

Remarks on the Situation in Ukraine *March 20, 2014*

Good morning, everybody. I wanted to provide an update on the situation in Ukraine and the steps that the United States is taking in response.

Over the last several days, we've continued to be deeply concerned by events in Ukraine. We've seen an illegal referendum in Crimea; an illegitimate move by the Russians to annex Crimea; and dangerous risks of escalation, including threats to Ukrainian personnel in Crimea and threats to southern and eastern Ukraine as well. These are all choices that the Russian Government has made, choices that have been rejected by the international community, as well as the Government of Ukraine. And because of these choices, the United States is today moving, as we said we would, to impose additional costs on Russia.

Based on the Executive order that I signed in response to Russia's initial intervention in Ukraine, we're imposing sanctions on more senior officials of the Russian Government. In addition, we are today sanctioning a number of other individuals with substantial resources and influence who provide material support to the Russian leadership, as well as a bank that provides material support to these individuals.

Now, we're taking these steps as part of our response to what Russia has already done in Crimea. At the same time, the world is watching with grave concern as Russia has positioned its military in a way that could lead to further incursions into southern and eastern Ukraine. For this reason, we've been working closely with our European partners to develop more severe actions that could be taken if Russia continues to escalate the situation.

As part of that process, I signed a new Executive order today that gives us the authority to impose sanctions not just on individuals, but on key sectors of the Russian economy. This is not our preferred outcome. These sanctions would not only have a significant impact on the Russian economy, but could also be disruptive to the global economy. However, Russia must know that further escalation will only isolate it

further from the international community. The basic principles that govern relations between nations in Europe and around the world must be upheld in the 21st century. That includes respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the notion that nations do not simply redraw borders or make decisions at the expense of their neighbors simply because they are larger or more powerful.

One of our other top priorities continues to be providing assistance to the Government of Ukraine so it can stabilize its economy and meet the basic needs of the Ukrainian people. As I travel to Europe next week to meet with the G-7 and other European and Asian allies, I once again urge Congress to pass legislation that is necessary to provide this assistance. And do it right away. Expressions of support are not enough. We need action. I also hope that the IMF moves swiftly to provide a significant package of support for Ukrainians as they pursue reforms.

In Europe, I'll also be reinforcing a message that Vice President Biden carried to Poland and the Baltic States this week: America's support for our NATO allies is unwavering. We're bound together by our profound article 5 commitment to defend one another and by a set of shared values that so many generations sacrificed for. We've already increased our support for our Eastern European allies, and we will continue to strengthen NATO's collective defense, and we will step up our cooperation with Europe on economic and energy issues as well.

Now, let me close by making a final point. Diplomacy between the United States and Russia continues. We've emphasized that Russia still has a different path available, one that deescalates the situation and one that involves Russia pursuing a diplomatic solution with the Government in Kiev, with the support of the international community. The Russian people need to know, and Mr. Putin needs to understand, that the Ukrainians shouldn't have to choose between the West and Russia. We want the Ukrainian people to determine their own

destiny and to have good relations with the United States, with Russia, with Europe, with anyone that they choose. That can only happen if Russia also recognized the rights of all the Ukrainian people to determine their future as free individuals and as a sovereign nation, rights that people and nations around the world understand and support.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to Executive Orders 13660, 13661, and 13662, which are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Blocking Property of Additional Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine

March 20, 2014

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the “order”) further expanding the scope of the national emergency I declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, and expanded in Executive Order 13661 of March 16, 2014, with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in Ukraine.

In the order, I find that the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation with respect to Ukraine—including its purported annexation of Crimea and its use of force in Ukraine—undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, and thereby constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to operate in such sectors of the Russian Federation economy as may be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, such as financial services, energy, metals and mining, engineering, and defense and related materiel;

- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

In addition, the order suspends entry into the United States of any alien determined to meet one or more of the above criteria. I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The letter referred to Executive Order 13662, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.