

# Putin Aide Met with Poroshenko, Report Says

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Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov

A mysterious meeting was held Sunday between presidential aide Vladislav Surkov and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Kiev, Ukrainian UNN news agency reported, citing anonymous sources.

The meeting was not announced in advance and very few people knew about it, according to the report. It remains unclear what the two discussed, but there has been widespread speculation since the crisis in Ukraine began that Surkov has been acting as President Vladimir Putin's intermediary with the new Ukrainian authorities.

Surkov, former deputy head of the Kremlin's administration in charge of internal politics in Russia, currently serves as Putin's aide on relations with South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The Ukrainian presidential administration could neither confirm nor deny whether the meeting took place on Sunday, according to UNN.

According to earlier media reports, Surkov has visited Kiev at least twice this year: once in January and once in February to hold talks with then-President Viktor Yanukovich, who was soon ousted by protesters.

Surkov has widely been seen as one of the Kremlin's top men trying to secure and maintain a strong foothold in Ukraine. Accordingly, he is one of many Russian officials to have been hit with U.S. sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea in March.

While there has been no official comment or explanation for his meeting with Poroshenko over the weekend, it came just two days after a cease-fire was brokered between Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists.

Representatives of Ukraine, Russia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the self-proclaimed people's republics of the Donbass region signed the deal in Minsk on Friday. It was brokered by both Poroshenko and Putin.

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