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## New Crimean War in the making: Russia readies to break diplomatic ties with Ukraine

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In response to attempted terrorist attacks in the Crimea, Russia may break diplomatic ties with Ukraine, a source at Russian foreign policy circles told the *Izvestia* newspaper.

"The termination of diplomatic relations could be one of the options for Moscow's tough response. Moscow is looking into such an opportunity. It is up to the head of state to make the final decision, though," the source told the newspaper.

Deputy Chairman of the committee for international affairs at the Federation Council, Vladimir Dzhбаров said: "As for the opportunity to break diplomatic relations, it is a prerogative of the head of state, but Moscow needs to revise its relations with Kiev against the backdrop of recent developments in the Crimea."

Russian President Putin said that he was not going to leave the events in the Crimea unanswered. "Of course, a meeting of the Norman format, especially in China, does not make any sense under these conditions," Putin said.

On August 10, the Federal Security Service said that Russian special services prevented terrorist acts in the Crimea. In addition, Ukrainian the services prevented several attempts of Ukrainian

sabotage and reconnaissance groups to penetrate in the Crimea. Two Russian soldiers were killed as a result of the armed clashes.

Speaking about the attempts to penetrate into the Crimea, Putin said that Ukraine switched to the practice of terror instead of looking for ways of peaceful regulation of the crisis.

Pravda.Ru asked Director of International Projects at the Institute of the Russian National Strategy, Yury Solozobov, to comment on the situation.

"Most likely, there were more than two military men killed. Acts of sabotage have been going on for over a year, but it was not talked about much. I think that Putin has made the right decision when he turned the table of the Norman format of negotiations. This is a highly binding form of talks that Russia is fed up with. The more it continues, the more claims they set forth to Russia for Minsk-2. Kiev doesn't want to do anything, and they simply blame it all on Russia. Putin has made the right move at the time when Ukraine has been waging covert subversive warfare for over a year," Yury Solozobov said.

When asked about the Minsk-2 agreements, the expert said that it did not make any sense at all to continue this format of talks.

"They gather and talk, but then it turns out that Russia has additional obligations. It's like catching a cab, but the driver tells you to pay more than the counter actually says. Of course, you only want to leave and never catch this cab again," the expert said.

"I do not think that Russia will terminate diplomatic ties with Ukraine, but the countries indeed may reduce their diplomatic relations to the level of temporary representatives. These are very bad and hostile relations, but it was not Russia that started all that. It is Kiev's fault. When I read American and European press, they all blame Russia, but no one says that terrorism cannot be encouraged," said Yury Solozobov.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev admitted that Russia could indeed break diplomatic relations with Ukraine. Speaking to reporters after the meeting of the heads of the Eurasian Economic Council, Medvedev said that Russia had terminated diplomatic ties with Georgia after the five-day war in 2008, when Georgia attacked South Ossetia.

"I would not want it to end it like this, but if there is no other option left to influence the situation, the president may make such a decision. The final decision on the matter can only be taken by the president, who is in charge of the foreign policy of our state," Medvedev said.