

# Senators meet with Baltic and Polish ambassadors to discuss Russian aggression in the region

February 9 2017 8:16 AM



WASHINGTON—U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) met today with Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S. Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Latvian Ambassador to the U.S. Andris Teikmanis, Estonian Ambassador to the U.S. Eerik

Marmeï, and Polish Ambassador to the U.S. Piotr Wilczek, to discuss Russian aggression in the region, the importance of maintaining transatlantic unity, and support for NATO and continued sanctions against Russia.

The meeting comes amid a recent spike in Russian attacks in eastern Ukraine, which has led to the highest casualty numbers in months, and resulted in the loss of plumbing, electricity, and heating to thousands of civilians in the region. The clashes mark the first major escalation in violence since President Trump's inauguration on January 20<sup>th</sup> and came just a day after President Trump spoke by phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“Eastern Europe is at a critical moment in its history. We must support our allies who face the brunt of Russian cyberattacks, propaganda, military intimidation, and even invasion in the case of Ukraine. But President Trump's defense of Russia only emboldens Putin and further threatens to destabilize these critical democratic nations in the region,” said Durbin. “At this afternoon's meeting, the Ambassadors expressed their concerns with the ongoing assault on Ukraine as well as the continued threat of Russia, and the need for transatlantic unity on defense cooperation and sanctions. The Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine, and others in the region have friends in Congress and around the world, and together we will continue to stand with them.”

Durbin joined a group of bipartisan Senators in January to introduce comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia for their cyberattacks, aggression, and destabilizing activities in the United States and around the world. He has also called for an [immediate, independent investigation of U.S. intelligence reports](#) of Russian acts of cyberwarfare on the 2016 presidential election, as well as allegations of Russian attempts to compromise President Trump and contact between Trump officials and the Russian government.