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From: "Hart, Liz" <elizabeth_a_hart@ovp.eop.gov>
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FOIA-6

From: Franklin, Andrew (Intern)
Sent: Monday, June 09, 2014 1:54 PM
To: Hart, Liz
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Vice President Biden's trip to Ukraine

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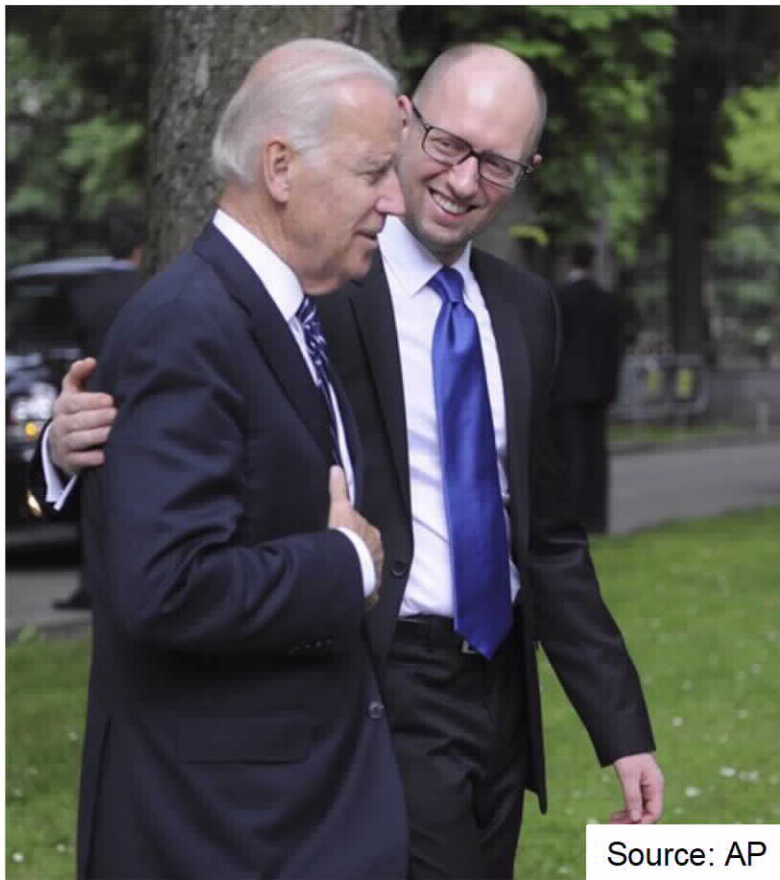
Source: The White House



Source: AP



Source: AP



Source: AP



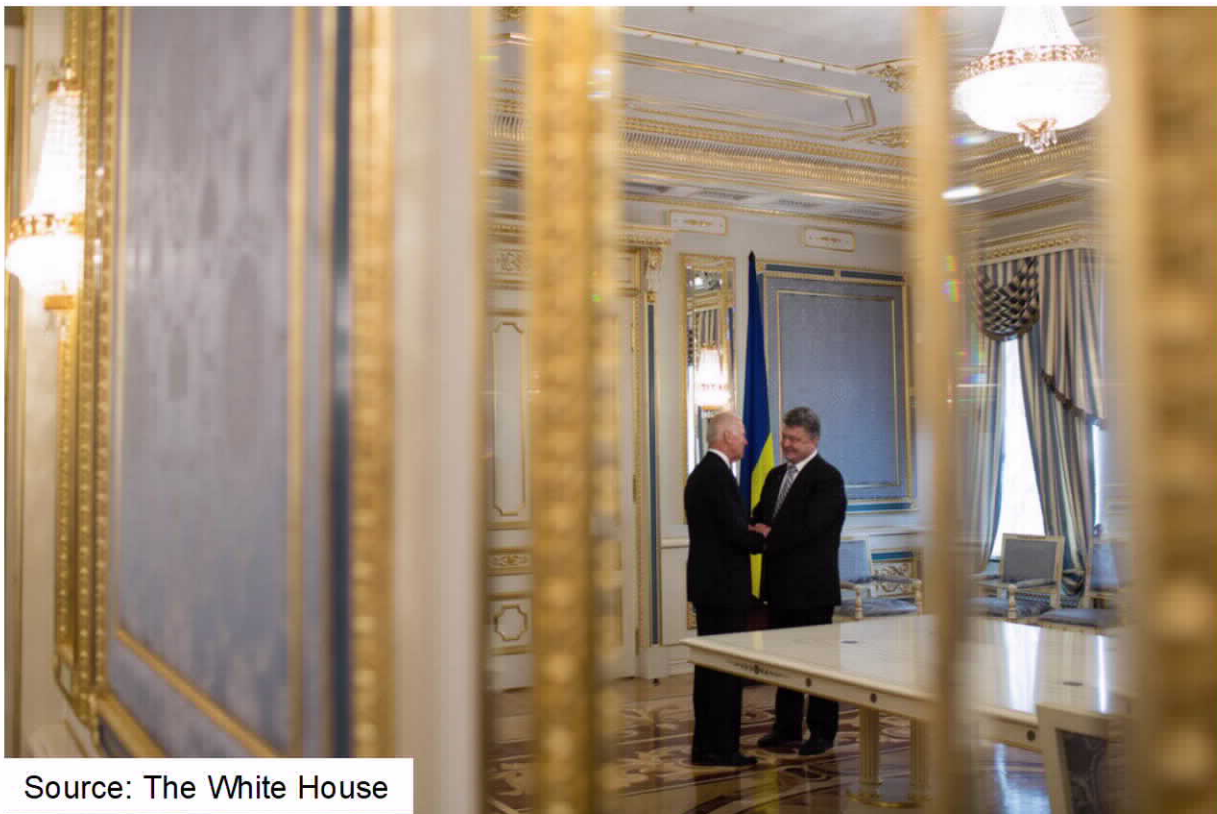
Source: Ukrainian Updates



Source: Reuters



Source: Reuters



Source: The White House



Source: Reuters

The Hill
USA chants welcome Biden to Ukraine
By Rachel Huggins / June 7, 2014

Vice President Biden and U.S. officials attending inaugural events honoring Ukraine's new leader were warmly greeted as they walked the streets of Kiev.

After Petro Poroshenko was sworn into office on Saturday, Biden and Sen. McCain (R-Ariz.) ditched the presidential motorcade and opted to walk to the new president's reception when crowds lined the streets cheering, "thank you" and "USA."

Members of the delegation include: Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt, Daniel B. Baer, ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

Biden greeted everyone he encountered as he and other presidential delegation members walked the red carpet leading to the ceremony.

“How are you? You’re a handsome boy. I’d like to borrow that tie,” Biden told a young boy, according to a White House pool report. He also said hello to several officials and introduced McCain, saying, “You know my friend the senator.”

Poroshenko and Biden spoke for a few minutes at the reception.

“Mr. President, congratulations,” Biden said before posing for photos. McCain embraced the chocolate tycoon-turned president with a hug.

“It’s wonderful to stand with you,” Murphy told the new president.

Radio Free Europe
Biden Meets Moldovan, Georgian Leaders In Kyiv
By: RFE/RL / June 9, 2014

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden has met with Moldovan President Nicolae Timofti during his visit to Kyiv for the inauguration of new Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

The U.S. White House said in a statement that, during the meeting on June 7, Biden announced an additional \$8 million in assistance to Moldova, pending consultations with the U.S. Congress.

The assistance is to support Moldova's European choice and mitigate vulnerabilities to external pressure.

