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2 March 2014

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Thanks to Nykolai Bilaniuk, Robert Fleming, Isabelle Fortin, Paul Goble, Idil Izmirli, William Risch, Oxana Shevel, Tim Snyder, Andrew Weiss, and Alisa Zavialova

#1

The Battle of Legitimacy

Dominique Arel
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The unimaginable is now before us: the Higher Chamber of the Russian parliament has authorized Russia to send troops "on the territory of Ukraine," leaving open the possibility that the Russian army, currently occupying Crimea, may be dispatched elsewhere on Ukrainian territory. In seeking to legitimate its military operation, Russia invokes political, ethnic, and security arguments. None stand up to analysis.

The political argument is that Ukraine is in the throes of an illegitimate political regime that came to power a week ago as a result of a "fascist coup." "Fascism" means something very specific in Russian discourse: since World War II, the invasion by Germany has always been presented as an invasion of "fascists." The fascists are the Nazis and their collaborators. In Western Ukraine, a violent Ukrainian insurgency against the Soviet Union tactically allied with Germany during the

war. Russian discourse labels these insurgents “fascists” (or “Banderites”, after their leader Stepan Bandera, a term that acquired equivalent meaning). Since key groups on Maidan (the parliamentary party Svoboda and the popular movement Pravyi sektor) claim lineage to the wartime insurgency, the collapse of the Yanukovich regime is portrayed in Russia as an internal fascist invasion. This narrative omits three basic points. The first is that the regime collapsed because all police forces withdrew on Friday February 21, leaving government buildings unprotected. They withdrew, not because they were overcome by armed militants, but because of demoralization, caused either for having previously used live ammunitions or for becoming unwilling to defend a regime perceived as widely corrupt. The second is that it is not the insurgents that attacked civilians (unlike wartime insurgents, who attacked Jewish and Polish civilians), but rather the state, and in the end the state security forces gave up. The third is that the political pillars of the previous regime, the Party of Regions and the Communist Party of Ukraine, have both recognized the legitimacy of the new government. The Communists, who depicts wartime insurgents as “fascists,” have voted en bloc for all constitutional changes in the past week.

The ethnic argument is that the life of Russia’s “compatriots” is in danger. The resolution of the Russian parliament refers both to “citizens,” who, outside of Sevastopol, are in principle not too numerous, since dual citizenship is illegal in Ukraine, and to this vague category of “compatriots,” which has no standing in international law. Compatriots is code word for ethnic Russians *and* Russian-speakers, in the context where most residents of Eastern Ukraine prefer to speak Russian. It is this undifferentiated “Russian” mass that the Russian state now sees as under threat by the “nationalists” that have taken power in Kiev (“nationalist”, since the Soviet days, has been used as a synonym for “fascist”). This narrative assumes that, in the defining moment that Ukraine is now experiencing, Eastern Ukrainians will choose Russian protection over “Ukrainian nationalist” rule. Russia’s power play could actually have the opposite effect of further crystallizing Ukrainian identity in the East. There is no organized Russian community in Eastern Ukraine – unlike in Crimea—because many, if not most “Russians” are partly of Ukrainian background, and many “Ukrainians” are partly Russian. This ethnic mixity likely explain the ambivalence expressed by Eastern Ukrainians towards Russia. Under quasi-war conditions, the ambivalence could lead way to a greater assertion of Ukrainian identity. The fact that mass demonstrations are now occurring in Eastern Ukraine, a traditionally passive society, could be seen as a barometer of a rising attachment to the nation, defined in civic terms.

The security argument is that the events that have “destabilized” Ukraine are the results of Western meddling on a territory that has historically belonged to the Russian sphere of interests. (The Russian historical narrative actually places Kiev as the “mother of all Russian cities”) Russian President Putin appears to firmly believes that Maidan was instigated by Western powers, a claim obliquely repeated by former Ukrainian President Yanukovich in his Rostov press conference. The “meddling,” however, was declarative, with Western powers expressing support for the right of Maidan demonstrators to peacefully air their grievances and repeatedly inviting the Ukrainian authorities to find a political solution and avoid the use of violence. Up until the protests turned into mass killing, the EU and the United States were in fact criticized in the West for how little concrete help they provided to Maidan, the EU resisting, for instance, the imposition of personal sanctions until the very end, when the police began shooting at demonstrators. The argument of Western intervention, however, operates on a higher plane than immediate support on the ground, taking the form of the claim, also often made in Western liberal and leftist circles, that the West’s ulterior motive is to secure military bases in Russia’s backyard and to make the Ukrainian market available for cheap labor fto the benefit of advanced Western economies. While these points merit a rigorous hearing, primarily or exclusively focusing on them evacuates the profoundly civic dimension of the Ukrainian rebellion. Maidan, initially a protest for Europe, became a protest against police brutality, large-scale corruption, and the lack of political accountability. Since all these features are also associated with the current Russian state, opposing them became a symbolic reaffirmation of “European” values (even if the free trade agreement was no longer talked about). It is easy to be dismissive of the weight of “values,” but the fact is that insurgents were willing to risk and pay for their lives and it is their stance that

ultimately broke the will of the Yanukovych regime. The meddling, in the end, was of “European” ideas and they, in themselves, are seen as an infringement on the security not of Russia, but of the Russian political system developed under President Putin. The logical fallacy is that since Western powers could benefit from the bottom-up Ukrainian civic uprising, then they must have caused it. They did not.

#2

Ukraine: The Haze of Propaganda

by Timothy Snyder

NYRBlog (New York Review of Books), 1 March 2014

From Moscow to London to New York, the Ukrainian revolution has been seen through a haze of propaganda. Russian leaders and the Russian press have insisted that Ukrainian protesters were right-wing extremists and then that their victory was a coup. Ukraine’s president, Viktor Yanukovych, used the same clichés after a visit with the Russian president at Sochi. After his regime was overturned, he maintained he had been ousted by “right-wing thugs,” a claim echoed by the armed men who seized control of airports and government buildings in the southern Ukrainian district of Crimea on Friday.

Interestingly, the message from authoritarian regimes in Moscow and Kiev was not so different from some of what was written during the uprising in the English-speaking world, especially in publications of the far left and the far right. From Lyndon LaRouche’s *Executive Intelligence Review* through Ron Paul’s newsletter through *The Nation* and *The Guardian*, the story was essentially the same: little of the factual history of the protests, but instead a play on the idea of a nationalist, fascist, or even Nazi coup d’état.

In fact, it was a classic popular revolution. It began with an unmistakably reactionary regime. A leader sought to gather all power, political as well as financial, in his own hands. This leader came to power in democratic elections, to be sure, but then altered the system from within. For example, the leader had been a common criminal: a rapist and a thief. He found a judge who was willing to misplace documents related to his case. That judge then became the chief justice of the Supreme Court. There were no constitutional objections, subsequently, when the leader asserted ever more power for his presidency.

In power, this leader, this president, remained a thief, but now on a grand, perhaps even unsurpassed, scale. Throughout his country millions of small businessmen and businesswomen found it impossible to keep their firms afloat, thanks to the arbitrary demands of tax authorities. Their profits were taken by the state, and the autonomy that those profits might have given them were denied. Workers in the factories and mines had no means whatsoever of expression their own distress, since any attempt at a strike or even at labor organization would simply have led to their dismissal.

