

**Ukraine conflict**

## Russia has 'little cause for optimism' after US rejects its Nato demands

Moscow's foreign minister says serious talks can be started only on 'secondary issues'



Ukraine's voluntary forces train in Kyiv as tension builds up between Russia and the west over a possible invasion © AP

**Max Seddon** in Moscow 5 HOURS AGO

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Russia said it had “little cause for optimism” on Thursday after the US rejected Moscow’s demands to roll back Nato’s expansion, but left the door open for further diplomacy as the west seeks to defuse tension over a possible invasion of Ukraine.

“You can’t say that our ideas were taken on board or [that the US and Nato] showed any kind of preparedness to listen to our concerns,” Dmitry Peskov, President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman, told reporters.

Peskov said Russia would send the US a formal response to its reply after receiving written answers to two draft security proposals on Wednesday but said the Kremlin would take its time to analyse them.

Sergei Lavrov, Russia’s foreign minister, said the US response “allowed us to count on the start of a serious conversation, but on secondary issues. There’s no positive reaction in the document on the main issue,” according to Interfax.

The US has said it is willing to co-operate with Russia on issues such as arms control and force deployments but has said Russia’s core demands, which would essentially rewrite the post-cold war security order in Europe, are unacceptable.