The White House said the package will build upon \$2.7 million in U.S. assistance announced on March 3 which is helping Moldovan businesses to increase productivity and competitiveness so they are better positioned to take advantage of European markets.

When added to funds previously budgeted, the United States is providing approximately \$31 million in assistance to Moldova this year.

While in Kyiv, Biden also met Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili.

The White House said that, during the meeting, Biden announced an additional \$5 million in assistance for Georgia, pending consultations with the U.S. Congress.

This assistance will help individuals affected by Russia's "borderization" of the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABLs) of Georgia's occupied territories, increase access to independent information in the region, promote national unity, and help Tbilisi conduct reforms to strengthen justice sector institutions.

This follows the \$1.5 million ABL assistance announced by Secretary of State John Kerry at the U.S.-Georgia Strategic Partnership meeting on February 26.

When added to funds previously budgeted, Washington is now providing approximately \$65 million in assistance to Georgia this year.

Bloomberg

Ukrainian Leader Says Eastern Violence Must End This Week

By: Daria Marchak, Daryna Krasnolutska and Volodymyr Verbyany / June 9, 2014

Ukraine's new leader, Petro Poroshenko, said the violence that's rocked the former Soviet republic's easternmost regions must end this week as peace talks began involving an envoy of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Poroshenko, who took the oath of office June 7, said negotiations should be held daily. Yesterday's three-way talks in Kiev included the Ukrainian ambassador to Germany, Pavlo Klimkin, the Russian envoy to Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov, and Heidi Tagliavini, a special representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"We must stop the violence this week," Poroshenko said on his website. "Every day when people die, every day when Ukraine pays such a high price is unacceptable."

Poroshenko, who was sworn in a day after discussing cease-fire proposals with Putin, used his inauguration speech to present a plan to bring peace

after more than six months of unrest that's pitted the U.S. and Europe against Russia in the worst standoff since the Cold War. After his May 25 election victory, the 48-year-old billionaire's ability to repair relations with Russia will be key to success in pacifying the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, where the military is battling a separatist insurgency.

Gas Talks

Talks between Russia's gas export monopoly, OAO Gazprom (OGZD), and Ukraine's state-run NAK Naftogaz Ukrainy on resolving a dispute over prices and money owed for past supplies were set to take place in Brussels today, Ukrainian Energy Minister Yuri Prodan said by phone. Russia has set a deadline of tomorrow for Ukraine to start pre-paying for gas. Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported that Ukraine will pay \$1 billion today for gas supplied in November and December.

Russia's Micex stock index rose 0.3 percent as of 4:15 p.m. in Moscow. It's climbed more than 20 percent from a March 14 low. The ruble headed for the strongest level in two weeks, appreciating 0.4 percent to 39.8907 against the central bank's target basket of dollars and euros.

Ukrainian government dollar bonds gained to a five-month high, with the yield on debt due in July 2017 falling 13 basis points to 8.84 percent, down from 14.7 percent five weeks ago.

Meanwhile, unrest continued in eastern Ukraine. Insurgents attacked a military building in Torez, 70 kilometers (45 miles) east of Donetsk, and two people died from gas inhalation after a fire broke out, the local Ostrov news service reported late yesterday.

Base Attacked

Ukrainian soldiers repelled an insurgent attack on a military base in Artemivsk, about 80 kilometers north of Donetsk, Vladyslav Seleznyov, the spokesman for the military operation, said on his Facebook page today. The rebels have changed tactics and are now working in small groups attacking military convoys, he said.

In his speech, Poroshenko switched between languages to address Russian speakers in their mother tongue, pledging to "preserve and strengthen Ukrainian unity and ensure lasting peace." He said he'd steer

the nation toward closer ties with the European Union, create jobs and stamp out graft.

Poroshenko, a businessman with investments including chocolates and media who's Ukraine's fifth president since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has said he's not seeking revenge, offering safe corridors for "Russian mercenaries" to leave the country and an amnesty for those who didn't kill. He's said he'll present a plan to decentralize power and urged early parliamentary elections.

Peace Window

"There's a window for peace now, but it won't stay indefinitely," U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said at a meeting with Poroshenko. "We look for Mr. Putin to meet his end of the commitments and deliver on the pledge to actually work with your government."

Pro-Russian separatist leaders denounced Poroshenko, with Alexander Boroday, leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, saying he's the "president of another country," according to the Russian state-owned RIA Novosti news service. Boroday and his Luhansk counterpart, Valeriy Bolotov, said the Kiev government must withdraw its army before any talks are possible, RIA reported.

Putin ordered security services to enforce the border with Ukraine on June 7, according to RIA. The two countries earlier agreed to close sections of the frontier, Poroshenko said June 6. The Foreign Ministry in Moscow said it was notified by the authorities in Kiev that eight checkpoints were shut.

Obama Meeting

Poroshenko and Putin had a brief meeting June 6 in France, where the Russian president also spoke face-to-face with U.S. President Barack Obama for the first time since the crisis in Ukraine escalated in February. The U.S. and its European allies say Putin is behind the unrest in eastern Ukraine, where hundreds have died. Russia has condemned the administration in Kiev's use of armed forces against its own people.

"The Ukrainian leadership must show its goodwill and wisdom," Putin said at a news conference in Normandy June 6. "They have to immediately stop

the operation and announce a cease-fire. There is no other way to create the conditions for negotiations.”

Bloomberg

Russia-Ukraine Talks to Start as Poroshenko Seeks Peace

By: Daryna Krasnolutska and Kateryna Choursina / June 07, 2014

Ukraine’s new leader, Petro Poroshenko, has agreed to start talks with an envoy of Russian President Vladimir Putin about ending separatist violence in the former Soviet republic’s easternmost regions.

Poroshenko took the oath of office as Ukraine’s president yesterday, a day after he discussed with Putin his proposals for the first steps toward a cease-fire. In his inauguration speech, he presented a plan to bring peace to the nation after more than six months of unrest that’s pitted the U.S. and Europe against Russia in the worst standoff since the Cold War.

“I know that peace is the most important thing that Ukrainian people desire now,” Poroshenko, 48, said yesterday in parliament in Kiev.

Poroshenko, switching between languages to address Russian speakers in their mother tongue, pledged to “preserve and strengthen Ukrainian unity and ensure lasting peace” in the country ravaged by separatist violence. The billionaire, who said he became a grandfather for the first time yesterday, vowed to steer the former Soviet republic toward closer ties with the European Union, create jobs and stamp out corruption.

“There’s a window for peace now, but it won’t stay indefinitely,” U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said yesterday at a meeting with Poroshenko in Kiev. “We look for Mr. Putin to meet his end of the commitments and deliver on the pledge to actually work with your government.”

‘Adequate, Realistic’

After his May 25 landslide election victory, Poroshenko’s ability to repair relations with the country’s eastern neighbor will be key to his success in pacifying Ukraine’s easternmost regions, where the military is battling a separatist insurgency. Ukraine is awaiting the arrival of Putin’s envoy for talks, Andriy Zhigulin, Poroshenko’s spokesman, said today by phone.

Poroshenko's speech addressed "all the pressing issues," Yuriy Yakymenko, head of political research at the Razumkov Center, said by phone from Kiev. "The plan of action proposed to stabilize the internal Ukrainian situation is entirely adequate and realistic. Poroshenko clearly prioritized and targeted foreign policy. He also called a spade a spade, what really is happening, and this is important."

Poroshenko promised safe corridors for "Russian mercenaries" to leave the country and pledged an amnesty for those who didn't kill servicemen or civilians. The president said he'll present a plan to decentralize power and urged early parliamentary elections. He also vowed to crush the insurgency, protect Ukraine as a "unitary state," while guaranteeing the rights of Russian speakers.