The country, Ukraine, was in effect an oligarchy, where much of the wealth was in the hands of people who could fit in one elevator. But even this sort of pluralism, the presence of more than one very rich person, was too much for the leader, Viktor Yanukovych. He wanted to be not only the president but the oligarch-in-chief. His son, a dentist, was suddenly one of the wealthiest men in Europe. Tens of billions of dollars simply disappeared from the state budget. Yanukovych built for himself a series of extravagant homes, perhaps the ugliest in architectural history.

It is hard to have all of the power and all of the money at the same time, because power comes from the state, and the state has to have a budget. If a leader steals so much from the people that the state goes bankrupt, then his power is diminished. Yanukovych actually faced this problem last year. And so, despite everything, he became vulnerable, in a very curious way. He needed someone to finance the immediate debts of the Ukrainian state so that his regime would not fall along with it.

Struggling to pay his debts last year, the Ukrainian leader had two options. The first was to begin trade cooperation with the European Union. No doubt an association agreement with the EU would have opened the way for loans. But it also would have meant the risk of the application of the rule of law within Ukraine. The other alternative was to take money from another authoritarian regime, the great neighbor to the east, the Russian Federation.

In December of last year, the leader of this neighboring authoritarian regime, Vladimir Putin, offered a deal. From Russia's hard currency reserves accumulated by the sale of hydrocarbons he was willing to offer a loan of \$15 billion, and lower the price of natural gas from Russia. Putin had a couple of little preoccupations, however.

The first was the gay conspiracy. This was a subject that had dominated Russian propaganda throughout last year but which had been essentially absent from Ukraine. Perhaps Ukraine could join in? Yes indeed: the Ukrainian prime minister began to explain to his population that Ukraine could not have closer cooperation with Europe, since the EU was interested chiefly in gay marriage.

Putin's second preoccupation was something called Eurasia. This was and is Putin's proposed rival to the European Union, a club of dictatorships meant to include Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Again, perhaps Ukraine could join? Yanukovich hesitated here, seeing the trap—the subordination of Ukraine of course meant his own subordination—but he did allow himself to be jollied along toward the necessary policies. He began to act like a proper dictator. He began to kill his own people in significant numbers. He bloodied his hands, making him an unlikely future partner for the European Union.

Enter a lonely, courageous Ukrainian rebel, a leading investigative journalist. A dark-skinned journalist who gets racially profiled by the regime. And a Muslim. And an Afghan. This is Mustafa Nayem, the man who started the revolution. Using social media, he called students and other young people to rally on the main square of Kiev in support of a European choice for Ukraine. That square is called the Maidan, which by the way is an Arab word. During the first few days of the protests the students called it the Euromaidan. Russian propaganda called it, predictably enough, the Gayeuromaidan.

When riot police were sent to beat the students, who came to defend them? More "Afghans," but "Afghans" of a very different sort: Ukrainian veterans of the Soviet Red Army, men who had been sent to invade Afghanistan during after the Soviet invasion of that country in 1979. These men came to defend "their children," as they called the students. But they were also defending a protest initiated by a man born in Kabul at the very time they were fighting their way toward it.

In December the crowds grew larger. By the end of the year, millions of people had taken part in protests, all over the country. Journalists were beaten. Individual activists were abducted. Some of them were tortured. Dozens disappeared and have not yet been found. As the New Year began the protests broadened. Muslims from southern Ukraine marched in large numbers. Representatives of the large Kiev Jewish community were prominently represented. Some of the most important organizers were Jews. The telephone hotline that people called to seek missing relatives was established by gay activists (people who have experience with hotlines). Some of the hospital guards who tried to stop the police from abducting the wounded were young feminists.

In all of these ways, the "decadent" West, as Russia's foreign minister put it, was present. Yes, there were some Jews, and there were some gays, in this revolution. And this was exploited by both the Russian and Ukrainian regimes in their internal propaganda. The Russian press presented the protest as part of a larger gay conspiracy. The Ukrainian regime instructed its riot police that the opposition was led by a larger Jewish conspiracy. Meanwhile, both regimes informed the outside world that the protestors were Nazis. Almost nobody in the West seemed to notice this contradiction.

On January 16, Yanukovych signed a series of laws that had been “passed” through parliament, entirely illegally, by a minority using only a show of hands. These laws, introduced by pro-Russian legislators and similar to Russian models, severely constrained the freedom of speech and assembly, making of millions of protesters “extremists” who could be imprisoned. Organizations that had financial contacts with the outside world, including Catholic and Jewish groups, were suddenly “foreign agents” and subject to immediate harassment.

After weeks of maintaining their calm in the face of repeated assaults by the riot police, some protesters now chose violence. Out of public view, people had been dying at the hands of the police for weeks. Now some of the protesters were killed by the regime in public. The first Ukrainian protester to be killed was an Armenian. The second to be killed was a Belarusian.

Then came the mass killings by the regime. On February 18 the Ukrainian parliament was supposed to consider a compromise that many observers believed was a first step away from bloody confrontation: a constitutional reform to return the state to parliamentary democracy. Instead, the riot police were unleashed in Kiev, this time armed not only with tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets, but also with live ammunition. The protesters fell back to the Maidan and defended it, the way revolutionaries do: with cobblestones, Molotov cocktails, and in the end their bare hands.

On February 20, an EU delegation was supposed to arrive to negotiate a truce. Instead, the regime orchestrated a bloodbath. The riot police fell back from some of the Maidan. When protesters followed, they were shot by snipers who had taken up positions on rooftops. Again and again people ran out to try to rescue the wounded, and again and again they were shot.

Who was killed? Dozens of people, in all about a hundred, most of them young men. Bohdan Solchanyk was a young lecturer at the Ukrainian Catholic University, a Ukrainian speaker from western Ukraine. He was shot and killed. Yevhen Kotlyov was an environmentalist from Kharkiv, a Russian speaker from eastern Ukraine. He was shot and killed. One of the people killed was a Russian citizen; a number of Russians had come to fight—most of them anarchists who had come to aid their Ukrainian anarchist comrades. At least two of those killed by the regime, and perhaps more, were Jews. One of those “Afghans,” Ukrainian veterans of the Red Army’s war in Afghanistan, was Jewish: Alexander Scherbatyuk. He was shot and killed by a sniper. Another of those killed was a Pole, a member of Ukraine’s Polish minority.

Has as it ever before happened that people associated with Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, Armenian, Polish, and Jewish culture have died in a revolution that was started by a Muslim? Can we who pride ourselves in our diversity and tolerance think of anything remotely similar in our own histories?

The people were victorious as a result of sheer physical courage. The EU foreign ministers who were supposed to be treated to a bloody spectacle saw something else: the successful defense of the Maidan. The horrifying massacre provoked a general sense of outrage, even among some of the people who had been Yanukovych’s allies. He did something he probably had not, when the day began, intended to do: he signed an agreement in which he promised not to use violence. His policemen understood, perhaps better than he, what this meant: the end of the regime. They melted away, and he ran for his life. Power shifted to parliament, where a new coalition of oppositionists and dissenters from Yanukovych’s party formed a majority. Reforms began, beginning with the constitution. Presidential elections were called for May.

