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Putin to skip this year's meeting, but Russia's concerns will top the agenda

Путін пропустить цьогорічну зустріч, але побоювання Росії стануть головним питанням порядку денного

Росія запропонувала розгортання миротворців ООН на Сході України, де бійці-сепаратисти, підтримані кремлівськими бійцями, приймають участь у трирічному військовому конфлікті з українськими силами. США та Україна офіційно заявили, що не готові розглянути російську пропозицію. Вашингтон і Київ підтримують у цілому ідею миротворців ООН на Сході України, однак хочуть, щоб миротворчі сили також патрулювати кордон з Росією, який Україна втратила у 2014 р.

<http://www.latimes.com/world/la-un-general-assembly-live-updates-putin-to-skip-this-year-s-meeting-but-1505756354-htmstory.html>

Russian President Vladimir Putin won't be attending this year's United Nations General Assembly meeting because of a scheduling conflict. Instead, he's overseeing a massive joint [military exercise](#) with neighboring Belarus that has the West, particularly NATO countries, nervous with speculation about so many Russian soldiers along their borders.

In Putin's absence, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will speak Thursday. Among the topics Russia will likely want to address are North Korea, Ukraine, Syria and what Moscow sees as a growing sentiment of Russophobia in the West — which the Kremlin see as led by the United States.

Lavrov met this week with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in a lead-up to the annual U.N. meeting. They discussed the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, according to Russian news reports.

Russian Sen. Konstantin Kosachev said Monday that the two diplomats “should coordinate their steps.” Kosachev chairs the International Affairs Committee in Russia’s upper house of parliament.

It will likely prove difficult to coordinate the two countries’ opposing sides on many issues, especially on the question of Ukraine. Russia has proposed the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers in eastern Ukraine, where Kremlin-backed separatist fighters have been engaged in a three-year military conflict with Ukrainian forces.

On Monday, the Russian U.N. ambassador, Vasily Nebenzia, said the U.S. and Ukraine had formally told Russia they are not prepared to work with the Russian proposal as is, according to Russian news agencies. Washington and Kiev support the idea of U.N. peacekeepers in eastern Ukraine, which Putin proposed last week, but want the peacekeeping forces to also patrol the border with Russia, which Kiev lost control of to separatist fighters in 2014.

When it comes to proposals on reforming the U.N., Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said on the sidelines of the meeting that Moscow is looking for a dialogue on how to go about those reforms, according to the Russian news agency TASS. Earlier, he indicated that Russia would not sign a U.S.-led reform initiative, which has been signed by 128 other countries. The reform proposal calls for deep cuts and staffing of the U.N. and streamlining the organization’s structure.