'Authority, Decisiveness'

"The head of state has a wide spectrum of different instruments to ensure territorial integrity and peace," Poroshenko said. "There will be no shortage of authority and decisiveness. I do not seek revenge."

Pro-Russian separatist leaders denounced Poroshenko, with Alexander Boroday, leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, saying he's the "president of another country," according to the Russian state-owned RIA Novosti news service. Boroday and his Luhansk counterpart, Valeriy Bolotov, said the Kiev government must withdraw its army before any talks are possible, according to the news service.

Poroshenko's remarks "look hopeful" and Russia will continue to have working relations with Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov, Russia's ambassador in Kiev, said yesterday, RIA reported. The issue of Crimea, annexed by Russia from Ukraine in March, will be peripheral while the two parties work to restore links, Zurabov said, according to RIA.

Border Controls

Putin yesterday ordered security services to enforce the border with Ukraine, according to RIA. The two countries earlier agreed to jointly close sections of the border in the conflict regions, Poroshenko said June 6 in a statement. The Foreign Ministry in Moscow said it received notification by

the authorities in Kiev of eight checkpoints having been shut.

The U.S. yesterday pledged a \$48 million assistance package to Ukraine for tasks including strengthening the border guard service and “confidence-building measures that enhance national unity, particularly in the East and South,” according to a statement from the White House.

Poroshenko and Putin had a brief meeting June 6 in France, where the Russian president also spoke face-to-face with U.S. President Barack Obama for the first time since the crisis in Ukraine escalated in February. Putin welcomed Poroshenko’s commitment to ending the bloodshed and said the government in Kiev must call off its military campaign against pro-Russian separatists.

Asset Rally

The diplomatic flurry pushed Russian financial markets higher. The benchmark stock index jumped 1 percent June 6, extending its gain since a mid-March low to 20 percent. The ruble added 0.8 percent against the dollar. The Ukrainian hryvnia, this year’s worst performer against the U.S. currency with a 30 percent plunge, advanced 0.8 percent.

Meanwhile, unrest continued in Ukraine’s easternmost regions. The army open fire on the insurgents’ base in the city of Slovyansk, forcing them to move their weapons stocks elsewhere, the local Novosti Donbassa newswire reported, without citing anyone. Government forces also used artillery on some occupied buildings, it said, without providing details of casualties.

Three crew members from a Ukrainian plane shot down near the city of Slovyansk two days ago died, three have been hospitalized and two are missing, Vladyslav Seleznyov, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said today on Facebook.

‘Goodwill, Wisdom’

The U.S. and its European allies say Putin is behind the unrest in eastern Ukraine, where hundreds have died in the separatist insurgency. Russia accuses them of backing what it considers an illegitimate administration in Kiev that’s using armed force against its own people.

“The Ukrainian leadership must show its goodwill and wisdom,” Putin said at a news conference in Normandy June 6. “They have to immediately stop the operation and announce a cease-fire. There is no other way to create the conditions for negotiations.”

Poroshenko, a businessman with investments including chocolates and media, became Ukraine’s fifth president since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Biden and European Union President Herman Van Rompuy were among leaders attending yesterday’s ceremony at parliament in Kiev.

“All neighbors stand to benefit from a return to stability in Ukraine and the promotion of growth and development,” Van Rompuy said yesterday in an e-mailed statement. “All neighbors also need to respect its sovereign choices, including stronger ties with the European Union, and its territorial integrity.”

The Wall Street Journal

Petro Poroshenko Sworn In as Ukraine President

By: Paul Sonne and Colleen McCain Nelson / June 7, 2014

KIEV—Chocolate tycoon Petro Poroshenko reached out to residents of Ukraine's restive east on Saturday, promising to end a separatist rebellion in their region that has left hundreds dead and pushed the former Soviet republic to the edge of civil war.

Mr. Poroshenko's ability to carry through with his promise of peace, to salvage Ukraine's economy and push the country toward Europe will determine the success of his presidency for the broad mass of pro-Europe demonstrators who rallied on Kiev's main square to topple Kremlin-friendly President Viktor Yanukovich in late February.

"I don't want war. I don't want revenge. I want peace," Mr. Poroshenko said at Ukraine's parliament, after being sworn in as the country's fifth president. The 48-year-old billionaire, who supported the anti-Yanukovich protests since their start late last year, said he was entering the presidency "to preserve and strengthen the unity of the nation."

The challenge facing Mr. Poroshenko comes amid the worst crisis in

Ukraine's independent history, which has pitted the U.S. and Europe against Russia and driven the widest chasm between Washington and Moscow since the Cold War.

It isn't immediately clear how Mr. Poroshenko can stem the violence, however, seeing as he has ruled out talks with separatist officials and has said there aren't competent regional leaders with whom Kiev can negotiate.

In his speech, Mr. Poroshenko reached out to Ukrainians in the country's Russian-speaking Donetsk and Luhansk regions, part of the Donbas basin, where armed rebels have declared independent republics and denounced Kiev's plans to move toward Europe. Many have demanded to become part of Russia.

The separatist rebels have engaged in bloody clashes with the Ukrainian army since April, when Kiev launched a military offensive to quell the revolt. So far, the offensive has reclaimed some ground but failed to retake the bulk of the region. Meanwhile, it has angered locals upset by civilian casualties and caused many residents to flee their homes.

Kiev and its Western allies have accused Moscow of fomenting the unrest, a charge the Kremlin has denied. Mr. Poroshenko, whose confectionary firm Roshen saw its candies banned in Russia last year, hinted at the accusation of Russian involvement in his speech.

"On the path to the colossal possibilities that have opened up for the European modernization of Ukraine with the fall of tyranny, has arisen a real war, instigated and carried out on Ukrainian territory," he said. Ukrainians won't be made "slaves of criminality and bureaucracy, the servants of colonial authorities," the new president said. He wore a tie the colors of the Ukrainian flag.

Switching into Russian during his speech, Mr. Poroshenko made a direct plea to residents of the rebel-held areas, calling on all who had taken up weapons to lay down their arms and presenting what he called a plan for peace.

He promised more powers of self-governance for the regions by reforming the constitution and decentralizing control but denied calls, including by the Kremlin, to transform Ukraine into a federation of states. He vowed to

respect easterners' right to speak Russian but said Ukrainian would remain the only official state language.

A former foreign minister, Mr. Poroshenko said rebels had not only engaged in looting and abuse of civilians but had also brought the region's economy to the "brink of complete catastrophe." He vowed to bring new jobs to the region, where the economy relies on coal mines and Soviet-era heavy industrial factories. The new president also promised to visit Donbas soon but made clear he wouldn't be negotiating with the separatist movement's leaders as the Kremlin has proposed.

"Today we need a legitimate partner for dialogue. We will not speak with bandits," Mr. Poroshenko said. "But the acting local legislators already don't represent anyone. We're prepared to call emergency local elections in Donbas."

Separatist leaders denounced Mr. Poroshenko's speech on Saturday. Alexander Borodai, a Moscow public-relations consultant leading the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, described the new Ukrainian president's comments as rhetorical propaganda and said he couldn't guarantee Mr. Poroshenko's safety on a trip to the region.

"Why on earth should we guarantee his security if he's the head of an enemy state?" Mr. Borodai said in an interview with the Russian tabloid website LifeNews. He said he would negotiate with Mr. Poroshenko only if he removed the Ukrainian military from Donetsk.