Still, the propaganda continued. Yanukovych stopped somewhere to record a video message, in Russian, claiming that he was the victim of a Nazi coup. Russian leaders maintained that extremists had come to power, and that Russians in Ukraine were under threat. Although the constitutional transition is indeed debatable in the details, these charges of a right-wing coup are nonsense.

The Ukrainian far right did play an important part in the revolution. What it did, in going to the

barricades, was to liberate itself from the regime of which it had been one of the bulwarks. One of the moral atrocities of the Yanukovych regime was to crush opposition from the center-right, and support opposition from the far right. By imprisoning his major opponents from the legal political parties, most famously Yulia Tymoshenko, Yanukovych was able to make of democracy a game in which he and the far right were the only players.

The far right, a party called Svoboda, grew larger in these conditions, but never remotely large enough to pose a real challenge to the Yanukovych regime in democratic elections. In this arrangement Yanukovych could then tell gullible westerners that he was the alternative to the far right. In fact, Svoboda was a house opposition that, during the revolution, rebelled against its own leadership. Against the wishes of their leaders, the radical youth of Svoboda fought in considerable numbers, alongside of course people of completely different views. They fought and they took risks and they died, sometimes while trying to save others. In the post-revolutionary situation these young men will likely seek new leadership. The leader of Svoboda, according to opinion polls, has little popular support; if he chooses to run for president, which is unlikely, he will lose.

The radical alternative to Svoboda is Right Sector, a group of far-right organizations whose frankly admitted goal was not a European future but a national revolution against all foreign influences. In the long run, Right Sector is the group to watch. For the time being, its leaders have been very careful, in conversations with both Jews and Russians, to stress that their goal is political and not ethnic or racial. In the days after the revolution they have not caused violence or disorder. On the contrary, the subway runs in Kiev. The grotesque residences of Yanukovych are visited by tourists, but they are not looted. The main one is now being used as a base for archival research by investigative journalists.

The transitional authorities were not from the right, or even from the western part of Ukraine, where nationalism is more widespread. The speaker of the parliament and the acting president is a Baptist preacher from southeastern Ukraine. All of the power ministries, where of course any coup-plotter would plant his own people, were led by professionals and Russian speakers. The acting minister of internal affairs was half Armenian and half Russian. The acting minister of defense was of Roma origin.

The provisional authorities are now being supplanted by a new government, chosen by parliament, which is very similar in its general orientation. The new prime minister is a Russian-speaking conservative technocrat. Both of the major presidential candidates in the elections planned for May are Russian speakers. The likely next president, Vitali Klitschko, is the son of a general in the Soviet armed forces, best known in the West as the heavyweight champion boxer. He is a chess player and a Russian speaker. He does his best to speak Ukrainian. It does not come terribly naturally. He is not a Ukrainian nationalist.

As specialists in Russian and Ukrainian nationalism have been predicting for weeks, the claim that the Ukrainian revolution is a "nationalist coup," as Yanukovych, in Russian exile, said on Friday, has become a pretext for Russian intervention. This now appears to be underway in the Crimea, where the Russian flag has been raised over the regional parliament and gunmen have occupied the airports. Meanwhile, Russia has put army battle groups on alert and sent naval cruisers from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

Whatever course the Russian intervention may take, it is not an attempt to stop a fascist coup, since nothing of the kind has taken place. What has taken place is a popular revolution, with all of the messiness, confusion, and opposition that entails. The young leaders of the Maidan, some of them radical leftists, have risked their lives to oppose a regime that represented, at an extreme, the inequalities that we criticize at home. They have an experience of revolution that we do not. Part of that experience, unfortunately, is that Westerners are provincial, gullible, and reactionary.

Thus far the new Ukrainian authorities have reacted with remarkable calm. It is entirely possible

that a Russian attack on Ukraine will provoke a strong nationalist reaction: indeed, it would be rather surprising if it did not, since invasions have a way of bringing out the worst in people. If this is what does happen, we should see events for what they are: an entirely unprovoked attack by one nation upon the sovereign territory of another.

Insofar as we have accepted the presentation of the revolution as a fascist coup, we have delayed policies that might have stopped the killing earlier, and helped prepare the way for war. Insofar as we wish for peace and democracy, we are going to have to begin by getting the story right.

#3

Sergey Taruta's Appeal to Ukrainians

Ekonomicheskie izvestiia, 1 March 2014

[translated by Alisa Zavialova for UKL]

[Taruta has agreed, late last night, to become Governor of Donetsk –UKL]

My dear compatriots, I address you not as a Chairman of the Board of directors of ... corporation, but as a Russian-speaking Ukrainian, who comes from Donbas region and within me flows both Russian and Ukrainian blood.

I urge everyone for who is not indifferent about Ukraine and its future, and for whom the current events in Ukraine are heartbreaking to consolidate our efforts in order to keep our country united. I also do hope that everybody understands that the decisions that are being taken in Moscow now may lead to the split (raskol) of Ukraine and also to a long-lasting civil war with numerous human victims.

Ukrainian land had seen more blood than any other land in the 20th century. We had lived through the horrors of the Holodomor, two World Wars and the consequences of totalitarian oppression.

With all those failures and instabilities that the first steps involve we, as one country and nation, were always able to avoid the conflicts that lead to victims.

For the last twenty three years we have been building our own country. Not always successfully, but we were putting all our skills, efforts, soul, time and knowledge in order for Ukraine to become a real independent, economically developed, politically mature and prosperous state.

And now they are taking away this opportunity from us. Those with whom we have been partners for those twenty three years, with whom we were building a joint market and common business.

The intervention of the Russian troops into the Ukrainian territory can only be considered as the military occupation of the peaceful territory.

Do I have to explain what may be the consequences of these actions? I don't think so. We will just lose all we have. Everything that was built during the years of independence will be devastated if not by fire then by economic devastation.

We must protect Ukraine! Not perfect- yes, multilingual- yes, but ours!

Ukrainian entrepreneurs, citizens, politicians! It is time to unite now! We are all Ukrainians today! We are all under one national flag. It's not the proper time to settle scores now. We will think how we are going to live together as one big family later. We must now unite to protect our land with all the strength that we have, because then it will be too late.

I urge the Verhovna Rada and the government to ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine and protection of Ukrainian people.

May God bless and save you!

#4

In Eastern Ukraine, anti-Putin meetings

The participants include those with St. George ribbons and Regions

Ukrains'ka pravda, 2 March 2014

[translated by Nykolai Bilaniuk for UKL]

In Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, and Odessa rallies are taking place in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and against the policy of occupation of the Russian government.

Thus in Zaporizhzhia next to the wall of the Oblast Administration Building, a few thousand people have gathered who are holding Russian flags but oppose Russian Federation intervention in the affairs of the Ukraine, and who oppose the seizure of the administration building. As is being reported by 061.ua, the protesters are chanting "Putin go away!"

