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Nadiya Savchenko Proposes Trading Crimea for Donbass

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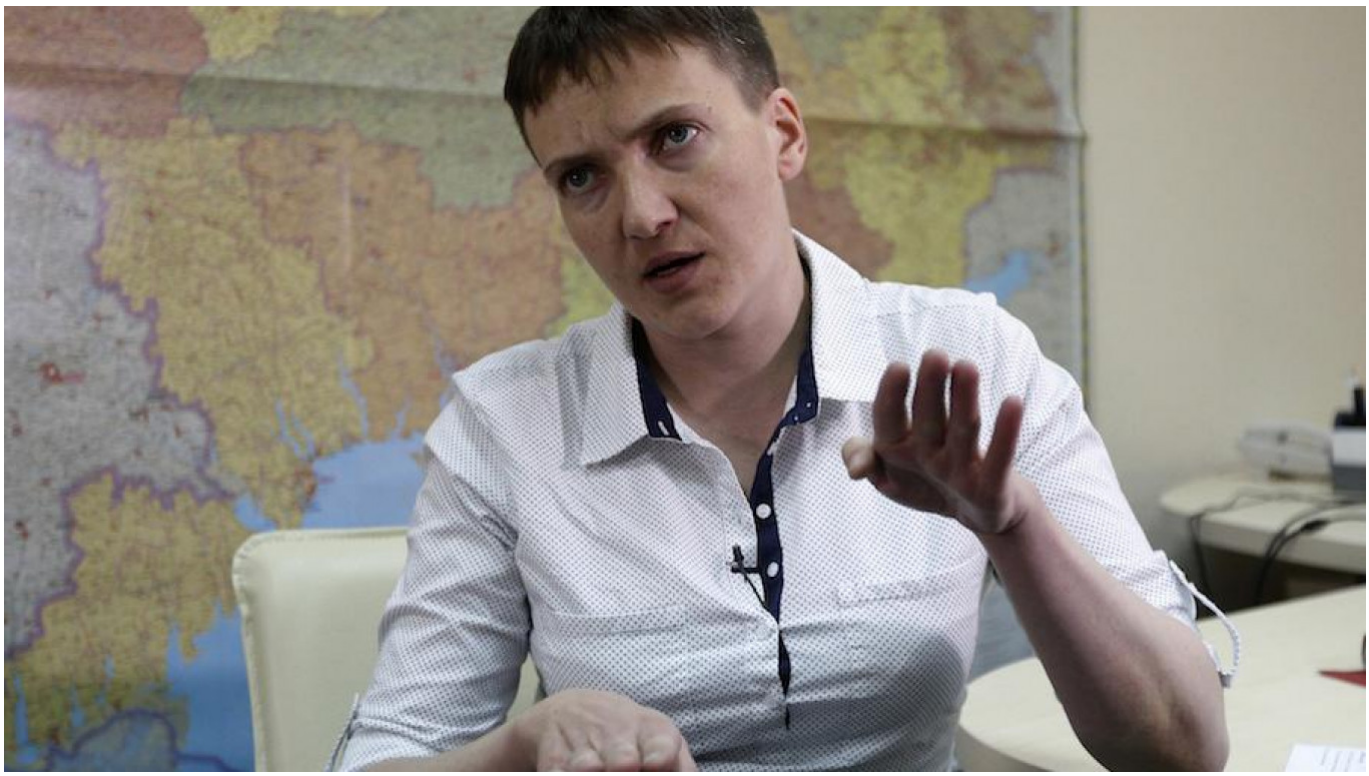

Ukrainian pilot Nadia Savchenko speaks to the Associated Press during an interview in Kiev, Ukraine.
Sergei Chuzavkov / AP

Ukrainian parliamentarian and former prisoner of war Nadiya Savchenko has sparked controversy with a suggestion that her country give up its territorial claim to the Crimea in exchange for Russia leaving the Donbass region.

In an interview with the Ukrainian television channel 112 Ukraine, Savchenko said that the only solution to the conflict in the Donbass would be a non-military one, and that this would mean giving up the Crimean peninsula which was annexed by Russia in March 2014.

"No matter how much some members of parliament scream and tear their shirts, however much they shout that we will not surrender, they must abandon the Crimea," she told 112 Ukraine.

Savchenko described Crimea as "another Transnistria," a reference to the unrecognized territory which is the root of an entrenched conflict in neighboring Moldova.

According to the former pilot and prisoner of war, if Ukraine somehow returns Crimea to Ukraine, Russia will formally annex territory in the Donbass.

Later on Wednesday, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the ownership of the Crimea is "not a topic for discussion."

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