

Medvedev Says Russia Has No Obligation to Stay Out of East Ukraine

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Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev gestures during his address to the State Duma, the lower house of parliament in Moscow, Russia.

Russia is under no obligation to stay out of eastern Ukraine, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has said, refusing to guarantee that Moscow will respect its neighbor's territorial integrity.

Medvedev also accused U.S. President Barack Obama of lacking "political tact" by imposing sanctions against Russia for its annexation of Crimea, saying the U.S. response was pushing the two countries close to a new Cold War, according to a Tuesday interview with Bloomberg television [published on the Cabinet website](#).

Asked whether he could guarantee that Moscow would not take over the eastern Ukrainian regions of Luhansk and Donetsk, where separatists have appealed to join Russia, Medvedev said "we do not have to guarantee anything to anybody, because we have never taken up any obligations in that respect."

President Vladimir Putin earlier this spring rejected any obligations that Russia has to Ukraine under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which Russia co-signed to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity in exchange for its giving up nuclear weapons, saying that Moscow has made no promises to Kiev's new administration.

Medvedev added in the interview that "the most important task is to calm down the situation in Ukraine — not to guarantee something to somebody, but to calm the situation down," according to the Cabinet transcript.

He reiterated Kremlin calls for a "dialogue" between the Ukrainian government in Kiev and separatists who had voted for self-rule in the east, and declined to say whether Russia would deliver on its latest promise to withdraw troops from Ukraine's eastern border, saying that such military matters fell outside the Cabinet's jurisdiction.

"It's not Russia who should guarantee anything, but the Ukrainian authorities should guarantee to their people that things will be calm in the east, that they will not use heavy weaponry, including tanks and airplanes, helicopters, against their own people," Medvedev said.

Credited with having helped "reset" the Russian-U.S. relations during his term as Russia's president in 2008-2012, Medvedev accused Washington of building up renewed tensions through its sanctions against Russia.

"We are slowly but surely moving toward a second Cold War, which nobody needs," Medvedev said.

He also accused Obama of having run out of "reserved, precise, delicate, intelligent, intellectual decisions" toward Russia that had helped achieve "reset" a few years earlier.

Medvedev declined to say whether Russia would recognize the results of Ukraine's presidential elections set for May 25, saying that a refusal by separatist regions to take part in the balloting could cast doubt on the legitimacy of the vote.

"The situation in Ukraine at this moment does not, unfortunately, permit us to be sure that those elections would be carried out properly," he said.

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