

# Greece Can Serve as Bridge to Russia, BRICS

March 4—Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias has called for Greece and Cyprus to become a bridge between Western Europe and Russia and the other BRICS nations. In a March 2 interview with Russia's Sputnik News, Kotzias was highly critical of sanctions against Russia in particular, and the anti-Russian policy in general.

"We believe that in the long-term perspective, Russia has to be part of the European security architecture and there should be no security system against Russia," Kotzias said. "We think that what is needed is the stabilization of peace in Ukraine, and that Europe should not come to a rupture in its relations with Russia, while Russia should also avoid taking actions that are not conducive to trust between it and the European Union."

He continued, "Greece and Cyprus ... could play the role of a bridge between the EU and Russia. We've never waged wars against each other; we have never been opposing powers...."

While saying that Greece and Cyprus wish to remain part of the European Union, Kotzias noted that both countries wish to further develop their historic ties to the BRICS nations. "We are especially connected with such countries as India (in ancient times), China (when we were the big civilizations and cultures—China in Asia and Greece in Europe—for 3,000-4,000 years), and Russia, with which we have always had deep historical, cultural, and religious ties," he said.

Kotzias said that since the new Greek government came to power, the EU has to listen to Greece, and take its interests into consideration. He stated that the sanctions against Russia is one of these issues. "In the history of international relations, there have been sanctions that actually functioned, but only in the sense that they led to negotiations. As I have already said, in most cases sanctions are not efficient, especially when they originate from a burst of anger or a wish to subordinate your opposing side," Kotzias told Sputnik. He added that his government is against sanctions on Russia.

Meanwhile, Kotzias and Deputy Prime Minister Yannis Dragasakis are reportedly scheduled to visit Beijing soon, to prepare for Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras's visit, likely in May.