

Russian Official Says Delivery of U.S. Weapons to Ukraine Will Not Solve Crisis

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Ukrainian servicemen line up near the freight delivered from Canada at Boryspil International airport outside Kiev on Nov. 28, 2014.

A deputy Russian foreign minister has declared that supplying weapons to Kiev will not help solve a crisis in eastern Ukraine, after the White House said U.S. President Barack Obama would sign corresponding legislation this week.

Russia and the West are at loggerheads over the conflict in east Ukraine where fighting between Kiev government troops and pro-Russian separatists has killed more than 4,700 people since mid-April. The West slapped sanctions on Moscow over the crisis.

The new U.S. law would authorize Washington to introduce new sanctions on Russia over Ukraine and provide weapons to Kiev.

"In recent weeks discussing providing ... lethal arms to Ukraine intensified in a worrisome way," Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying by the RIA news agency, in comments on the crisis in the industrial Donbass region of east Ukraine.

He said those seeking a solution to the crisis should not supply weapons "that will be used to kill the Russian-speaking inhabitants of Donbass" but put pressure on Kiev to hold talks with the rebels.

Russia, which denies military involvement in east Ukraine despite mounting evidence on the ground, says Kiev must negotiate with the rebels and reform Ukraine's constitution to give Donbass more autonomy within Ukraine.

Kiev accuses Russia of driving the rebellion, possibly with the aim of annexing the rebel areas or subjecting them to its control on a more permanent basis.

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