The rally is also attended by "Regionals" and people with St. George ribbons. They are apparently activists of the "people's militia" who "called for peace, but said that he would never support the Banderites". Organizers of this Maidan ask people not to succumb to provocations.

In Kharkiv, about a thousand participants came to the rally with national flags and placards "No Little Russia", and "Kharkov is Ukraine", reports "Interfax - Ukraine".

People came to the meeting despite the fact that the day before in social networks there appeared information about its cancellation due to "possible provocations."

In addition, next to the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Administration building, over ten thousand participants gathered at a peoples' assembly, demanding that deputies to the Oblast council condemn the aggression of Russia against Ukraine.

On the square next to the Oblast Administration, participants gathered with Ukrainian flags and placards reading "Putin hands off Ukraine", "No to War", "Crimea, we are with you. Ukraine is united", and "No to Putin's aggression."

The rally participants are demanding Putin withdraw his troops from the territory of Ukraine and to stop "the politics of lies and aggression against the Ukrainian people," and are chanting "Putin out."

On March 1, activists placed the oblast administration and council building under heavy guard.

Also in Donetsk, next to the oblast administration building, protesters with banners reading "Peace and Freedom for Ukraine," "No occupation!" and "Don't interfere in our lives" tried to hold an anti-war rally, reports "Ostriv."

The event took place quietly, under the supervision of the police. Later, however, the protesters came up to the participants in a pro-Russian rally, in particular members of the public organization of veterans of the Navy of the USSR, who kept the protesters away from the monument, but there were no clashes.

#5

Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate is asking Russians to Stop Calling Ukrainians “Fascists” and “Banderites”

Ukrains'ka pravda, 24 February 2014

[translated by Alisa Zavialova for UKL]

The head of the press office of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate Heorhii Kovalenko urged Russians against using such words as “Fascists”, “Banderites” and “Nazis” when referring to Ukrainians.

He posted the following on his Facebook page:

“Dear Russians! If you still have at least some love left for us, Ukrainians, please, stop using terms like “Fascists”, “Banderites”, “Nazis” or “Nationalists” even in your private conversations. These words kill” - he wrote.

“Do you know what struck me most of all when I was overlooking the square with people and coffins from the Maidan’s stage? What struck me was that on the corner of Khreshchatyk and Institutska streets where the most violent and bloody clashes took place there is the sign of “Sberbank Rosii” (Bank of Russia) that stretches along the whole building and there is a bank facility inside the same building. The barricades are very close to the glass windows of the bank and they remained completely untouched” - wrote the priest.

The representative of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate emphasized that Ukrainians are not fighting against Russians and Russian speakers.

“We are not fighting against Russians, Russian speakers or against canonical church, as it is presented in your media. Besides, I don’t really want to talk about your mass media”, he wrote.

“I just ask all of you: if we all belong to the same Orthodox church, if you consider Kyiv to be ‘the mother of Russian cities’, don’t escalate the conflicts, but pray for us and hear us!”, Kovalenko urged.

#6

Russian intervention in Ukraine is a disgrace!

By I. Gerasimov M. Mogilner A. Semyonov

Editors of Ab Imperio (Kazan, Russia)

[Ab Imperio, which publishes in Russian and English, is one of the most respected scholarly journals in Russia –UKL]

This is a case in which political analysis is inseparable from professional competence.

Regardless of one’s political preferences and fantasies, the universally known facts and conventions of social analysis leave no room for any “professional argument” in support of Russian aggression.

To begin with, this is a violation of the sovereignty of a neighboring state and of the international guarantees given to it by Russia. The “special circumstances” that are often evoked as at least rationalizing this aggression cannot validate it, even ideologically.

New Russia (Novorossia) and Crimea were indeed conquered by the Russian Empire, and they were never anyone’s “national territories” (except for the Crimean Tatars). But positing itself as the legal heir to the USSR, the Russian Federation acknowledges its political legacy in full, including the localization of these territories within the Ukrainian Republic.

The Ukrainian national project, in its various versions, relies on the Ukrainian language as the state language. But Russia has done nothing to support the Russian-speaking community in Ukraine (at least following the lead of the British Council). Russian social scientists concerned with Ukrainian nationalism have failed to offer alternatives to the Romantic nationalist project of the nineteenth century ("blood and soil"), and are unable to partake in dialogue with Ukrainian public intellectuals actively searching for a modern and more inclusive version of national community.

Ukraine is viewed as a strategic buffer with NATO member countries. Even those who take different "geopolitical schemes" seriously cannot but realize that this is an outdated argument from the mid-twentieth century, of the pre-missile epoch of confrontation of mass mobilized armies and tank armadas. In the categories of strategic political thinking of the twenty-first century, this is a miserable makeshift intellectual product.

Foreign policy (particularly of the Putin regime) is always cynical. But to a qualified observer, the direct connection of foreign and domestic policy is the nuts and bolts of analysis. Aggression in Ukraine and turning Russia into a rogue state will have immediate economic and political consequences for every citizen of Russia. We are all guilty that this intervention has become possible.

We are witnessing in Ukraine a very important historical experiment in the large-scale self-organization of society, finding a broad compromise, and forging a new political community. There is a chance not only to preserve the unique phenomenon of Ukrainian hybrid identity, but to use it as a foundation for a new political nation and democratic state. Russia's aggression aims at the destruction of this hybridity and freedom – at the breakup of Ukraine – literally and culturally.

#7

Proposed Law to Allow Russia to Expand Could Lead to Its Destruction,

Murtazin Says

by Paul Goble

Window on Eurasia, 1 March 2014

Staunton, March 1 – A bill being pushed in the Russian Duma to allow Russia to "absorb and form new subjects," one that promotes the idea that local referenda can trump international agreements, could backfire on the country and even lead to its destruction, according to a Moscow commentator.

Writing on the Kasparov.ru site yesterday, Irek Murtazin says that it is clear those behind the measure want to create a legal fiction that would allow them to make an end run around international law and to absorb parts of neighboring states without the agreement of the governments of those states.

But those backing the measure forget that two can play that game. What will happen, Murtazin says, "if tomorrow a similar law is adopted by China, Japan, or Mongolia, by Ukraine or Belarus? And then across all of Russia, 'a part of another state' begins to conduct referenda about unification?"

"If Tyva, for example, wants to combine with Mongolia? A couple of districts of Orenburg with Kazakhstan? Taganrog and Novorossiisk to join to Ukraine? And Smolensk and Pskov with Belarus?" If any of those things happen, what will the Russian backers of this new measure say? That is "contradicts international law" given what they have done.

Clearly this measure is being pushed because of a desire in Moscow to spark a civil war in Ukraine over Crimea. But if Ukraine might be the first victim, "Russia would suffer most of all,"

Murtazin says. Doesn't anyone in the regime understand that? Or do they assume that the world will allow Russia to act in ways it would not allow anyone else?

But even if those things don't happen, even if the West continues to defer to Moscow and permit it to do what it would not allow anyone else, Russia will still suffer from this law and its application. It will find it harder to export its oil and gas, and it may very well face serious refugee flows.

