

Putin and Poroshenko meeting in Minsk makes little progress

World

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With the constant lies coming from the Russian side and the continued dispatch of huge amounts of arms into Ukraine by the Russian army it is impossible to see how Ukraine will have any choice except to continue its attacks on the pro-Russian terrorists who still control parts of Ukrainian territory.

MINSK, Aug. 27, 2014 (UBO) - Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko had a one-on-one meeting at the trilateral summit in Minsk on Aug. 26, their first encounter since June 6 in France, Concorde Capital told its clients in an online advisory today that continues below. The main topic was a peaceful resolution to the war in Donbas, Poroshenko told reporters, calling the negotiations very complicated. "I can say that the logic of the peace plan was finally supported by all heads of state, without exception," he said. Poroshenko and Putin also agreed to arrange consultations between their respective joint chiefs of staff and border agencies to monitor the situation in eastern Ukraine, Poroshenko summarized afterwards, as reported the Interfax-Ukrayina news agency. "We agreed that consultations of border officials will begin immediately, the goal of which will be ensuring the fulfillment of requirements of establishing control on the Ukrainian and Russian border, he said. The joint chiefs of staff will discuss ensuring the preconditions for peace in the Donbas region, he said. The two sides also agreed to activate the work of a contact group with the OSCE's involvement. The Ukrainian government is continuing to require the release of all hostages, as well as the need for close the border to transfers of arms and military hardware from Russia, he said. "On the basis of the peace plan, a road map will be developed, possibly within the consultations of a trilateral contact group, in order to achieve a ceasefire regime as quickly as possible, which will be ensured by the representatives of the OSCE monitoring mission," he said. The ceasefire regime should be exclusively bilateral, he said. Poroshenko and Putin also reached an agreement to renew consultations on natural gas issues, which had reached a dead end, Putin told reporters afterwards. "To be frank, it's a difficult issue that's in a dead end, but discussing it is needed all the same," Putin said. They also agreed to cooperate on the delivery of humanitarian aid for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, he said. The sides involved "didn't materially discuss a ceasefire in Ukraine, Putin said. "We, Russia, can't talk about some ceasefire conditions or possible agreements between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk," he said, adding that it's an internal matter for Ukraine, not Russia. The Donbas war was mentioned in only three percent of Putin's official remarks at the summit, the Ukrayinska Pravda news site reported on Aug. 26. "Early takeaway from meeting: Putin ignores elephant in the room (war in Ukraine) and rants about trade, mentions war only in passing," tweeted Associated Press reporter Nataliya Vasilyeva. Also in attendance were Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, EU Energy Commissioner Gunther Oettinger, and EU Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht. The Russia-Ukraine-EU working group will intensify its work and formulate proposals by Sept. 12, Putin said. The talks were focused on two important issues: establishing peace and security, particularly an end to military activity in

eastern Ukraine, as well as the economic aspects of implementing the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement. The Russian government is seeking to amend and make additions to the agreement and its implementation program by Sept. 12, Russian Economic Development Minister Aleksey Uliukayev said on Aug. 27, as reported by the RIA Novosti news agency. Trilateral talks on the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement will be held on Sept. 12 in Brussels involving Uliukayev, de Gucht, and Ukraine Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin, de Gucht said on Aug. 26. "I believe that we will be able to find solutions to the so-called trade complications that will emerge as a result of implementing the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area," de Gucht said. Russian Armed Forces are continuing to transfer military hardware to the Ukrainian border and fire upon Ukrainian positions, reported the press center of the Anti-Terrorist Operation on Aug. 27. Armed fighting continued between Ukrainian and separatist forces for control or isolation of several cities and towns in the Luhansk region near the Russian border. The Russian military brought a large column of military hardware to the border crossing of Gukovo the evening of Aug. 26. The column includes 100 units of hardware, including tanks, trucks, Grad rocket launchers, and infantry vehicles. The Russian military is likely aiming to transfer this hardware to separatists in Ukraine, reported Andriy Lysenko, the spokesman for the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. Concorde analyst Zenon Zawada added: "Poroshenko and Putin achieved what could be expected of them, given that no breakthroughs were being anticipated by anyone. A potential spark for future conflict is the Russian demand to amend or add to the Association Agreement and program. We see the Ukrainian government resisting such attempts, though statements from EU leaders recently (particularly from German Chancellor Angela Merkel) indicate they're now more willing to accommodate the Russians than before its military aggression. Indeed we expect this Russian attempt to mold the agreement to its favor will be used to undermine the Association Agreement's ratification in parliament, where Ukraine's latest pro-Russian forces still lurk. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian government finds itself in a difficult position. The EU leadership is urging against a Ukrainian military defeat of pro-Russian and Russian forces. Yet by intensifying its armed support for the separatists these last few days, Putin has indicated his eagerness to keep warring (further demonstrated in his disinterest in discussing a ceasefire in Minsk). The momentum remains with the Ukrainian side, which could achieve its victory by October, at the latest. Just how the Ukrainian government will accommodate the Europeans and Russians, while at the same time extinguishing the war in its own interest, looks to be quite the conundrum for Poroshenko in the next several weeks.

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Photo courtesy Ukraine presidential website