Ukraine Starts Building Wall to Keep Russia Out

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A car approaches the border between Russia and the pro-Russian separatist controlled area of Ukraine, which is marked by posts, near the village of Verkhnyaya Orekhovka, in the Rostov region, Aug. 7, 2014.

Ukraine has started building a wall along its border with Russia to block an influx of fighters and weapons across its frontiers and guard itself from the former Soviet neighbor that has become an "aggressor," the government said.

"On the orders of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, priority work on installing fortifications and assembling engineering barriers along certain border stretches has begun," the command of Ukraine's anti-terrorist forces said Wednesday on its Facebook page.

"Two defense lines have been planned, and their main goal is to prevent the infiltration by the adversary into the territory of Ukraine," the statement said.

Defense lines will include a 60-kilometer stretch of a "non-explosive barrier," thousands

of kilometers worth of trenches for personnel, armored vehicles and communication lines, and 4,000 army dugouts, the statement said.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced the start of "Project 'Wall'" earlier this month, saying that Ukraine should be clear about who its enemy is.

Speaking last Wednesday, Yatsenyuk said his country needed a new military doctrine, "clearly defining who the aggressor is, and who is a threat," according to a statement published on the government website.

"In the new military doctrine, the Russian Federation should be acknowledged as the only threat and as the aggressor that threatens Ukraine's territorial integrity," he added.

Russia has repeatedly dismissed Ukrainian and Western appeals to seal its border to prevent Russian fighters and weapons from crossing into Ukraine, with Moscow insisting that it was not meddling in the Ukrainian conflict and had no troops there. It later conceded that a few of Russian paratroopers who were detained in Ukraine had "accidentally" wandered across the border.

But a Kremlin adviser said Wednesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian counterpart Poroshenko had both expressed "satisfaction" during a telephone conversation this week on how a ceasefire between Ukrainian forces and separatists was holding, Reuters reported.

Following a major military offensive by Ukraine's pro–Moscow rebels in late August — an operation that Ukraine said was aided by Russian forces –— Poroshenko said Wednesday that "70 percent of Russian troops have moved back across the border," according to a remarks published by his administration.

"I have no doubt: There will be peace in Ukraine," he told a government meeting.

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