Russians should be thinking about all these risks before adopting such a dangerous piece of legislation, Murtazin says. One can only add that so should the leaders of the West who need to recognize not only how dangerous this law would be in the short term but how it would reinforce Moscow's view of international acceptance of Russian exceptionalism.

Boris Vishnevsky, a Yabloko deputy in St. Petersburg's legislative assembly, puts the challenge to the West Putin has laid down in even more stark terms. He says that what is happening in Crimea recalls Hitler's move into the Sudetenland, where initially German forces were welcomed with flowers.

That leaves open, of course, another and potentially more important question, he suggests. Will there be a new Munich?

#8

Ukraine Sovereignty Not in Russian Ideological Narrative

by Vitaly Chernetsky
2paragraphs.com, 1 March 2014

Vitaly Chernetsky, an associate professor at The University of Kansas, is the author of Mapping Postcommunist Cultures: Russia and Ukraine in the Context of Globalization, co-winner of the Prize for Best Book given by the American Association for Ukrainian Studies. He holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ideological narratives that guide contemporary politics often have very deep historical roots, reaching back not just for decades, but for centuries. Although social science tells us that modern nations are a recent product, only about 200 years old, their origins, and narratives of origins, go much deeper. When a portion of Ukraine was incorporated into the Muscovite state in the mid-17th century, these two cultures saw each other as distinctly different from one another. A tragic paradox is that among the ideologues of the ascending Russian Empire in the 18th century there were many educated Ukrainians who de-emphasized this difference, in part to assure their own legitimacy as participants in building the Russian imperial project. The ascent of imperial Russia combined with both the colonization and the provincialization of Ukraine. By the 19th century, Ukraine was seen in Russia (including by many Ukrainians) as something quaint, colorful, with a romantic past, but with no prospects for a meaningful future, much like Scotland or Ireland. The Russian imperial narrative, by contrast, was seen as future-oriented, much like in the case of Western colonial empires. It took the passionate writings of Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine's national poet, born a serf, whose bicentennial is marked this month, to start radically changing the Ukrainian discourse. Russian authorities saw him as very dangerous, and treated him with extreme brutality. Shevchenko's writing deserves to be much wider known and appreciated internationally, because he is one of the first and most powerful spokespersons for global anti-colonial solidarity.

Over the course of the past 200 years, a new modern Ukrainian national identity was being forged. At the same time, the dominant Russian ideological narrative has been that Ukrainians are but a (lesser) branch of the Russian nation, that there is no such thing as a distinct Ukrainian language (with Russia nevertheless acting to restrict and ban the use of this language), that Ukraine and Ukrainians as a separate entity are an aberration on *Russian* territory. For all the absurdity of this view, quite many people in Russia still subscribe to it. Alternatively, others follow

the Soviet practice of recognizing ethnic difference but rejecting the possibility of a distinct and uniting Ukrainian civic national identity. This makes Russian colonialist attitude to Ukraine different from the colonialist attitude towards the Caucasus or Central Asia. Their otherness is not disputed when they are treated with racist prejudice. In the case of Ukraine and Ukrainians, there is both condescension from Russia and a refusal to recognize Ukraine as something truly distinct. By contrast, the West has struggled to develop a coherent narrative of what Ukraine and Ukrainians are and where they belong, even though this is a country in Europe the size of France. While this can be seen to a degree as a shortcoming of the Ukrainians themselves, the events of both 2004-2005 and of the latest several months emphasize that the West needs to discard stereotypes and look at the people and events not only in Ukraine, but in the broader region of Eastern Europe. Thankfully, there are indications that the earlier misperceptions that handicapped the formulation of a coherent Western policy on Ukraine are now being discarded. Most importantly, the recent months witnessed a rapid acceleration of the development of a modern united civic Ukrainian identity that transcends ethnic difference and emphasizes Ukraine's rightful place as an equal member of the family of nations which seeks, and deserves, to live in peace with all its neighbors.

#9

Who are the Crimean Tatars, and why are they important?

by Oxana Shevel

The Monkey Cage Blog (Washington Post), 1 March 2014

[Oxana Shevel is Associate Professor of Political Science at Tufts University]

All eyes are on Crimea, in Ukraine, where unidentified armed men have taken over local government buildings in the regional capital, Simferopol, hoisting Russian flags on the roofs and the Russian military has taken blocked two airports and the Ukrainian coast guard's base, as well as some telecommunications. Acting Ukrainian President Oleksandr Turchynov announced that Russia is attempting to annex Ukrainian territory and is implementing the Abkhaz scenario in Crimea, while Andrei Illarionov, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, said that Putin wants to provoke large-scale civil war in Ukraine and is just waiting for the Ukrainians to respond to his provocative maneuvers in Crimea. In the Russian parliament, a law simplifying incorporation of foreign territories into Russia was tabled, and the Russian Foreign Ministry said the Russian Consulate in Crimea will begin issuing passports to members of the disbanded Ukrainian Berkut riot police.

Russia may be planning to take over Crimea, but several factors make it harder to believe that Russia will be able to establish control and to effectively annex Crimea as it did with South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria. For one, the Ukrainian side so far has not made any moves that Russia can credibly present as a provocation that necessitates armed response by the Russian side to "protect" its military or its citizens, as was the case in Georgia in 2008. The new Ukrainian government leaders have called for calm, the far right Right Sector said it will not be sending its men to Crimea, and in a conciliatory gesture to Russian-speakers, acting president Turchynov today vetoed the law the Ukrainian parliament adopted several days earlier repealing the 2012 law elevating the status of the Russian language. With the Security Council in session to discuss events in Crimea and Western leaders urging restraint and warning Russia that violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable, there is hope that a diplomatic solution to the crisis could be found.

But even if diplomacy fails and the Russian military seizes Crimean territory with the intention of controlling it permanently, it will be much harder for Russia to establish control of Crimea than it was in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transnistria. The main reason for this is the Crimean Tatars. The Tatars — a Muslim group that was deported en masse from Crimea by Stalin in 1944 and that for decades has waged a peaceful struggle for the right to return — have been coming back in droves since 1989. According to the latest Ukrainian census, from 2001, 243,433 Crimean

Tatars account for 12.1 percent of the Crimean population of 2,033,700. They represent a highly mobilized and unified constituency that has consistently been pro-Ukrainian and opposed to pro-Russian separatism on the peninsula. Going back to the 1991 independence referendum, the narrow vote in favor of Ukrainian state independence in Crimea may have been thanks to the vote of the Crimean Tatars. Since then, the Crimean Tatars and their representative organ, the Mejlis, have cooperated with the pro-Ukrainian political parties. Leaders of the Mejlis such as Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov have been members of the Ukrainian parliament elected on the party list of Ukrainian nationalist parties such as Rukh in the 1990s and later from Our Ukraine party. On Feb. 26, the day before the Crimean parliament was taken over by the armed men, Crimean Tatars held a large rally near the parliament that was larger than a simultaneous pro-Russian rally. There has been no comparable local mobilized group opposed to Russian takeover in any other of the breakaway regions.

