

# *US pushes Kiev to confront Moscow: Lavrov*

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Moscow, June 28, (RHC), – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has accused the United States of encouraging Ukraine to challenge Moscow and heavily weighing in on the European Union.

US officials have continued to push Ukraine's leaders toward a confrontational path, Lavrov said in a televised event on Saturday, adding that chances of settling the crisis would increase if Ukraine only depended on Russia and Europe.

The Russian foreign minister's comments come a day after the European Union summit in Brussels, which gave the Russian government and pro-Russia activists in Ukraine until Monday to take steps to improve the situation.

Also during the event, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed a trade and political association pact with the European Union.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin has warned that it would take action in case the deal inflicts damage on the Russian economy.

Earlier in November, Ukraine plunged into chaos after then president, Viktor Yanukovich, refused to sign the Association Agreement with the 28-member bloc. The refusal triggered months of unrest and clashes,

which finally led to the ouster of Yanukovych on February 23.

Following this, pro-Russia protests broke out in Ukraine's eastern and southern regions. The protests gained momentum after independence referendums in eastern parts of Ukraine.

Ukrainian troops have been carrying out military operations since mid-April to crush pro-Russia protests in the east of the country.

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