

Germany, France, U.S. React to Spiraling Ukraine Conflict

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The  **Moscow Times**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed her concern to Russian President Vladimir Putin over pro-Russian separatists shooting down a Ukrainian army transport plane, saying it made a ceasefire all the more important.

The German government said in a statement over the weekend that Merkel and French President Francois Hollande had spoken together by telephone with Putin following the incident, in which 49 servicemen died.

"During the call, the chancellor voiced her dismay over the shooting down of a military plane in Ukraine, during which numerous people lost their lives," German government spokesman Georg Streiter said in a statement.

"This incident illustrates the urgency of a ceasefire."

France's Elysee also "stressed the importance" of a ceasefire in a separate statement issued in Paris.

Merkel also urged Russia to control its borders effectively, stop the influx of arms and combatants into Ukraine, and to exert its influence over the separatists to stick to a truce.

The U.S. State Department said Friday, however, that Russia had sent tanks, heavy weapons and rocket launchers to Ukraine in recent days in support of separatists. Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Saturday pressed his Russian counterpart to make clear Moscow's commitment to end the flow of weapons and other support to separatists in Ukraine, the State Department said.

In addition, the U.S. condemned an attack on the Russian Embassy in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital. Protesters threw eggs and overturned parked cars with diplomatic plates.

Ukraine must meet its international obligations to provide "adequate security," State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki said.

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