

Russia Calls Recent Western Military Activity Unprecedented



Moscow, April 29 (Xinhua-RHC) -- Russia on Tuesday accused the United States and NATO of staging "unprecedented" military activity near its borders.

In a telephone conversation with his U.S. counterpart Chuck Hagel, Russian Defense Minister, Sergei Shoigu, said the Western military activity had been growing substantially, and was "accompanied by provocative statements."

Shoigu's remarks came after NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said earlier that the bloc had decided to take "further military measures" to respond to the crisis in Ukraine.

Rasmussen said the alliance's aircraft would fly more sorties over the Baltic region, and ships would be deployed to the Baltic Sea, the eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere.

Shoigu denied allegations that Russian special troops had been infiltrating into the Ukrainian territory.

"Anti-Russian hysteria that was recently unleashed in the Western media would not help subdue these emotions," the Russian Defense Ministry's press service quoted Shoigu as saying.

He also said two fly-bys of Russian jet fighters around a U.S. warship and a warplane in April had been "misinterpreted" by the West.

A Russian SU-24 fighter jet flew over the U.S. destroyer Donald Cook 12 times in the Black Sea on April 12. An SU-27 approached the U.S. RC-135 plane over Okhotsk Sea on April 22.

Also on Tuesday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergei Ryabkov, said the new package of U.S. sanctions levied against Russia will negatively affect the country's high-tech industry.

"The gravity of these measures is absolutely obvious, especially in terms of restricting cooperation in high technologies, deliveries of dual-purpose products from the United States to Russia and issues linked with launches of U.S.-made spacecraft," Ryabkov was quoted by Gazeta.ru online news portal as saying.

On Monday, the White House announced fresh sanctions against Russia targeting seven government officials and 17 companies.

Ryabkov said Moscow does not want to sever ties with the United States and the European Union.

"We want to cut nothing, as we've got lots of ties -- human and economical," he said.

Last week, Standard & Poor's rating agency downgraded Russia's long-term rating as well as ratings of a number of Russian companies amid the wave of sanctions imposed against Moscow by the West.

Ryabkov called these actions "disgusting" and warned that Russia will retaliate.

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