

Russia Condemns New U.S. Military Strategy as 'Confrontational'

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U.S. army soldiers look on during the multinational NATO exercise Saber Strike in Adazi, Latvia.

Russia denounced a new U.S. military strategy that accuses Moscow of failing to respect its neighbours' sovereignty as "confrontational" on Thursday, saying it would set back efforts to improve relations.

The Pentagon has updated the U.S. National Military Strategy to take into account changes in the global security situation, which include a standoff with Russia over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis.

It said in the document, published on Wednesday, that Russia had contributed to global security in areas such as fighting the narcotics trade and terrorism but had "repeatedly demonstrated that it does not respect the sovereignty of its neighbours and it is willing to use force to achieve its goals."

"Russia's military actions are undermining regional security directly and through proxy forces," it added, naming Russia among "revisionist-minded" states.

Asked about the new strategy during a conference call with reporters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov expressed regret.

"The use of such language in this document points, shall we say, to what is probably a confrontational attitude devoid of any objectivity towards our country," he said.

"Of course this will hardly contribute to attempts to steer bilateral relations in the direction of normalisation," he added, calling for more cooperation between Russia and the United States on global matters.

Relations between Moscow and the West are at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War, mainly because of the pro-Russian rebellion in eastern Ukraine.

Asked what would be said about the United States when Russia draws up its own new security strategy, Peskov said: "Of course, all threats to Russia's national security are taken into account and counter-measures are worked out and adopted."

Russian 'Aggression' on NATO Periphery

The United States and the European Union imposed sanctions on Russia after it seized the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine last year and have accused it of providing pro-Russian separatists in east Ukraine with weapons and soldiers.

Moscow denies doing this, and accuses the West of plotting a coup to topple a Ukrainian president backed by Moscow in February 2014.

The new U.S. national military strategy warned of "hybrid" conflicts in which military forces assume a non-state identity, saying Russia had done this when armed groups without insignia took control of Crimea.

It said the United States was steadfast in its commitment to its NATO allies and that the defence alliance was "strategically important for deterring conflict, particularly in light of recent Russian aggression on its periphery."

Despite the tension over Ukraine, the military strategy said Washington still wanted to engage Russia in areas of common interest, while urging it and China to "settle their disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law."

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