The Donetsk rebel defense commander, Igor Strelkov, told LifeNews he expected the violence to grow worse now that Mr. Poroshenko had assumed his duties. He said that Kiev had asked its Western allies for military aid in a move that the rebel leader said presaged more deaths.

Mr. Poroshenko said Kiev would permit each region to choose its own heroes and craft its own historical memory—an implicit reference to the general distaste in the country's east for Ukrainian nationalists primarily from the country's west.

Mr. Poroshenko guaranteed amnesty for locals without "the blood of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians on their hands" or a history of financing the separatists. He offered safe passage for rebel fighters from Russia to

return to their home country.

Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in March in response to the toppling of Mr. Yanukovych, provoking sanctions against Russian officials by the U.S. and the EU. Russian President Vladimir Putin met Mr. Poroshenko briefly Friday at a D-Day remembrance ceremony in Normandy, France. The new Ukrainian president said he told Mr. Putin that Crimea is Ukrainian but said he wanted to cooperate with Russia.

"There can be no compromises on questions of Crimea, our European choice and our structure of government," Mr. Poroshenko said, regarding Russia. "But all other things we should discuss and decide at the negotiating table."

Mr. Putin, who has pledged to work with Mr. Poroshenko, issued an order Saturday to Russia's Federal Security Service to step up controls on the country's border with Ukraine and prevent people from crossing illegally, according to the Interfax news agency. Ukraine has been forced to abandon border posts where the Luhansk and Donetsk regions meet Russia because guards there have come under fire by separatists. Weapons and reinforcements have flowed over the border, propping up the rebel militants.

The U.S. sent Vice President Joe Biden to Saturday's ceremony. Russia, meanwhile, sent its ambassador to Ukraine, Mikhail Zurabov. Mr. Biden met with Mr. Poroshenko after the speech and pledged \$48 million more in U.S. aid, bringing the total U.S. assistance to Ukraine this year to more than \$184 million. The U.S. also has provided a \$1 billion loan guarantee to help salvage Ukraine's troubled finances.

Mr. Poroshenko spent part of his speech going after his predecessor, Mr. Yanukovych, saying the Donetsk native had betrayed his own people, robbed the region of its wealth and had turned to financing separatists from exile in Russia.

"It's precisely him who carries full responsibility for the political and socio-economic situation in the region," Mr. Poroshenko said. "And for the joblessness, for the poverty, for the refugees. And for the killed citizens and the mothers' tears." Mr. Yanukovych, who has been issuing statements from exile in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, didn't immediately

respond.

During Mr. Yanukovych's inauguration in 2010, the doors to the Ukrainian parliament began closing as he tried to walk in the door, an accident many Ukrainians later said served as a harbinger of his ultimate rejection by the country's people.

On Saturday morning, as Mr. Poroshenko walked up to the same doors, a soldier standing guard dropped his gun and stumbled amid the sweltering heat, looking as if he was about to faint. Mr. Poroshenko continued on into the parliament. On his way out of the building, the new Ukrainian president stopped to check on the soldier's health.

During his speech, Mr. Poroshenko pledged to return Ukraine to its natural place in Europe, saying he would sign the economic portion of an integration pact with the European Union as soon as possible.

"The pen is in my hand," he said. He also vowed to fulfill all necessary requirements so Ukrainians can travel to Europe without visas starting in January 2015 and one day become citizens of the EU. To do that, he promised to snuff out corruption.

"We are a people who were separated from our great homeland of Europe," he said. "We are returning. Finally and irrevocably."

The additional U.S. aid will be directed at helping Ukraine make reforms necessary to comply with an International Monetary Fund assistance package. It will also go to building law enforcement capacity, particularly within the State Border Guard Service, among a number of other projects, the White House said.

One of those projects is the fight against corruption. Mr. Biden emphasized the importance of that fight in joint comments with Mr. Poroshenko on Saturday.

"Corruption is cancer," Mr. Biden said. "It eats away at the fabric of democracy." He said Mr. Poroshenko has shown the will to deal with the problem, as well as the political courage to take necessary steps that may prove unpopular on their face.

The U.S. vice president emphasized the need for Russia to help stop border incursions streaming into eastern Ukraine. "There's a window for peace," he said, appearing alongside Mr. Poroshenko. "And you know as well as anyone that it will not stay open indefinitely."

The New York Times

Poroshenko Takes Ukraine Helm With Tough Words for Russia

By: David Herszenhorn / June 7, 2014

KIEV, Ukraine — Petro Oleksiyovych Poroshenko, a pro-European, billionaire confectioner, was sworn in on Saturday as the fifth president of Ukraine, promising to put an end to a separatist insurrection in the east that has divided the country for months.

He also expressed new resolve, saying Ukraine would never accept Russia's annexation of Crimea, a point he also made in a face-to-face meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Friday.

In a forceful inaugural address, Mr. Poroshenko, 48, called on rebel fighters in eastern Ukraine to put down their weapons and promised safe passage for "Russian mercenaries" who wished to return home. But he said there would be no negotiations with armed insurgents, raising the prospect of further bloodshed as the Ukrainian military seeks to quash the rebellion.

Though the United States and its Western allies expressed new hope of a diplomatic resolution after meetings with Mr. Putin in France at a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of D-Day, Russia's intentions in Ukraine remain unclear, and there have been mixed signals on whether there is consensus among Western nations over further sanctions if diplomatic efforts fail.

Mr. Poroshenko, after being installed in a mostly solemn ceremony at the Ukrainian Parliament, said he hoped to mend relations with Russia. "Citizens of Ukraine will never enjoy the beauty of peace unless we settle down our relations with Russia," he said.

At the same time, however, he voiced no willingness to tolerate recent Russian aggression or the annexation of Crimea, which Mr. Putin has described as the righting of a historical accident that separated the

peninsula from its Russian roots.

“Russia occupied Crimea, which was, is and will be Ukrainian soil,” Mr. Poroshenko told an audience that included Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and other international dignitaries. “Yesterday, in the course of the meeting in Normandy, I told this to President Putin: Crimea is Ukraine soil. Period. There can be no compromise on the issues of Crimea, European choice and state structure.”

Mr. Poroshenko also said he would move swiftly to sign political and economic agreements with the European Union that Ukraine’s former government, under heavy Russian pressure, backed away from in November, setting off the civil unrest. “My pen is in my hands,” he said, adding later, “European democracy, for me, is the best form of government invented by mankind.”

In a sign of outreach, Russia returned its ambassador, Mikhail Y. Zurabov, to Kiev to attend the inaugural festivities. Mr. Zurabov had been recalled to Russia after the ouster of the former Ukrainian president, Viktor F. Yanukovych.

And a day after President Obama demanded that Russia stop the flow of weapons and fighters into Ukraine, Russian news agencies reported that Mr. Putin had ordered tighter controls on the border to prevent people from crossing illegally.

Still, violence continued to flare in eastern Ukraine. An assassination attempt on Denis Pushilin, a pro-Russian, separatist leader in Donetsk, on Saturday resulted in the shooting death of an assistant, Maksym Petruhin. Photographs on Ukrainian news sites showed Mr. Petruhin, wearing a business suit, lying face down on a street alongside a parked car with at least seven bullet holes in the rear door panel.

Mr. Poroshenko won the presidency in a landslide on May 25, in a special election that was called after months of civil unrest toppled Mr. Yanukovych, who fled to Russia.

For many years, Mr. Poroshenko served in Parliament, including a stint as speaker. He was foreign minister under President Viktor A. Yushchenko and trade and economics minister under Mr. Yanukovych.

He earned his fortune making chocolate, and Russia is a major market for his company, Roshen, which has factories and other facilities there. His deep business ties in Russia and his long experience in Ukrainian politics had led to hope that he could negotiate successfully with the Kremlin.

