**Beat: Miscellaneous**

# Obama: Russia must move back troops from Ukrainian border

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**USPA News -** U.S. President Barack Obama has called on Russian President Vladimir Putin to pull Russian troops back from the Ukrainian border and lower tensions in the region, according to an interview published on Friday, Russia is believed to have a range of troops massing along the border with eastern Ukraine under the guise of military exercises. "It may simply be an effort to intimidate Ukraine or it may be that [Russia has] additional plans," President Obama said in an interview in Rome with CBS Evening News` Scott Pelley.

To resolve and de-escalate the situation, President Obama urged Putin to move back his troops from the border and begin negotiations with the Ukrainian government directly as well as the international community. Obama told Pelley that Putin is "misreading American foreign policy" with regard to the intentions of the United States in the region. He said the U.S. had "no interest in encircling Russia" and "no interest in Ukraine beyond letting the Ukrainian people make their own decisions about their own lives." According to President Obama`s interview, Putin considers the breakup of the Soviet Union to be tragic. "I think that there`s a strong sense of nationalism and a sense that somehow the West has taken advantage of Russia in the past and that he wants to - in some fashion - reverse that or make up for that," he said. President Obama rejected the notion that there is a sphere of influence along the Russian border that justifies Russia invading other countries. He acknowledged that "sending troops in because you`re bigger and stronger, taking a piece of the country," is not how international law and international norms are observed in the 21st century. In the interview, Obama also spoke about his brief meeting with Pope Francis and his prior admiration of him from afar. "I think he projects the kind of humility and kindness that is consistent with my understanding, at least, of Jesus` teachings," he said. "Nothing is more powerful than someone who seems to live out their convictions."

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