Although the group has been a staunch ally of the Ukrainian government against pro-Russian separatism on the peninsula, the Ukrainian central authorities, while benefiting from this support, have also been suspicious of the Crimean Tatars, who consider Crimea their historical homeland and have advocated measures such as changing the status of Crimean autonomy to make it the national-territorial autonomy of the Crimean Tatars as opposed to simply territorial (and de facto ethnic Russian autonomy given that ethnic Russians constitute more than 50 percent of the population in Crimea). The law on the status of the Crimean Tatars as indigenous peoples of Ukraine that the Tatar leaders have been pushing for many years remains unadopted.

Whatever the Tatar grievances against the Ukrainian state may be, when faced with the choice of being under either Russian or Ukrainian control, the Crimean Tatar leadership has consistently and unequivocally chosen Ukraine. Since the Soviet period, attempts to split the Crimean Tatar movement and persuade some of the Tatars to support a pro-Soviet, and later pro-Russian, agenda has not borne fruit. In an interview with this author in the 1990s, Mustafa Dzhemilev said that in 1991 Boris Yeltsin's government made an offer to the Crimean Tatars to back Russian control of Crimea in return for giving the peninsula the status of Crimean Tatar national autonomy. Dzhemilev refused the offer then, and, in an interview with the author by phone from Crimea on Friday, he said that he has received a similar offer from a highly placed Russian official now, noting that the Crimean Tatars will not entertain such offers now, either, and that they do not trust Russia and want Crimea to remain within Ukraine. The Chairman of the Mejlis already issued a statement refusing to recognize the new local government in Crimea that was voted for by the local parliament yesterday.

The Crimean Tatars are known for a history of nonviolent resistance, and Dzhemilev is a recipient of the [UNHCR Nansen medal](#) for his decades of peaceful struggle for the rights of the Crimean Tatars. So far, the Tatars have stayed off the streets, and their leaders, just as Ukrainian leaders in Kiev, have exercised a commendable degree of restraint. But if Russia does not back down and tries to annex and hold on to Crimea, it is certain to face sustained and mobilized opposition from the group. with armed men in the building and reportedly without a quorum. Today, news media reported Dzhemilev's [statement](#) that the Crimean Tatars are organizing self-defense units and that if diplomacy fails, the units would come under Ukrainian command and would fight the "aggressor" if necessary.

The Crimean Tatars are known for a history of nonviolent resistance, and Dzhemilev is a recipient of the [UNHCR Nansen medal](#) for his decades of peaceful struggle for the rights of the Crimean Tatars. So far, the Tatars have stayed off the streets, and their leaders, just as Ukrainian leaders in Kiev, have exercised a commendable degree of restraint. But if Russia does not back down and tries to annex and hold on to Crimea, it is certain to face sustained and mobilized opposition from the group.

Overnight Crimean Crisis Hits Stalemate

by Idil Izmirli

Eurasia Daily Monitor, 28 February 2014

As of at least Friday, February 28, unmarked Russian tanks are reportedly moving through the streets of Simferopol, the administrative capital of Crimea.

The crisis situation on this Ukrainian peninsula, populated by majority ethnic Russians, has been escalating for the past several days. On the morning of February 27, at 4:27 a.m., around 50–100 gunmen with masks, bags of ammunition, Kalashnikovs, sniper rifles and grenade launchers occupied the Crimean Parliament and the building of the Council of Ministers, and hoisted the Russian flag from the tops of both buildings. According to eyewitness accounts, they arrived in the area on buses and executed a well-designed plan to seize the buildings. Meanwhile Russian tanks became visible on the streets of Simferopol.

According to Crimean residents, people were told stay at home, and government institutions, schools and universities were closed (Author's interviews, February 27). While the gunmen prevented anybody from entering the building, the Crimean legislature held an extraordinary session that was supposed to have taken place the day before, but had been impeded by a mass rally of Crimean Tatar protesters gathered in front of the parliament. When Anatoly Mogilev, the chairman of the Crimean Council of Ministers, came out and tried to reason with the gunmen, they reportedly told him to go inside and wait. Most of the occupiers were wearing orange and black ribbons, which became a symbol of anti-Maidan protesters within the last months. In the morning, it became clear that the Crimean Parliament had dismissed Anatoly Mogilev from his post, and replaced him (by 53 out of 100 votes) with the chairperson of the Russian Unity party Sergei Aksyonov, a pro-Russian, anti-Tatar chauvinist politician who declared that he only recognizes Viktor Yanukovich as the president of Ukraine and that he was going to work only with Yanukovich and with Russia to turn Crimea into a truly attractive place to live.

The parliament also decided that Crimea would hold a referendum on May 25 on the peninsula's sovereignty. Meanwhile, hundreds of pro-Russian demonstrators assembled in front of these areas and cheered while Soviet marching music played through megaphones. In an interview with journalists, the speaker of the Crimean parliament, Vladimir Konstantynov, claimed that on Wednesday, February 26, "radical" forces—meaning the Crimean Tatars—prevented the extraordinary session that was going to decide on Crimea's future. That Wednesday, under the slogan of "Preserving the territorial integrity of Ukraine," Crimean Tatars arrived in the thousands—including women and the elderly—carrying Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar flags and chanting "Glory to Ukraine," "Glory to the heroes" (for the 82 who died during the Maidan protests in Kyiv), "Down with the Gang," and "Crimea—not Russia."

The Crimean Tatars' motivation to attend this rally organized by the Mejlis (the de-facto representative body of the Crimean Tatars) was to suspend the extraordinary session that the Crimean parliament was preparing to hold at 3 p.m. on Wednesday. At this session, the members of the Crimean parliament were planning to discuss two questions: "The political situation in Ukraine," and "The situation of the Council of Ministers of Crimea." In effect, the local Crimean legislators were planning to declare the newly forming government in Kyiv as illegitimate and ask for Moscow's help to secede from Ukraine and to unify with the Russian Federation. After the Crimean Tatars gathered, pro-Russian groups soon also arrived in the area under the leadership of Aksyonov—who would be named the new chairmen of the Crimean Council of Ministers the following day. Aksyonov's group, which eventually numbered 2,000–3,000, included the Crimean Cossack Union—"Crimean Front" (these so-called Cossacks, in reality have nothing to do with the real Cossacks, but are simply pro-Russian, retired military officials living in Crimea), the "People's Liberation Movement," and "Union Taurida" (Taurida was a Tsarist Russian administrative district that included modern-day Crimea). They were carrying Russian flags and

cheering "Glory to Russia". Scuffles eventually broke out between the two opposing groups, which sent 30 people to the hospital and resulted in two deaths.

After the rally, everybody returned home. Refat Chubarov, the newly elected head of the Mejlis, declared, "Today Crimea won"; but he obviously could not guess what the night was going to bring. On the evening of February 26, Simferopol Airport (the only international airport in Crimea) was occupied by unmarked airplanes carrying military personnel, thought to be Russian special forces. The Belbek military airport near Sevastopol was also blocked by ten "Ural" trucks belonging to the Russia Black Sea Fleet (BSF) forces. That same day, the BSF accepted an extra 11,000 Russian paratroopers to Sevastopol—where the Russian fleet is based according to a bilateral agreement with Ukraine that does not expire until 2042.

