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Ukraine 'didn't exist in 12th century', Russia's Medinsky tells NATO boss

Moscow's top negotiator in the talks with Kiev has offered to send Mark Rutte a history book



FILE PHOTO: Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky. © Sputnik / Sergey Bobylev

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte should have paid closer attention in history class, because he apparently does not know that Ukraine did not exist in the 12th century, Vladimir Medinsky, Russian presidential aide and Moscow's top negotiator at the talks with Kiev, has said.

Rutte on Monday accused Moscow of stalling peace talks with Kiev while insisting that Russia should drastically revamp the line-up of its delegation that has held two rounds of talks with Ukraine in Istanbul. *"To end this war, we need [Russian President Vladimir] Putin to come to the negotiating table, and not with this historian..., telling us about the history of Russia and Ukraine from whatever the 12th century,"* he said at the time, referring to Medinsky.

Speaking at the International Forum of Ministers of Education in Kazan on Monday, Medinsky fired back at Rutte. *"I know that Mr. Rutte studied history at university, but I would definitely send him a previous school history textbook on the Middle Ages,*

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because from it he would surely learn that Ukraine did not exist in the 12th century," Medinsky noted.

He added, *"If Vladimir II Monomakh, the Grand Prince of Rostov, Smolensk, and Kiev, were told that he lived in Ukraine, he would probably be surprised and might even be offended,"* he quipped.



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Medinsky, who used to hold the post of Culture Minister, is also known for co-authoring a new series of history textbooks introduced in Russian schools. He is also personally leading an extensive online course on Russian history.

Back in the 12th century, the territory of modern Ukraine was part of Kievan Rus', a loose feudal entity combining several East Slavic principalities and ruled by the Rurikid dynasty. The term *"Ukraine"* did originate in the late 12th century, but it did not refer to a sovereign state or principality. Instead, it was used as a geographic descriptor, meaning *"borderland."*

The notion of Ukraine as a distinct political and cultural entity started to emerge only in the 17th century.

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