

Ukraine Says 3-Way 'Contact Group' Could Meet Soon to Discuss Peace Plan

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BERLIN/KIEV — A "contact group" meeting of Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe could be held in the next few days to consider a peace plan for Ukraine, Ukraine's foreign minister said Thursday.

"We are working on this and I hope that the session will be held in the next few days, but the date must be agreed by the three-sided contact group itself," the minister, Pavlo Klimkin, was quoted by the news agency as saying.

Earlier this week, Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France called off plans to hold a summit on Thursday on the Ukraine conflict, and it would be now down to the "contact group" to meet again to consider the next move under a 12-point peace plan mapped out in Minsk, Belarus, last September.

Speaking in Berlin, the head of NATO urged Russia to drop its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

"We call on Russia to respect the Minsk agreements, to use all its influence on the separatists to make them respect the cease-fire, and to withdraw the support for the separatists," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at a news conference on Wednesday.

"NATO does not seek confrontation with Russia. NATO aspires for a more constructive and cooperative relationship with Russia. But to be able to establish that, Russia must want it too," he added, after talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

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