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Turkey Backs Crimea's Return to Ukraine – FM

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MevlutCavusoglu / Twitter

Turkey is willing to support the Russia-annexed Crimean peninsula's return to Ukraine, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Wednesday.

The statement comes amid an already uneasy relationship between Moscow and Ankara, which are traditionally partners but have recently been at odds over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Syrian conflict and Libya's civil war. In October, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey does not recognize the 2014 annexation of Crimea and will continue to support its territorial integrity as "part of Ukraine."

"We will continue to strengthen our relationship, especially in the areas of military cooperation and the defense industry," Cavusoglu tweeted.

Referring to Ukraine's newly announced initiative aimed at refocusing the international community's attention on returning Crimea to Kiev, Cavusoglu said "we welcome the Crimean Platform initiative."

The statement came shortly after the Turkish diplomat had a “friendly meeting” with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmitry Kuleba.

The first Crimean Platform summit is expected to be held next May, with representatives from Turkey, France, Germany, Britain and the U.S. set to attend.

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