

# Speech

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## SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SPEECH

### Secretary of Defense James Mattis Remarks with President Petro Poroshenko

AUG. 24, 2017

Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense Secretary of Defense James  
Mattis

Presidential Palace, Kyiv, Ukraine

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Mr. President, it is an honor to stand alongside you on Ukraine's Independence Day as a tangible demonstration of our unity and solidarity.

Have no doubt, the United States stands with Ukraine. We support you in the face of threats to your sovereignty and territorial integrity, to international law, and to the international order

We do not, and we will not, accept Russia's seizure of Crimea.

And despite Russia's denials, we know they are seeking to redraw international borders by force, undermining the sovereign and free nations of Europe.

Russia put its reputation on the line when it accepted the call for an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons, and to grant the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe unfettered access under the Minsk Agreement.

In 1994, Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum – alongside the United States, United Kingdom and Ukraine – providing Ukraine with assurances that all parties would respect its independence, sovereignty and existing borders.

In that memorandum, Russia also promised to refrain from the threat or use of force in exchange for Ukraine’s relinquishment of nuclear weapons.

Once again, under the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, Russia agreed to refrain from the “threat or use of force against each other or any other state, its sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence.”

Unfortunately, Russia is not adhering to the letter, much less the spirit, of these international commitments

The U.S. and our allies will continue to press Russia to honor its Minsk commitments and our sanctions will remain in place until Moscow reverses the actions that triggered them.

As President Trump has made clear, the United States remains committed to diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

I am especially pleased to be here today with Ambassador Kurt Volker, the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations. Ambassador Volker is coordinating carefully with our allies on these efforts.

As Secretary Tillerson said in July, the United States’ goals are to restore Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to seek the safety and security of all Ukrainian citizens, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or religion.

We in the United States understand the strategic challenges associated with Russian aggression.

Alongside our allies, we remain committed to upholding the widely accepted international norms that have increased global stability since the tragedy of World War II.

Mr. President, we continue to support Ukraine and remain committed to building the capacity of your armed forces.

We applaud Ukraine's commitment to reform and modernize its defense sector according to NATO standards. This will make Ukraine's forces more operationally effective as well as more effective protectors of the Ukrainian people. We look forward to full implementation of NATO standards.

The United States and Ukraine are cultivating a lasting strategic partnership, already twenty-five years in the making, built on common security interests and shared principles.

I look forward to continuing to build on that partnership, which we strengthened when President Trump hosted you at the White House in June and reinforced during our meetings here today.

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