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Tillerson: Ukraine Is Biggest Obstacle to Normal Russia Ties

Speaking Thursday at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Russia is entirely to blame for ongoing tensions with the US, [saying violence within Ukraine was the biggest obstacle](#) to any normalization of US-Russia relations.



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

Tillerson said the US continues to blame Russia entirely for the conflict within Ukraine, even accusing Russian troops of attacking OSCE monitors, something that previously had never been alleged before.

Tillerson also insisted the [US would “never” accept Crimea as part of the Russian Federation](#), and that it remains Ukrainian, saying US sanctions against Russia would remain in place until Ukraine gets Crimea back.

This effectively means that US sanctions against Russia are permanent, with Russia obviously having no intention of forcing Crimea out of its federation and back into

Ukraine, given it hosts both a major Russian naval base and a large number of ethnic Russians, neither of which they're likely to accept being forced into Ukraine given the countries' current acrimony.