
Lavrov: Russia demands that Turkey withdraw its troops from Iraqi territory

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"We demand that Turkey withdraw its troops from Iraqi territory, where they are deployed, as former Turkish Prime Minister Davutoglu put it, to 'strengthen' Iraq's sovereignty. This position is absolutely unacceptable," Lavrov told Komsomolskaya Pravda daily.

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Russia's Western partners and Turkey's allies from NATO should pay much greater public attention to Ankara's activities in the region, Lavrov noted, adding that currently NATO's stance is that Turkey is a member, so they will sort things out among themselves.

"What about Cyprus, which is not a NATO member and whose airspace is violated by the Turkish Air Force on a regular basis? And secondly, what kind of a position is that – if you are a NATO member, you can do whatever you like?" the Russian FM asked.

In Iraq, Ankara is realizing Turkey's *"neo-Ottoman aspirations"* and pursuing certain economic goals, Lavrov said.

"[The Turks] reckon on getting a foothold there somehow and waiting for a battle for Mosul to lay claim to the [oil] fields and wait for a reaction from the international community," he added.

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Lavrov also said that Moscow will continue to demand that Turkey stop causing chaos in Iraq, in the first place against the Kurds.

As part of its efforts to counter terrorism in the region, Russia provides Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan with weapons “*with the consent from the Iraqi government,*” Lavrov stressed, adding that “*we apply no other principles.*”

Earlier, the Russian foreign minister said that fighting terrorism must be conducted in rigorous compliance with international legal norms and with the absence of “*double standards.*”

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