

Kerry Threatens Lavrov With Cost of Incursion Into Ukraine

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (L) with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the Russian Ambassador's residence in Paris.

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has told Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that Washington is watching events in eastern Ukraine with great concern and any moves by Moscow to destabilize Ukraine will "incur further costs for Russia."

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Monday that in a telephone call Kerry "called on Russia to publicly disavow the activities of separatists, saboteurs and provocateurs" in Ukraine.

She said the two discussed convening direct talks in the next 10 days between Ukraine, Russia, the U.S. and the European Union to defuse tensions.

The government in Kiev has said the overnight seizure of public buildings in three cities in eastern Ukraine's mainly Russian-speaking industrial heartland were a replay of events

in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula Moscow annexed last month.

Kerry noted that the actions in eastern Ukraine "do not appear to be a spontaneous set of events," the spokeswoman said.

She said Kerry "noted the Ukrainian government's assertion that this appeared to be a carefully orchestrated campaign with Russian support," and said he referred to "the recent arrests of Russian intelligence operatives working in Ukraine."

Kerry noted that Ukrainian government leaders were traveling on Monday to all the affected cities "to try to negotiate evacuation of government buildings and de-escalation of tensions," Psaki said.

The secretary called on Russia "to publicly disavow the activities of separatists, saboteurs and provocateurs, called for de-escalation and dialogue and called on all parties to refrain from agitation in Ukraine," she said.

"He made clear that any further Russian efforts to destabilize Ukraine will incur further costs for Russia," Psaki said.

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