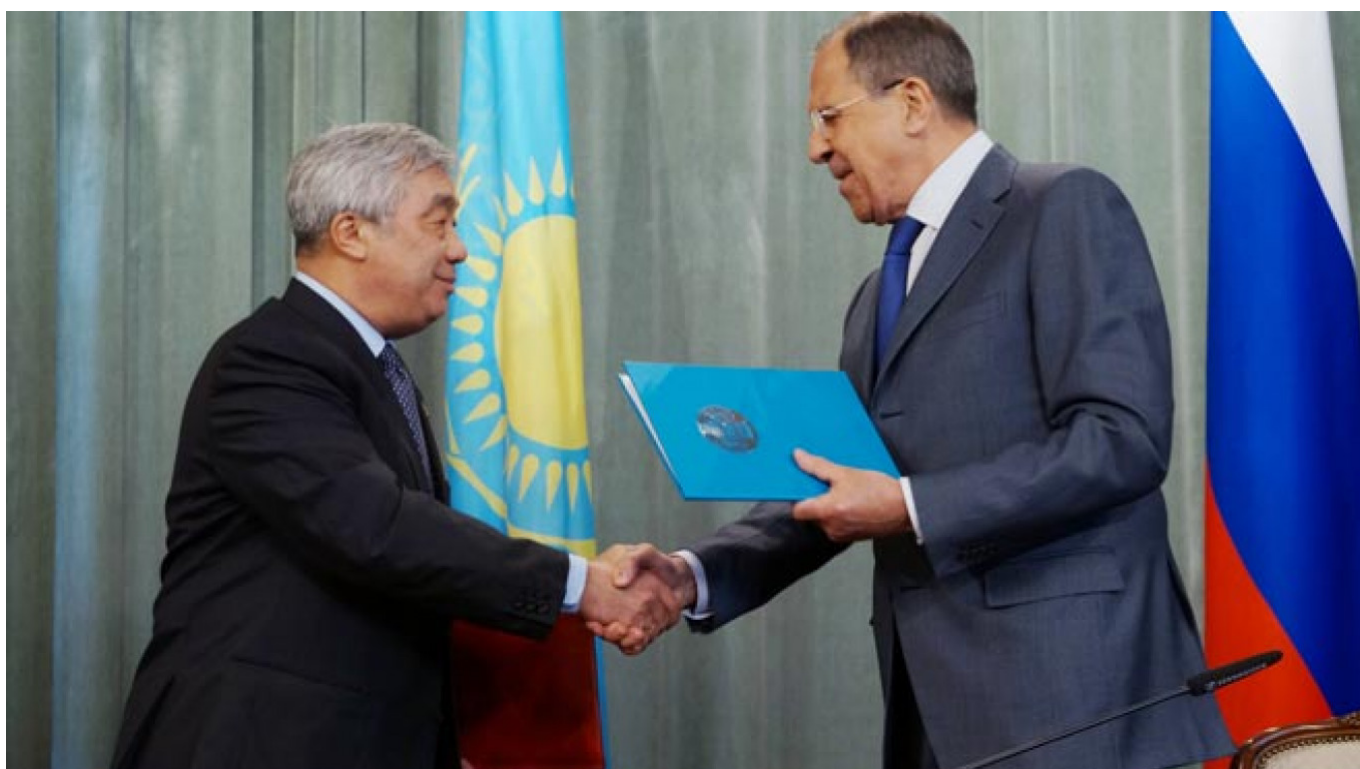


NATO Accuses Russia of Breaking International Commitments

April 03, 2014



Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right) meeting with his Kazakh counterpart, Yerlan Idrisov, in Moscow on Thursday.

BRUSSELS — NATO denied on Thursday that it was violating an agreement with Russia by boosting its forces in Eastern Europe and accused Moscow of "violating every principle and international commitment it has made" by occupying Ukraine's Crimea region.

Russia said earlier that it wanted answers from NATO on its activities in Eastern Europe after the Western military alliance promised to beef up defenses for its eastern members.

But NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen said he had not received any questions from Moscow and called Russian accusations about NATO's actions "propaganda and disinformation."

NATO has ordered military planners to draft measures to reassure nervous Eastern European countries — which were under Moscow's domination until the 1989 end of the Cold War — but stopped short of calls by Poland to base more forces there.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said any increase in NATO's permanent presence in Eastern Europe would violate a 1997 treaty on NATO-Russian cooperation.

"We have addressed questions to the north Atlantic military alliance. We are not only expecting answers, but answers that will be based fully on respect for the rules we agreed on," Lavrov told reporters at a briefing with his Kazakh counterpart.

Lavrov responded to criticism over the size of the force along Russia's border with Ukraine by saying Moscow had the right to move troops on its territory and they would return to their permanent bases after military exercises.

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