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## Kerry Raises Prospect of More Sanctions Against Russia Over Ukraine

### *Kerry піднімає питання про перспективу нових санкцій проти Росії через Україну*

*Приблизно через тиждень після того, як перемир'я на Україні повинно було вступити в силу, держсекретар США Джон Керрі зустрівся зі своїм британським колегою, щоб обговорити введення додаткових санкцій у зв'язку з тим, що, за його словами, є безцеремонне порушення Росією угоди. Керрі заявив, що на розгляді знаходяться більш серйозні санкції, і додав, що, як він очікує, президент Обама прийме рішення про те, які заходи вжити, у найближчі кілька днів. Керрі заявив, що адміністрація Обами прагнула винайти санкції, які вона вже ввела, таким чином, щоб вони вплинули на російське керівництво без шкоди населенню країни. Але, давши очевидне попередження Кремлю, Керрі сказав, що після посилення санкції будуть мати більш широкий ефект, що може призвести до великим сумнівам в політиці президента Володимира Путіна всередині країни.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/world/europe/kerry-says-further-sanctions-on-russia-will-be-discussed-over-ukraine.html>



A demonstration in Moscow on Saturday against the protest movement in Ukraine that led to President Viktor F. Yanukovich's fleeing the country last year. Credit: Sergei Karpukhin/Reuters

Nearly one week after a cease-fire was supposed to have gone into effect in Ukraine, Secretary of State John Kerry met with his British counterpart to discuss the imposition of additional sanctions because of what he called Russia's "brazen" violations of the agreement.

"We know to a certainty what Russia has been providing to the separatists," Mr. Kerry said at the start of a meeting with Philip Hammond, the British foreign secretary. "We're not going to sit there and be part of this kind of extraordinarily craven behavior at the expense of the sovereignty and integrity of a nation."

After their meeting, Mr. Kerry told reporters that "more serious sanctions" were being weighed, and he added that he expected President Obama to make a decision on what steps to take in the next few days. Mr. Kerry did not provide any examples of what sanctions might be chosen or when they might take effect.

Mr. Kerry said the Obama administration had sought to target the sanctions it had already imposed so they would influence the Russian leadership without hurting the Russian public. But in a clear warning to the Kremlin, Mr. Kerry said that sanctions would have a broader effect as they are stepped up, which could lead to more questioning at home of President Vladimir V. Putin's policies.

"Increasingly there will be an inevitable broader impact as the sanctions ratchet up," he said. "I am confident that some additional steps will be taken in response to the breaches of this cease-fire and to the process that had been agreed upon in Minsk."

Washington has expressed alarm over the past week about Russia's role in supporting the separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Last week, the State Department said Russia was not only providing the separatists with weapons but also using its own forces to fire shells and rockets at Debaltseve, a strategically important town that Ukrainian troops were forced to abandon.

With Ukraine's loss of Debaltseve, there is growing concern in Western countries that Mariupol, a port city in eastern Ukraine, could be the separatists' next objective. Mr. Kerry echoed those concerns on Saturday, warning that Russia had been involved in "land grabbing."

The outrage in Western capitals, however, has yet to lead to a package of tough, new measures like economic sanctions or the shipment of defensive arms to the Ukrainian military. And it remains to be seen whether the United States and its allies can forge an effective response to Russia's support of the separatists.

Mr. Hammond, who in his public comments made no specific reference to sanctions, also condemned Russia's "continued aggression" while emphasizing the need to maintain the close "alignment" between European and American strategies on Ukraine.

Britain, France and Germany have been opposed to sending arms to Ukraine's forces, arguing that such a move would lead to an escalation of the fighting.

The Obama administration has been weighing whether to send defensive weapons to Ukraine. Proponents have argued that sending weapons to the Ukrainians would dissuade the Russians and the pro-Russian separatists from trying to take more territory.

But the White House has also allowed Germany and France to take the lead in the diplomacy with Russia over Ukraine. And the Obama administration's desire to close ranks with the Europeans, along with its cautious approach toward Russia, may be pushing the issue of arms to the back burner. While Mr. Kerry asserted that sending lethal weapons to Ukraine was still under discussion, he said nothing to indicate a decision on providing military support was imminent.

In one positive sign for the cease-fire, the Ukrainian Army and the separatists exchanged dozens of prisoners, including more than 100 captured in the battle for Debaltseve, late on Saturday on a remote highway across the front lines. The cease-fire agreement signed in Minsk this month called for both sides to release all prisoners.

In the swap on Saturday, the separatists released 139 Ukrainian soldiers in exchange for 52 prisoners released by the central government. It appeared a generous exchange on the part of

the separatists by the standards of prisoner releases, where officers, the wounded and high-profile detainees are generally highly valued and not swapped en masse.

This time, among those released was a Ukrainian soldier wounded in the chaotic and bloody retreat from Debaltseve who survived for three days lying in a field before being captured. The rebels also released soldiers captured in a January battle for the Donetsk airport, a group viewed as heroes in Ukraine and nicknamed the cyborgs.

“They just freed 139 Ukrainian soldiers!” President Petro O. Poroshenko wrote in a post on Facebook. “Among them are soldiers captured near Debaltseve, and also ‘cyborgs’ from Donetsk Airport. I demand the release of all detainees. I did and will do all I can for this.”

It’s unclear how many prisoners each side holds, though certainly many hundreds remain in detention. The separatists have said they hold more than a thousand Ukrainians while asserting that the authorities in Kiev hold more than 580 rebels.

The Ukrainian Army, outgunned and losing ground, has had a chronic shortage of prisoners of war to trade, and has resorted to releasing civilians who have been detained as pro-Russian activists in street demonstrations in different parts of Ukraine. The swap on Saturday seemed to be no exception. In a statement, the Donetsk People’s Republic said civilians were among the 52 released.

In Moscow and other Russian cities on Saturday, thousands of government supporters yelling anti-American and anti-Ukrainian slogans marched through the streets.

Protesters carrying flags and banners filed past the Bolshoi Theater in the Russian capital and assembled for a rally at nearby Revolution Square.

“There will be no Maidan in Russia!” the crowd chanted, referring to months of protests last year on the Maidan, Kiev’s main square, that led to the departure of President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

The official narrative as reported by state-run television in Russia, and thus accepted by most Russians, is that the uprising in Ukraine last year was an American-engineered coup, aided by Ukrainian Nazis, and fomented to overthrow Mr. Yanukovich, a pro-Russian president.

Mr. Yanukovich, who fled to Russia by helicopter after his security forces evaporated, has said little since.

But he broke his silence to give an interview to Russia’s main television channel that will be broadcast on Monday. In excerpts posted online by Channel One, he said he was ready to return to Ukraine.

“As soon as there is a possibility for me to return, I will return and will do everything I can to make life better in Ukraine,” Mr. Yanukovich said. “Today, the main task is to stop the war.”

In London, topics on the agenda between Mr. Hammond and Mr. Kerry included the turmoil in Libya, the nuclear negotiations with Iran and efforts to counter Islamic State militants who have taken over much of eastern Syria and northern and western Iraq.

This month, a British parliamentary committee complained that Britain had been playing a “strikingly modest” role in the coalition’s struggle against the Islamic State militant group.

Britain has carried out only 6 percent of the coalition’s airstrikes in Iraq, the committee noted in a report, and has not played an important role in training Iraq’s forces.

The panel reported that Britain had only three military personnel outside the Kurdish region of Iraq, compared with Australia’s 400, Italy’s 280 and Spain’s 300.