Furthermore, a delegation from the Russian Federation arrived in this strategic port city. Among them were deputy speaker of the Russian Parliament, Vladimir Vasiliev; State Duma member and the first female Cosmonaut of Russia, Valentina Tereshkova; as well as other Russian parliamentarians and members of the ruling United Russia party. "This is a beginning of a civil war," warned Leonid Pilunsky, a deputy of the Crimean Supreme Council. "In the [past] 22 years of the existence of the Ukrainian state, men armed with machine guns never occupied a state administration building. This is terrorism. Are these gunmen the voluntary self-defense units protecting Russian interests in Crimea? Nobody knows," argued Pilunsky, a Ukrainian politician from the Qurultay-Rukh faction, which is supported by Crimean Tatars. On February 27, Mejlis head Chubarov addressed the Crimean Tatars on television and advised them to keep calm during these turbulent times. "Tomorrow, [national] Rukh Party deputies are arriving from Kyiv," he said, "and soon, we will get help from international organizations..." (ATR, February 27). Nevertheless, the presence of Russian tanks and military personnel on the streets, armed men occupying government buildings, as well as seized airports could not help but remind many Crimean Tatars of the deportation their nation suffered 70 years earlier. On May 18, 1944, they were forced onto cattle cars by thousands of Soviet soldiers and armed security personnel, and 46.2 percent of them died while being transported to Central Asia (Justin Burke et al., *Crimean Tatars: Repatriation and Conflict Prevention*, New York: The Open Society Institute, 1996). It is thus no wonder how vehemently the Crimean Tatars now reject any plans for their homeland of Crimea to return to Russian rule.

#11

From: Robert Fleming
Sent: Saturday, March 1, 2014 4:10 AM

This is Robert Fleming in Simferopol, Crimea. As you already know, Russian military forces have entered the Crimea and are presently stationed throughout the city of Simferopol and, I assume, elsewhere on the peninsula. Contrary to what may be the 'conventional wisdom' they are, for the most part, welcome here as a stabilizing force. The relations between Crimean Tartars and the majority Russian population are seriously strained and the local government was ill prepared to deal with the growing anger and fear. In addition, there were credible reports of nationalists massing north of Crimea with the intention of coming here and taking charge of the community. I have no way of verifying this assertion but, given the escalating war of words between the Crimea and Kiev, it's not to be dismissed. For obvious reasons, the Russian community here is afraid and the strident rhetoric and stupid behavior of block Svoboda in the Rada only served to increase their fear. From this place it would appear Kiev has lost control of the revolution.

The situation in Crimea is calm right now with people going about their business. My wife is heading out with our daughter to buy some things and to see if the local banks are still dispensing money. We see no troops from our flat but do hear the distinctive sound of Russian armored personnel carriers and large trucks as they pass nearby. All major buildings in Semferopol are being guarded by Russian troops. There is no longer any "Crimea Self Defense Force" cover for the troops who started arriving on Friday. They are Russian. The Tartars are being told not to

worry as they are being protected too. We've been told the Russians will stay for 10 days and then reevaluate the situation to see if they stay longer or leave. I would guess they will eventually reduce their visibility but will remain within the area until such time as the situation in Ukraine as a whole stabilizes. If things in the north go to hell, then I would assume Crimea will formally secede from Ukraine under the protection of Russia. The talk we've heard from the local government is that there is no intention to affiliate with Russia at this time and that separation from Ukraine would lead to Crimea forming an entity separate from both countries. That might be the best option given the diverse ethnic makeup of this place and the deep, painful memories so many here carry.

Although I'm a strong support of the Maidan, it would appear the nationalists have assumed a commanding presence over the country and that is a worry. The Crimea representatives in the national Rada have indicated that the nationalists are threatening deputies and their families. I cannot verify this is true but it would certainly seem that things are not going all that well in Kiev. One can and should blame much of this on the previous government and on the complete failure of the security forces to do their jobs. Yes, these forces are corrupt but, until something better can be found, they do serve some valuable purposes.

Finally, it would seem that the world community needs to find some way of stepping into Ukraine and acting as a stabilizing force until a functioning government is formed. I do not view the current unity government as functional and, with no money in the bank, the country can't supply even basic services. More is needed than just the IMF coming in with suitcases full of cash and a list of demands for austerity. It's time for some creativity, something that has been seriously lacking from the bankers and elites of late. Austerity will literally tear this country apart and no one can believe that's a good thing.

Keep up the good work but I again strongly suggest both sides (or many sides) of this conflict be given an airing. Nationalism is a very serious problem here right now and every Ukraine supporter needs to stand up and condemn the bigotry and hate being cast about by these forces. If Ukraine falls under the spell of these people there will be major consequences not just for Ukraine but for much of Europe and the FSU countries. We all must work to keep the strident anger under control and not let emotions cloud our better judgement.

#12

**This Is No Second Cold War:
Ukraine's Territorial Integrity Must Remain Intact**
by Tarik Cyril Amar
The Guardian, 28 February 2014

Sochi feels very far away. Western eyes are now fixed on Crimea, a Ukrainian peninsula about 500 miles west of the Olympic city, where local militias and politicians have mounted a separatist response to the Ukrainian revolution against Viktor Yanukovich's regime. Because Crimea is ethnically and politically complex, this move threatens the peace not only of Ukraine and Russia but also Crimea itself. Vladimir Putin has exacerbated this crisis. After a some sabre-rattling, we now hear reports of boots on the ground, even while Russia's official position remains murky. The new Ukrainian government decries an invasion; some observers fear a repetition of the 2008 war in Georgia; and western governments and Nato have warned Russia.

In the west there is talk of a return to the cold war, but this is wide of the mark: the sources of current Russian conduct lie in how different our world is to that of the Cold War, not how similar. Putin is not aggressive because he feels strong or unchallenged by a flabby west. Since the end of the Soviet Union, the EU and Nato have enlarged at the impressive clip of roughly one new member state every two years. Against this background, Putin has just suffered what he sees as a massive political defeat.

Putin was triumphant last November, when he seemed to have successfully (and shortsightedly) torpedoed the EU's association agreement with Ukraine. Now we see him frustrated for the second time in a decade by a country he fails to understand, afraid of "revolutionary contagion" and "domino" regimes. His plans for a "Eurasian" union lie in tatters, because without Ukraine, the rest will be a rump. All this is set against mounting problems in the Russian economy.

If the cold war taught us anything, it is that perceptions are crucial and empathy is not sympathy. One need not concede anything to know it is vital to understand Putin's motives. It is obvious he is wrong. Ukraine is a sovereign state: questioning its territorial integrity is unjustifiable and a danger to peace, domestic and international. But this doesn't matter to Putin, who is likely to genuinely see himself as the aggrieved party, acting defensively. In reality he has only himself to blame – real Russian interest did not dictate his attack on an association agreement with the EU. But the Ukrainian revolutionaries' equally rash rejection of the Sikorski-Steinmeier-Fabius agreement – brokered by Poland, Germany and France – in which Yanukovich acceded to demands for a new coalition government and early elections, has given Putin a reason to feel that the west has acted in bad faith (again, whether he is right or wrong is beside the point).

