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Kremlin Advisor Surkov and U.S. Envoy Volker to Discuss Ukraine

August 21, 2017



United States Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker **U.S. Embassy Kyiv Ukraine / Flickr**

Kremlin advisor Vladislav Surkov and U.S. special representative to Ukraine Kurt Volker are set to meet in Minsk on Monday to discuss the conflict in Ukraine, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry said.

The meeting will held behind closed doors and press will not be allowed to attend, the Interfax news agency reported, citing the ministry's press spokesman.

Minsk was agreed by the sides as the venue for the meeting after U.S. officials proposed Vienna and Russia suggested meeting in its Baltic exclave Kaliningrad.

The two officials will discuss the situation in Ukraine more than three years after the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovych was toppled and conflict broke out in the country's east between government forces and pro-Russian separatists.

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Surkov, who earned the moniker the "grey cardinal" as Putin's deputy chief of staff, is seen as a key intermediary between the Kremlin and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

A Reuters report in May cited three former top separatist commanders as saying Surkov personally managed the situation in eastern Ukraine on behalf of the Kremlin.

Volker, a former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, was appointed U.S. envoy to Ukraine in July.

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