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Donbass Elections Remain Problematic in Nuland's Moscow Talks

By The Moscow Times

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U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland

The United States will refuse to recognize any elections in eastern Ukraine that do not comply with the Minsk agreements, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland told reporters in Moscow.

Her statement came after meeting with Kremlin officials on May 17 to discuss the Ukraine conflict, the TASS news agency reported Wednesday.

“We've had a very constructive round of talks here in Moscow, including with Russian presidential aide Vladislav Surkov,” she told journalists after a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Nuland stressed the importance of the Minsk agreements, which formed the basis of her latest visit to Moscow.

"We will not recognize the results of any elections held in the Donbass outside of the Minsk framework. The agreement that is represented in the Minsk [agreements] is that these need to be Ukrainian elections that meet Ukrainian standards and meet OSCE standards," Nuland said.

"A bunch of guys out there just deciding to call an election is not going to lead to peace and security in the Donbass. We will respectfully encourage them instead to focus on Minsk-compliant elections," she said.

Nuland said that although the U.S. would not join the so-called "Normandy Four" — the group of countries working to implement the Minsk agreements — the U.S. would work alongside them.

Talks also focused on improving the security situation in southeast Ukraine, increasing access to the area for the OSCE, and upholding political commitments, including elections for the Donbass area.

Sanctions against Russia will be lifted if the Minsk agreements are properly implemented, Nuland said.

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