In his inaugural speech, however, he was resolute against Russian intervention. "The issue of territorial integrity of Ukraine is not subject to discussion," he said. "I have just sworn 'with all my deeds to protect the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine,' and I will always be faithful to this sacred promise."

The ceremony was imbued with ritual. Mr. Poroshenko swore the oath of office with his hand on the 16th-century Peresopnytsia Gospel. He was presented with a bejeweled presidential necklace, which framed his tie of sky blue and yellow, Ukraine's national colors. He was also given the bulava, a scepter that is a historical symbol of power.

Mr. Poroshenko opened his speech by recognizing the so-called Heavenly Hundred demonstrators who were killed in clashes with the police in Kiev in the days before Mr. Yanukovich was forced from power.

"Many people thought that we got independence without any difficulty," he said. "It is not true."

After calling for a moment of silence, he turned his attention to the pro-Russian violence in the east and switched from speaking Ukrainian to Russian.

He promised amnesty for fighters who put down their weapons and safe passage for Russian insurgents who wanted to go home. To the peaceful citizens of eastern Ukraine, he said he would welcome dialogue.

He offered conciliatory actions, promising to go to eastern Ukraine "with peace, with a project of government decentralization, with a guarantee of free usage of Russian language in your region, with the strong intention not to divide people into right and wrong Ukrainians, with respect for the specifics of regions, for the right of local communities to their peculiarities in the issues of historic memory, pantheon of heroes, religious traditions."

Mr. Poroshenko also promised to pursue a jobs program and to fight the corruption that has plagued Ukraine throughout its post-Soviet history. He said he would push for parliamentary elections later this year, aiming to meet a demand of demonstrators — many of whom are still camping out in Independence Square in the center of Kiev — who say that changing presidents is not sufficient.

He also acknowledged that the uprising had deeply altered the country. “The victorious revolution of dignity not only changed the government,” he said. “The country has changed. People have changed.”

In conjunction with Mr. Biden’s visit, the White House announced \$48 million in new aid to Ukraine, as well as \$8 million for Moldova and \$5 million for Georgia. Moldova and Georgia are also expected to sign agreements with the European Union this month and have come under Russian pressure as a result.

Meeting with Mr. Poroshenko, Mr. Biden saluted his efforts to combat corruption. “Corruption is a cancer,” he said. “It eats away the fabric of democracy.”

He also reiterated American support for Ukraine. “America’s with you,” Mr. Biden said. “That is not hyperbole.”

Associated Press

Poroshenko sworn in as Ukraine's president

By: Laura Mills and Jim Heintz / June 7, 2014

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine’s new president on Saturday called for pro-Russian rebels in the country’s east to lay down their arms and welcomed dialogue with the insurgents, but said he wouldn’t negotiate with those he called “gangsters and killers” and struck a defiant tone on the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Petro Poroshenko’s inaugural address after taking the oath of office in parliament gave little sign of a quick resolution to the conflict in the east, which Ukrainian officials say has left more than 200 people dead.

He also firmly insisted that Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula annexed by

Russia in March, “was, is and will be Ukrainian.” He gave no indication of how Ukraine could regain control of Crimea, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has said was allotted to Ukraine unjustly under Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Hours after the speech, Putin ordered security tightened along Russia’s border with Ukraine to prevent illegal crossings, Russian news agencies said. Ukraine claims that many of the insurgents in the east have come from Russia; Poroshenko on Saturday said he would offer a corridor for safe passage of “Russian militants” out of the country.

Rebel leaders in the east dismissed Poroshenko’s speech.

“At the moment it’s impossible for him to come (to Donetsk for talks),” said Denis Pushilin, a top figure in the self-declared Donetsk People’s Republic. “Perhaps with security, a group, so people won’t tear him to pieces.”

Poroshenko offered amnesty to rebels who “don’t have blood on their hands.” But “I don’t believe it,” said Valery Bolotov, the insurgent leader in the Luhansk region. Rebels in both Luhansk and Donetsk have declared their regions independent.

The new president promised “I will bring you peace,” but did not indicate whether Ukrainian forces would scale back their offensives against the insurgency, which Ukraine says is fomented by Russia.

Russia has insisted on Ukraine ending its military operation in the east. Ambassador Mikhail Zurabov, representing Moscow at the inauguration, said Poroshenko’s statements “sound reassuring,” but “for us the principal thing is to stop the military operation,” adding that the insurgents should also stop fighting in order to bolster the delivery of humanitarian aid, RIA Novosti reported.

As president, the 48-year-old Poroshenko is commander-in-chief of the military and appoints the defense and foreign ministers. The prime minister is appointed by the parliament.

Poroshenko, often called “The Chocolate King” because of the fortune he made as a confectionery tycoon, was elected May 25. He replaces Oleksandr Turchynov, who served as interim president after Russia-friendly

president Viktor Yanukovych fled the country in February after months of street protests against him.

The fall of Yanukovych aggravated long-brewing tensions in eastern and southern Ukraine, whose majority native Russian speakers denounced the new government as a nationalist putsch that aimed to suppress them.

Within a month, the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea was annexed by Russia after a secession referendum and an armed insurgency arose in the eastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk.

In his inaugural address, attended by dignitaries including U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, Sen. John McCain and Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Poroshenko promised amnesty “for those who do not have blood on their hands” and called for dialogue with “peaceful citizens” in the east.

“I am calling on everyone who has taken arms in their hands — please lay down your arms,” he said, according to an interpreter. He also called for early regional elections in the east and promised to push for new powers to be allotted to regional governments, but he rejected calls for federalization of Ukraine, which Moscow has advocated. Federalization would make regions more independent of the central government.

Biden later met with Poroshenko and said “there is a window for peace and you know as well as anyone that it will not stay open indefinitely ... America is with you.”

He also promised an additional \$48 million in US aid to Ukraine to carry out economic and constitutional reforms and strengthen the border guard service. Washington previously announced \$50 million in “crisis response” aid and \$23 million for security assistance.

Poroshenko also said he would seek early parliamentary elections because “the current composition of the parliament is not consistent with the aspirations of the nation.” The current parliament, elected in 2012 with a large contingent from Yanukovych’s former party, is to stay in place until 2017.

Poroshenko insisted that Ukrainian would remain the sole state language of the country, but promised “the free use of the Russian language.”

He assumed power a day after meeting Putin at D-Day commemoration ceremonies in France.

Putin has denied allegations by Kiev and the West that Russia has fomented the rebellion in the east, and he insisted Friday that Poroshenko needs to speak directly to representatives from the east.

After the low-key inauguration ceremony, which included a choir in traditional national costume singing the national anthem, Poroshenko went to the square outside the landmark Sophia Cathedral for a ceremonial troop inspection.

Taras Danchuk, a 37-year-old spectator at the square who was wearing a traditional embroidered tunic, said he supported Poroshenko's strategy for trying to negotiate an end the eastern conflict.

"Out of emotion I would like to say that we should destroy the terrorists, but that is not possible without sacrificing the civilians who live there, so there will have to be negotiations," he said.

The protests against Yanukovych were set off by his decision to shelve a long-anticipated agreement to deepen political and economic ties with the European Union and seek closer relations with Russia. The protests grew hugely after police violently dispersed some early gatherings.

Poroshenko said Saturday he wants to sign the economic portion of the EU "association agreement" in the near future.

No major fighting was reported on Saturday, but the Donetsk People's Republic said one of Pushilin's aides was fatally shot in Donetsk city, the region's capital.

