

# *Moscow Affirms U.S. Financial Aid to Ukraine Illegal*

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Moscow, March 12 (RHC)-- Russia has said U.S. efforts to provide financial aid to Ukraine's pro-Western government are illegal.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Russia's Foreign Ministry dismissed the move, saying that it goes beyond the U.S. legal framework because it would fund an illegitimate regime.

In other news, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke with his U.S. counterpart John Kerry about the efforts to bring peace and calm to Ukraine's now-volatile Crimea region.

The two agreed to continue bilateral talks. Lavrov told Kerry that any solution should consider interests of all Ukrainians and respect the Crimeans' right to determine their future.

Meanwhile, Crimean lawmakers endorsed a declaration of independence, which was required by law to hold a secession referendum on March 16th.

The Crimean parliament voted on Tuesday for the region to declare itself an independent state if its residents agree to split off from Ukraine and join neighboring Russia in the referendum.



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