality, non-interference in internal affairs, and taking Russian interests into account without attempts to pressure us,"* the ministry said in a statement.

The talks between Kerry and the Russian president are not yet confirmed, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

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Earlier, RIA Novosti news agency quoted a Russian diplomatic source as saying that Kerry's arrival was *"very symbolic,"* since the top US diplomat had canceled the trip several times.

This will be Kerry's first visit to Russia since the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine in November 2013.

Lavrov and Kerry met last in March during the Iran nuclear talks in Switzerland's Lausanne, where several world leaders were working hard to hammer out a final decision on Iran's nuclear program before a looming deadline of March 31.

Last time Putin and Obama met was at the G20 summit in Australian Brisbane in 2014. The US president also declined Kremlin's invitation to attend the May 9 celebrations in Moscow.

The death toll in the Ukrainian conflict has exceeded 6,100 people, according to UN estimates from April 2015. There was a scaling down the level of violence in eastern Ukraine since then, but little progress in finding a long-term solution that would restore peace in the country.

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