

Ukraine Goes West in 2 New Deals

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BRUSSELS — The European Union pulled Ukraine closer into its orbit on Friday as Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk signed a long-awaited political association agreement.

Around the same time that President Vladimir Putin was in the Kremlin signing parliament bills to incorporate the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea into Russia, EU leaders sought to pull the rest of Ukraine westward by signing the agreement in a ceremony in Brussels.

This is a highly symbolic piece of paper — part of the very same EU deal that touched off Ukraine's political crisis when President Viktor Yanukovych rejected it in November, igniting months of protests that eventually drove him from power.

Yatsenyuk said this deal, and further sanctions against Russia, are necessary to ensure peace.

"Russia decided to actually impose a new post-Cold War order and revise the results of the World War II," Yatsenyuk said in Brussels. "The best way to contain Russia is to impose real economic leverage over them."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov dismissed the EU pact, saying the current Ukrainian

leadership lacks popular support and should have held elections before making such a decision.

Amid its political crisis, Ukraine is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy, struggling to pay off billions of dollars in debts in the coming months. The U.S. and the EU have pledged to quickly offer a bailout.

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