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Russian Lawmaker: 'Thin Line' Keeps Russia, Ukraine From All-Out War

By The Moscow Times

August 14, 2014



Ukrainian servicemen, who are members of an artillery section, gather near a cannon being fired during a military operation against pro-Russian separatists near Pervomaisk, Luhansk region.

Only a "thin line" separates Russia and Ukraine from going to war, a pro-Kremlin lawmaker said, arguing that Moscow has been careful in its policies to avoid tipping the scale and that Kiev should demonstrate more restraint.

The head of the federal parliament's International Affairs Committee, Alexei Pushkov, said Wednesday that the dispute between the two neighboring countries threatened to be protracted, and he blamed Western interference for a lack of resolution.

According to a statement by the ruling United Russia party, of which he is a member, Pushkov also said that a "thin line" separates the two countries from an all-out war, and that the risk has prevented Russia from sending aircraft to protect its borders from what it claims is rocket fire against its territory by Ukrainian forces, RBC reported.

"Ukraine will be supported by Europe and the U.S., and this is one of the goals of their activities," Pushkov was quoted as telling a meeting of residents in the Crimean town of Balaklava. "Patrolling Ukrainian airspace by our planes can provoke the start of a war."

Pushkov dismissed as insincere Kiev's claims that any shelling of the Russian territory was coming from pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's eastern regions along the border. Instead he blamed Kiev government troops.

"We have stringently warned them about possible retaliatory measures, but there has been no reaction so far," Pushkov said.

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