

Obama Urges Russia to 'Change Course' on Ukraine

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During his annual address to the 193-nation United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President Barack Obama urged Russia to back down from its actions in Ukraine.

He said that if Russia took the path of peace and diplomacy, then the United States would lift its economic sanctions and would be prepared to engage in the type of diplomacy that in the past has reduced U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles and persuaded Syria to give up chemical weapons.

"That's the kind of cooperation we are prepared to pursue again if Russia changes course," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown no inclination thus far to bow to Western demands that he end Russian actions in eastern Ukraine after seizing Crimea earlier this year.

Obama's speech covered a great deal of ground. The Islamic State featured front and center in the speech, as he warned the radical militant group's fighters to "leave the battlefield while

they can." The U.S. president then asked the world to back a U.S.-led campaign against the militants in Iraq and Syria.

Obama also zeroed in on Iran, which he urged to "not let this opportunity pass" to forge a nuclear deal and, indirectly called on China to ease its pressure on its Asia-Pacific neighbors.

In a departure from his prepared text, Obama urged Israel to extend an olive branch to the Palestinians after a summer of violence in Gaza.

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