Also Saturday, Russian officials including the ambassador and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu complained that two journalists from a TV channel belonging to the ministry had been detained by national guard forces in Ukraine and called for their release.

Associated Press

Poroshenko sworn in as Ukraine's president, welcomes talks with

insurgents

By: Laura Mills and Jim Heintz / June 7, 2014

KIEV, UKRAINE — Petro Poroshenko, Ukraine's new president, on Saturday called for pro-Russian rebels in the country's east to lay down their arms and welcomed dialogue with the insurgents, but he said he wouldn't negotiate with those he called "gangsters and killers" and struck a defiant tone on the Russian-annexed Crimean peninsula.

In his inaugural address, attended by dignitaries including Vice President Joe Biden, Republican Sen. John McCain and Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Poroshenko promised amnesty "for those who do not have blood on their hands" and called for dialogue with "peaceful citizens" in the east. Biden later met with Poroshenko and said, "There is a window for peace, and you know as well as anyone that it will not stay open indefinitely. ... America is with you."

Biden also promised an additional \$48 million in U.S. aid to Ukraine to carry out economic and constitutional reforms and strengthen the border guard service. Washington previously announced \$50 million in "crisis response" aid and \$23 million for security assistance.

Crimea in dispute

Poroshenko's inaugural address after taking the oath of office in parliament gave little sign of a quick resolution to the conflict in the east, which Ukrainian officials say has left more than 200 people dead.

He also firmly insisted that Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula annexed by Russia in March, "was, is and will be Ukrainian." He gave no indication of how Ukraine could regain control of Crimea, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has said was allotted to Ukraine unjustly under Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Hours after the speech, Putin ordered security tightened along Russia's border with Ukraine to prevent illegal crossings, Russian news agencies said. Ukraine claims that many of the insurgents in the east have come from Russia; Poroshenko on Saturday said he would offer a corridor for safe passage of "Russian militants" out of the country.

Rebel leaders in the east dismissed Poroshenko's speech.

"At the moment it's impossible for him to come (to Donetsk for talks)," said Denis Pushilin, a top figure in the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic. "Perhaps with security, a group, so people won't tear him to pieces."

Biden's son

Biden's visit Saturday to support Ukraine's fragile democracy came soon after his youngest son was hired by a private Ukrainian company that promotes energy independence from Moscow.

Yet that company leases natural gas fields in the breakaway Russian-backed state of Crimea and is owned by a former government minister with ties to Ukraine's ousted pro-Russian president.

The hiring of Hunter Biden, 44, by Burisma Holdings Limited in April was approved by the company's owner, a former senior minister and political ally of Viktor Yanukovich, the exiled Ukrainian president. Yanukovich fled to Russia in February after protests erupted over his efforts to establish closer economic ties with Moscow.

Hunter Biden's employment means he will be working as a director and top lawyer for a Ukrainian energy company during the period when his father and others in the Obama administration attempt to influence the policies of Ukraine's new government, especially on energy issues.

White House officials declined to comment on Hunter Biden's association with Burisma and the company's holdings in Crimea and east Ukraine.

The vice president's spokeswoman, Kendra Barkoff, previously said that Biden's son is a private citizen and a lawyer, and that Joe Biden "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Demands on Russia

The U.S-Russian standoff over Ukraine moves into a new phase this weekend, with fresh rules and an uncertain path forward.

During this week's trip to Europe, President Barack Obama and Group of Seven colleagues made new demands on Russian President Putin and threatened new sanctions if he did not cut off support for pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine.

"They need to stop financing and arming separatists who have been wreaking havoc in the eastern part of the country," Obama told NBC News in an interview broadcast Friday. "If Russia begins to act in accordance with basic international principles, then I'm confident that the United States-Russia relationship will improve."

Putin, who spoke Friday with new Ukrainian President Poroshenko, has pledged to seek peace.

Aid to Moldova, Georgia

The U.S. is offering new financial assistance to Moldova and Georgia, two former Soviet republics the West seeks to lure toward Europe.

Vice President Biden announced the aid in Kiev during meetings with both nations' presidents on the sidelines of the new Ukrainian president's inauguration.

Both Moldova and Georgia are pursuing association agreements with the European Union amid a regional crisis over Russia's actions in Ukraine.

The White House says an additional \$8 million will help Moldova "advance its European aspirations." The U.S. is also sending \$5 million to Georgia to help economically vulnerable people living near Russian-controlled breakaway regions.

The aid follows Obama's announcement that the U.S. will work to boost the military capacity of non-NATO countries near Russia, including Moldova and Georgia.

Associated Press

**U.S. Pledges Millions More in Aid to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia
June 8, 2014**

The United States pledged millions of dollars in additional aid to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia on Saturday, deepening American support to the Western-leaning countries on Russia's border.

Vice President Joe Biden announced the extra aid, which must be approved by Congress, during a visit to Kiev for the inauguration of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

Washington pledged \$48 million to Ukraine, \$8 million to Moldova and \$5 million to Georgia after Biden met the presidents of the three countries. Russia's annexation of the Crimea region from Ukraine in March, after weeks of protests ousted Poroshenko's pro-Moscow predecessor Victor Yanukovich, has provoked the most serious crisis in relations with the West since the end of the Cold War.

As with Ukraine, there are sharp tensions between Moscow and Moldova and Georgia, where regions have formed breakaway states in reaction to ethnic nationalist regimes, aligning themselves with Russia: Transdnestr in the case of Moldova, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the case of Georgia.

The additional Ukraine aid follows Poroshenko's meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday in Warsaw and will go toward economic reforms, the White House said in a statement.

In Moldova, the U.S. aid will target programs to democratic institutions and the economy as the country implements a trade pact reached with the European Union last summer, it said. The new aid is in addition to the \$2.7 million announced in March.

The collapse of a proposed trade agreement with the European Union has been at the heart of Ukraine's political crisis over the past six months as Russia and western countries compete to assert dominance in the region. The proposed aid packages follow a U.S. announcement Tuesday that it would help build the defense capacity of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, all on Russia's western border.

The new aid also will support better ties between Moldova and Russian-speaking Transdnestr, the White House said.

Similarly, it said the \$5 million to Georgia will help people living along the border with Russia and "increase access to objective information by populations in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia."

Associated Press

US to offer financial assistance to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia June 7, 2014

The United States pledged millions of dollars in additional aid to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia on Saturday, deepening American support to the Western-leaning countries on Russia's border.

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Washington pledged \$48m to Ukraine, \$8m to Moldova and \$5m to Georgia after Biden met the presidents of the three countries.

Secretary of state John Kerry, meanwhile, said on Saturday he was hoping for steps to ease tensions in Ukraine now that the new president has been sworn in.

Both Moldova and Georgia are pursuing association agreements with the European Union amid a regional crisis over Russia's actions in Ukraine.

The White House says the aid will target programs to democratic institutions and the economy, which will help Moldova "advance its European aspirations". The new aid is in addition to the \$2.7m announced in March. The US is also sending \$5m to Georgia to help economically vulnerable people living near Russian-controlled breakaway regions, and "increase access to objective information by populations in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia"

The aid follows President Barack Obama's announcement that the US will work to boost the military capacity of non-Nato countries near Russia, including Moldova and Georgia.

Kerry told reporters in France he was "confident there are ways forward"

and that included Russia's help in getting separatists to put away their weapons and relinquish buildings they are occupying.

He said the hope was not to impose tougher penalties against Russia over its actions in Ukraine.

Earlier Saturday, Ukraine's new president Petro Poroshenko said he wanted a dialogue with his country's east, where a separatist insurgency has taken hold.

