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NATO Suspends Military Relations With Russia

By The Moscow Times

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NATO suspended military relations with Russia on Wednesday and said that it will lend significant support to the new Ukrainian government in response to the Russian incursion in Crimea.

Alexander Grushko, Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO, said that the suspensions were disappointing, and that Russia had expected to be able to clarify its position on reaching a settlement in Ukraine at the NATO-Russia Council.

"Today's meeting further evidenced that NATO operates with double standards and Cold War stereotypes with respect to Russia," he said, Voice of Russia reported.

Following the NATO-Russia meeting, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen laid out a series of immediate responses to Russia's violation of "Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its own international commitments," a statement on NATO's

website said. He said that all NATO-Russia cooperation was "under review."

The first NATO-Russia joint operation — a naval escort mission for the USS Cape Ray, the U.S. vessel that will be used to safely neutralize Syria's chemical weapons — has been scrapped. Rasmussen said that this will not affect the destruction of the weapons, only that "Russia will not be involved in the escort of the U.S. vessel."

In addition to NATO canceling the joint-naval escort, "we have decided to intensify our partnership with Ukraine" by strengthening support for democratic reforms, stepping up engagement with civilian and military leadership, and increase efforts "to build the capacity of the Ukrainian military, including with more joint training and exercises."

Rasmussen said that he will meet with the Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk on Friday "to make clear NATO's support."

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