

White House Confirms CIA Director Visited Ukraine

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White House officials has confirmed that the director of the Central Intelligence Agency visited Ukraine over the weekend, following reports in the Russian media. On Sunday, Moscow urged Washington to respond to allegations in the Russian press that CIA Director John Brennan had made an incognito visit to Ukrainian capital Kiev.

The [reports](#) alleged that Brennan, who assumed the directorship of the CIA a year ago, traveled to Ukraine on official business under a false identity in order to avoid attention. Russian media further alleged that the CIA head met with a host of Ukrainian intelligence and security officials and advised them on how to respond to the ongoing crisis in eastern Ukraine.

Initially, Washington denied comment on the allegations. But early on Monday White House Press Secretary Jay Carney [told](#) reporters that Brennan had indeed traveled to Ukraine over the weekend. He said that the White House normally declines comment on the whereabouts of the CIA Director. However, “given the extraordinary circumstances” in the case of Ukraine, he said he was willing to confirm that Brennan was in Kiev over the weekend “as part of a trip to Europe”.

He went on to state that he hoped the official confirmation of Brennan’s trip by the White House would suffice to discredit the “false claims being leveled by the Russians at the CIA”. Carney added that there was nothing inherently suspicious about a CIA Director’s trip to a foreign country. He argued that “senior-level visits of intelligence officials [abroad] are a standard means of fostering mutually beneficial security cooperation” and that such visits —some of which have been to Russia— go back “to the beginnings of the post-Cold War era”. He concluded by stating that Russia’s suggestions that Brennan’s visit to Ukraine were in “anything other than the same spirit” were “absurd”.

But Moscow [responded](#) to Carney’s comments by arguing that Washington had “not yet given a sufficient response” to the allegations of Brennan’s visit to Kiev. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told journalists on Monday that the Kremlin was still waiting to receive “intelligible explanations” of Brennan’s trip by the White House. CIA spokesman Todd Ebitz dismissed allegations that Brennan’s trip to Kiev was aimed at conducting tactical operations inside Ukraine as “completely false”. But he refused to comment specifically on the nature of the CIA Director’s trip.

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