Kerry raised the possibility of a ceasefire and said it's important to begin to build Ukraine.

He spoke in the French seaside town of Saint Briac that is home to his family's ancestral estate, on the 70th anniversary of D-Day.

A day after attending international ceremonies to mark the allied invasion of France in Normandy, Kerry traveled to Saint Briac in the neighboring province of Brittany, where his mother's family has long owned property.

Three US soldiers were killed during the liberation of the town in August, 1944, and Kerry placed a wreath at a monument "To the Americans" that overlooks the harbour.

Associated Press

US OFFERS NEW AID TO EX-SOVIET EUROPEAN NATIONS

June 7, 2014

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — The United States is offering new financial assistance to Moldova (mawl-DOH'-vah) and Georgia, two former Soviet nations the West seeks to lure toward Europe.

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The aid follows President Barack Obama's announcement that the U.S. will work to boost the military capacity of non-NATO countries near Russia, including Moldova and Georgia.

Press TV

US stands with new Ukrainian president in talks with Russia, Biden says

June 9, 2014

US Vice President Joe Biden has told Ukraine's new President Petro Poroshenko that the United States is standing with him on his efforts to bring peace in the country and in talks with Russia, but warning that the window for peace will not remain open for ever.

Biden made the remarks on Saturday in Kiev during a meeting with Poroshenko at the Presidential Administrative Building, hours after he was inaugurated as Ukraine's fifth president.

"There's a window for peace, and you know as well as anyone, that it will not stay open indefinitely," Biden said.

"America's with you," the US vice president added. "That is not hyperbole." Biden also promised an additional \$48 million in assistance to Ukraine to carry out economic and constitutional reforms and strengthen the border guard service on top of a previous \$1 billion in loan guarantees and \$73 million in security and crisis-response aid.

The financial package must get Congress approval.

Earlier, Poroshenko offered a peace plan to resolve the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, but he warned that Russia's "occupation" of Crimea was not acceptable.

"Russia occupied Crimea, which is and will be Ukrainian," Poroshenko said at the inauguration ceremony. "Yesterday during the meeting in Normandy [France], I said exactly that to [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin, that Crimea belongs to Ukraine."

"I know that peace is the main thing the Ukrainian people want today," he said. "I don't want war. I don't want revenge, despite the massive casualties sustained by Ukraine's people.... I want peace, and I will achieve Ukraine's unity."

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea declared independence from Ukraine on March 17 and formally applied to become part of Russia following a referendum a day earlier, in which nearly 97 percent of the participants voted in favor of the move. On March 21, Crimea officially became part of the Russian territory.

On April 17, Russia, Ukraine, the US and the European Union agreed over steps to "de-escalate" the crisis in eastern Ukraine, where anti-Kiev protesters seized buildings in several towns and cities.

But, Ukrainian authorities have ordered military operations against pro-Russian protesters in both eastern and southern Ukraine, claiming that Russian special forces are fueling unrest in the country.

Moscow has dismissed as "nonsense" claims that Russian special forces are fomenting unrest in Ukraine.

The Voice of Russia

US pledges \$48 mln in additional aid to Ukraine

June 8, 2014

The United States has reaffirmed its commitment to assist Ukraine in carrying out drastic democratic reforms and promoting economic development, as well as to support the country's "sovereignty and territorial integrity," the White House said in a statement.

Consequently, during a visit to Kiev for the inauguration of Ukrainian President Petr Poroshenko US Vice President Joe Biden announced that Ukraine will receive an additional "to help the Ukrainian Government

conduct key reforms, build law enforcement capacity, and strengthen national unity."

The new aid package follows the \$1 billion loan guarantee, \$50 million crisis-response package, and \$23 million in security assistance. Thus, the overall US aid to Ukraine this year exceeds \$184 million.

The \$48 million assistance package is aimed at economic reforms that will ensure that IMF and World Bank programs are successfully implemented and put the country "on a path towards economic growth."

Another set of measures involves "constitutional reforms, decentralization, and confidence-building" that should "enhance national unity, particularly in the East and South."

The package also seeks to strengthen Ukraine's state border guard service, to assist the country's government, civil society, and the private sector in tackling corruption, as well as diversifying its trade and enhancing its energy security.

The additional Ukraine aid follows Poroshenko's meeting with US President Barack Obama on Wednesday in Warsaw.

Associated Press

Complex Times for VP's Son to Work at Ukraine Firm

By: Stephen Braun / June 7, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden's visit Saturday to support Ukraine's fragile democracy came soon after his youngest son was hired by a private Ukrainian company that promotes energy independence from Moscow.

Yet that company leases natural gas fields in the breakaway Russian-backed state of Crimea and is owned by a former government minister with ties to Ukraine's ousted pro-Russian president.

The hiring of Hunter Biden, 44, by Burisma Holdings Limited in April was approved by the company's owner, a former senior minister and political ally of Viktor Yanukovich, the exiled Ukrainian president. Yanukovich fled to Russia in February after protests erupted over his efforts to establish

closer economic ties with Moscow.

Hunter Biden's employment means he will be working as a director and top lawyer for a Ukrainian energy company during the period when his father and others in the Obama administration attempt to influence the policies of Ukraine's new government, especially on energy issues.

There's no indication that Hunter Biden, his father or Burisma is crossing any legal or ethical lines, although ethics experts appear divided over the implications of Hunter Biden's new job.

American conflict-of-interest laws and federal ethics rules essentially do not regulate the business activities of adult relatives of those who work in the White House.

"The primary problem here is the fact that Hunter Biden has set up a financial arrangement with someone who might have business pending before this administration," said Craig Holman, an ethics expert with Public Citizen, a Washington-based government reform organization.

Joe Biden led the U.S. delegation at Saturday's inauguration of Ukraine's new president, Petro Poroshenko, and announced \$48 million in additional aid for the Kiev government. Biden met Poroshenko and said "there is a window for peace and you know as well as anyone that it will not stay open indefinitely ... America is with you."

Ukraine is an important natural-gas and petroleum-liquids transit country. Two major pipeline systems carry Russian gas through Ukraine to Western Europe.

Burisma is headed by Nikolai Zlochevskyi, who held senior posts over natural resources, environment and defense in Ukraine. The company has aggressively bought up Ukrainian oil and natural gas leases and companies.

Hunter Biden's new company says it aims to reduce Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas and oil, a goal that parallels U.S. efforts to aid Ukraine's energy industry.

As a Burisma director and the company's top lawyer, the younger Biden

has yet to take any public actions on behalf of the company.

But the timing of his hiring is politically awkward for the administration's efforts to shore up Ukraine's pro-Western government, and poses potential complications from Burisma's growing energy interests and the background of Hunter Biden's new boss, Zlochevskyi.

At least two oil and natural gas fields leased by subsidiaries of Burisma are in Ukrainian territories where pro-Russian sentiments remain strong, according to government and media releases, independent energy maps and Burisma's website.

One is in the breakaway Russian-backed state of Crimea; the other is in the eastern Ukrainian Kharkiv region. Instability there could force the younger Biden's new company to coordinate with pro-Russian separatists whom the U.S. considers illegitimate.

White House officials declined to comment on Hunter Biden's association with Burisma and the company's holdings in Crimea and east Ukraine. The vice president's spokeswoman, Kendra Barkoff, previously said that Biden's son is a private citizen and a lawyer, and that Joe Biden "does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company."

Presidents and vice presidents have long been vexed by relatives rewarded for family ties.

