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Obama and Merkel Discuss Slapping Russia With New Sanctions

By The Moscow Times

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U.S. President Barack Obama has urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to support peace in Ukraine and said Moscow will face further sanctions if it does not take steps to reduce tensions in the country.

President Barack Obama consulted by phone on Friday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and agreed to keep up the pressure on Russia to defuse the crisis in Ukraine or face more economic sanctions.

The U.S. and the EU have threatened to ratchet up sanctions against the Russian economy unless Moscow reins in pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine that are fighting the Ukraine government. Moscow denies supporting them.

A White House statement said Obama and Merkel expressed their support for diplomatic efforts that are trying to arrange a new ceasefire in eastern Ukraine.

"They stressed that Russia must take immediate steps to deescalate the conflict in eastern

Ukraine. The president and the chancellor agreed that the U.S. and Europe should take further coordinated measures to impose costs on Russia if it does not take steps toward deescalation in short order," the White House said.

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