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Russian Media Report CIA Director Held 'Secret Consultations' in Kiev

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Russian news agencies reported Sunday that U.S. CIA director John Brennan had a secret meeting with Ukrainian officials in Kiev before they began operations against separatist forces that had taken over buildings in the country's east.

Brennan landed in Ukraine on Saturday under an assumed name and held a "series of secret meetings" with the country's "power bloc" Interfax reported, citing an unidentified official in the Ukrainian parliament. The unidentified official said that there were "unconfirmed reports" that the U.S. security official was behind the decision to use force in eastern Ukraine after pro-Russian separatist forces took control of the city of Slovyansk.

Ukrainian parliament Communist Party deputy Vladimir Golub told RIA Novosti that lawmakers were talking about the visit openly and opined that the Ukrainian Security Service had become a unit of the CIA.

Commenting on the report, deputy chairman for the State Duma's Defense Committee Frants Klintsevich said that he would view such a visit as a challenge to Russia.

Pro-Kremlin media have spoken of alleged CIA involvement in Ukraine since pro-Western protests against now-ousted President Viktor Yanukovych began last November.

The political crisis in the country following Yanukovych's flight from Kiev in February has seen an increase in tension between Russia and the U.S., including the two countries' trading sanctions against each other's government officials following Russia's annexation of the Crimea peninsula.

On Saturday U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry warned of "additional consequences" against Russia if it did not take steps to deescalate the situation in eastern Ukraine, where separatist sentiment similar to that seen in Crimea led to the takeover of government buildings in several cities by armed, pro-Russian forces.

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