Political loan troubles shadowed Vice President Richard Nixon's brother, Donald, during the 1960 election, and President Jimmy Carter's brother, Billy, who accepted a \$220,000 stipend in 1981 from Libya's Moammar Gadhafi.

In recent years, several Bush and Clinton relatives were caught in a string of murky financial and political dealings.

But "unless there's solid evidence that Hunter Biden got his job to influence American foreign policy, there's no clear line that's been crossed," said Melanie Sloan, executive director of the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

A former Washington lobbyist, the vice president's son is effectively exempt from most rules that would require him to describe publicly the legal work he does on behalf of Burisma.

Hunter Biden will not lobby for the company, said Lawrence Pacheco, an official with FTI Consulting, a Washington government affairs company recently hired by Burisma.

Pacheco did not say whether Biden might oversee or advise on any future Burisma lobbying strategy in the U.S. Pacheco said the company "does not take positions on political matters."

But Biden's company may have to deal with Ukrainian enclaves that the U.S. does not recognize diplomatically or are threatened by instability. One Burisma subsidiary, KrymTopEnergoservis, operates natural gas fields and has headquarters in the Crimea, which seceded from Ukraine this year and now aligns with Russia.

A second subsidiary, Esco-Pivnich, produces oil and natural gas just west of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which was the site of several protests and borders on separatist-controlled provinces. The company's website confirms that Burisma operates oil and natural gas sites in Crimea and east Ukraine, as well as elsewhere in Ukraine.

"While he's just at the beginning of his involvement with this company, Ukraine is volatile right now and there are all sorts of problems that might crop up down the line," said Bill Allison, the editorial director of the Sunlight Foundation, a nonpartisan watchdog group.

Pacheco said the company's western and eastern operations have been unaffected by Ukraine's unrest but that its Crimea subsidiary is not operating currently. He did not explain further, but confirmed KrymTopEnergoservis is based and leases gas deposits in Crimea. Hunter Biden, Zlochevskyi and other company officials would not comment publicly, Pacheco said.

Hunter Biden is a managing director with Rosemont Seneca Partners, a private equity firm, and worked as a Washington lobbyist for seven years until his father was elected vice president. He lobbied primarily for colleges, hospitals and tech firms.

Pacheco said Biden's son came to Burisma's attention after he was introduced by Devon Archer, another new Burisma board member, to Alan Apter, Burisma's board chairman. Archer works with Hunter Biden at Rosemont and was a top fundraiser for now-Secretary of State John Kerry when Kerry ran for president in 2004. Zlochevskyi approved Biden's hiring, Pacheco said.

Zlochevskyi, 48, worked as minister of natural resources and environment under Yanukovych and most recently was deputy secretary of Ukraine's national security and defense council, which advised Yanukovych on defense matters.

Zlochevskyi also served in the Ukrainian parliament from 2007 to 2011 as a member of the Party of Regions, the political party affiliated with Yanukovych and traditionally aligned with pro-Russian interests. Zlochevskyi's name is missing from Burisma's web site, but financial documents in Cyprus as well as U.S. Securities and Exchange records show that he owns the bulk of Burisma's shares. Zlochevskyi's Cyprus-based Brociti Investments Limited controls Burisma.

Hunter Biden joined Burisma in April, the same month his father visited Kiev to show support for the new interim government.

Fox News

Ukraine energy firm hiring Biden's son raises ethical concerns June 8, 2014

Vice President Joe Biden's visit Saturday to Ukraine in support of the country's new democratic government is renewing concerns about his youngest son being hired by a Ukraine company promoting energy independence from Moscow.

Hunter Biden will be working for the company while his father and others in the Obama administration attempt to influence energy policies and other issues of the new government, which is gripped in a struggle with Russia and pro-Russian separatists to control the county.

The company, Burisma Holdings Limited, says it wants to reduce Ukraine's dependence on Russian gas and oil, a goal that parallels U.S. efforts to aid Ukraine's energy industry.

The other major issues are Hunter Biden's new employer leases natural gas fields in Crimea, an eastern Ukraine peninsula being controlled by Russia in the country's months-long political upheaval. And the company is owned by a former Ukraine government minister, Nikolai Zlochevskyi, who has ties to the country's ousted pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich.

The 44-year-old Biden was hired in April and will be a director and lawyer for the company.

American conflict-of-interest laws and federal ethics rules essentially do not regulate the business activities of adult relatives of those who work in the White House, and there's no indication that the situation crosses legal or ethical lines.

But ethics experts appear divided over the implications.

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The Office of the Vice President said some of the money will help Ukraine "enhance its energy security."

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The Wire

It's Totally Normal That Joe Biden's Son Works for a Ukrainian Energy Company

By: Adam Chandler / June 7, 2014

The inauguration of Petro Poroshenko as Ukraine's new president was Europe's biggest story today. The billionaire confectioner promised to bring Ukraine closer to Europe and the West. He also had some tough words about Crimea, which he delivered in the presence of Mikhail Zurabov, the recently restored Russian ambassador to Ukraine.

Russia occupied Crimea, which was, is and will be Ukrainian soil.

Yesterday in the course of the meeting in Normandy, I told this to President Putin: Crimea is Ukraine soil. Period. There can be no compromise on the issues of Crimea, European choice and state structure."

Among the dignitaries in attendance was Vice President Joe Biden, which is where the story gets interesting. It hardly seems noteworthy that, given the scope of the crisis, Biden took his second trip to Ukraine in the past six weeks.

However, Biden's trip also coincided with a story about his youngest son. Hunter Biden was tapped last month to join the board of Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest private gas producer. At the time, The Guardian wryly explained the oddity of Biden-spawn's new gig.

"Isn't that a bit fishy? Why do you say that?

Because he's the vice-president's son! That's a coincidence. "This is totally based on merit," said Burisma's chairman, Alan Apter.

He doesn't sound very Ukrainian. He's American, as is the other new board member, Devon Archer.

Who? Devon Archer, who works with Hunter Biden at Rosemont Seneca partners, which is half owned by Rosemont Capital, a private equity firm founded by Archer and Christopher Heinz.

Who? Christopher Heinz ... John Kerry's stepson."

As the Associated Press reports today, there is more fishiness yet. While Hunter Biden's new company is said to be working to get Ukraine off its

dependence on Russia for energy, Burisma also reportedly "leases natural gas fields in the breakaway Russian-backed state of Crimea."

The company is also owned by Nikolai Zlochevskyi, whose "ties to Ukraine's ousted pro-Russian president" include serving as a senior minister in several government posts under Viktor Yanukovich. At the time of the appointment, Hunter Biden said this:

"As a new member of the Board, I believe that my assistance in consulting the Company on matters of transparency, corporate governance and responsibility, international expansion and other priorities will contribute to the economy and benefit the people of Ukraine."

Said transparency seems to be elusive on the American side of this deal.

Beltway ethicists seem to be mixed about whether this arrangement is kosher or not. What is clear is that relatives of high-level American political figures have benefited from their ties for generations now. It's practically a tradition at this point.

Associated Press

Ukrainian energy firm hires Biden son as lawyer

June 7, 2014

WASHINGTON — Vice President Joe Biden's weekend trip to support Ukraine's fragile democracy comes soon after his youngest son was hired by a private Ukrainian company that promotes energy independence from Moscow.

The company leases natural gas fields in the breakaway Russian-backed state of Crimea. It's owned by a former government minister with ties to Ukraine's ousted pro-Russian president.

Hunter Biden will be working as a director and top lawyer for the energy company during the period when his father and the Obama administration attempt to influence the policies of Ukraine's new government, especially on energy issues.

There's no indication that Hunter Biden, his father or Burisma are crossing any legal or ethical lines.