Putin's macho image should not deceive us; neither should his statements lamenting the end of the Soviet Union (those keen to take his word for it should try to reconcile their literalism with their usual insistence that he is a deceitful scion of the KGB).

The best analogy for him is not a post-1945 cold war warrior but a pre-1917 national imperialist. Quite plausibly, he would like to see himself as reviving Russia's greatness without actually relapsing into a cold war which, after all, he witnessed Russia lose. This makes Ukraine even more important for him because he perceives it not simply as part of the short-lived Soviet experiment, but of either Russia, or Russia's Huntingtonian zone of civilisational hegemony. That is wrong too, but the problem is Putin thinks he is right.

There are no simple solutions. Western warnings to Putin are necessary. But if they come without any face-saving offers, they will be worse than useless. Moreover, those urging the west to scare the imperialism out of Russia should also warn the new Ukrainian leadership that, while Crimea is indeed Ukrainian, restraint is urgently needed.

There is, after all, one more thing we can learn from the cold war. It was not peace: we got through it without one big hot war but with many nasty smaller ones, which devastated the societies in which they took place. Ukraine's territorial integrity, its chance to build a more democratic and equal society, and its free decision about the EU are all worth supporting; so is not having the country turn into a vicarious battlefield.

#13

Russia Stages a Coup in Crimea

by Michael Weiss

The Daily Beast, 1 March 2014

Georgia 2.0 has begun—overnight, Russian troops were dispatched to seize control of Crimea's airspace, ports and regional government. Why Kiev could be next.

So Russia invaded Crimea.

Despite promising that it would not do so (well, except when [saying](#) that it might), Moscow just dispatched both conventional military and paramilitary forces to seize control of Crimea's airspace, its ports, its highways, its television stations, and its regional government. The last fortnight of hysterical Kremlin propaganda about a "coup" being waged in Kiev by homosexual neo-Nazi terrorists suborned by the U.S. State Department has thus given way to a Kremlin-hatched coup waged in Simferopol by an even more intriguing consortium of Russian intelligence operatives,

paratroopers, masked militiamen, and burly motorcycle thugs straight out of a Vasily Aksyonov rendition of *Mad Max*. A swift and easy day-long putsch initiated from within, and now clearly abetted by external reinforcements, has resulted in Moscow's seizure of a southern European territory nearly the size of Wales and home to two million souls. True, the majority is ethnic Russians, but approximately 720,000 Crimeans are either Muslim Tatars or Ukrainians with little or no desire to be incorporated into the Russian Federation.

Yet incorporation in some form or another seems inevitable. What remains to be seen is whether or not a formal annexation of Crimea will take place or whether the peninsula will be run as another "semi-autonomous" satellite of Moscow, or simply serve as a waiting room for what Putin hopes will happen next: the fall of the Euromaidan government in Kiev. In the course of a hastily-assembled [press](#) conference yesterday, President Obama said that "the situation remains very fluid" and that there would be an undisclosed "costs" for Russian military intervention in Ukraine. Our commander-in-chief's definition of fluidity is Vladimir Putin's definition of a *fait accompli*; any American-debited costs weigh not at all on the machiavellian czar's mind at this point because he'd already accomplished what Obama warned him not to do. Just this morning, in fact, Putin made an appeal to the Federation Council, the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, "for the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine for the normalization of the political situation in this country." Guess how the Council just voted? Now Putin's preparing to invade the rest of Ukraine, too.

So much, then, for a 1994 memorandum signed by Moscow ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a newly independent state of Ukraine (one encompassing Crimea). Russia has now decided that it'd rather take by force what it pleases, when it pleases, and in contravention of international law—all on the pretext of protecting its own Slavic brethren. This from a regime that never shies from accusing other countries of stoking "sectarianism." Its other favorite word is "sovereignty," and I invite you to Google that in conjunction with Russia Foreign Ministry statements since March 2011 on the Syria conflict to see what bottomless hypocrisy looks like. Or consider how Sergei Lavrov would respond if Saudi Arabia or Qatar or Turkey invaded Aleppo out of a similarly advanced motive to rescue their fellow Sunni Muslims who have suffered far worse in three years than what Crimean Russians have suffered since Viktor Yanukovich was toppled a week ago.

The groundwork for this invasion was likely planned while the Sochi Olympics were still ongoing, but the thing itself only began in earnest on Thursday, as masked, armed militants took control of Crimean state institutions, including the regional parliament or Verkhovna Rada, which, in a sign of official collusion with vigilantism, continued to function much the same as before. As of early Friday morning GMT, news trickled in that "50 armed men in military uniforms" had also stormed the airport in Simferopol, Crimea's regional capital, dressed in the same nondescript fatigues as the machine gun-toting men who seized the Rada. Despite denials from the airport "telephone help desk employee" that nothing untoward had taken place, a spokesman for the Simferopol airport indeed confirmed that an armed raiding party had arrived but then withdrew once it realized that Ukrainian paratroopers were nowhere to be found. Why unidentified militants thought they had any just reason to take a Ukrainian airport from Ukrainian paratroopers went unexplained. Then Arsen Avakov, the newly appointed Ukrainian Interior Minister, issued a statement on the incident, calling it a "military invasion and occupation." First, he said, the gunmen numbered 100, not 50, and *had* identified themselves after all—as "Cossacks". These, however, were successfully repelled by Ukrainian troops and police, upon which several Russian KAMKAZ trucks (the canvas-canopied lorries you remember from "M.A.S.H.") arrived carrying 119 camouflaged soldiers who didn't hide "their affiliation to the armed forces of the Russian Federation." When Ukrainian Interior Ministry personnel questioned them, Avakov said, these soldiers "answered curtly that 'we do not have instructions to negotiate with you.'" Furthermore, Avakov claimed, Belbek airfield in Sevastopol had also been cordoned off by Russian Black Sea Fleet troops, although the air field itself remained under the control of the Ukrainian military and border guard. Russian blogger Ilya Varlamov would later [write](#): "There is a story that the airport is being blocked not by troops of the Black Sea Fleet, but special forces from the Russian GRU

[military intelligence directorate] who have arrived from Russia. A special forces plane has landed at the Black Sea Fleet military airfield in the village of Gvardeyskoye.”

Just before noon GMT, Gazeta.ru reported that the Russian Ministry of Economic Development had announced a major infrastructure project for Crimea worth \$5 billion, designed to “give a second life to the peninsula. A list of sites for investments has already been drawn up” for ports, roads, hotels and certain factories. The entire bill would evidently be footed by Russian oligarchs, though no such investment scheme was mooted for the rest of Ukraine or even acknowledged by its new government. This Crimea-only capital boost, rather, had apparently been pre-arranged with Yanukovych last December.

Next came word that Putin’s favorite biker gang (you read that right), known as the “Night Wolves” (yes), were now en route to Crimea to whip up support for what they’ve decided to term a “Russian Spring” on non-Russian soil. The leader of this Slavic Hell’s Angels, Aleksandr Zaldostanov—nicknamed Khirurg (“Surgeon”)—said that he’d be headed to Sevastopol to agitate among the local Night Wolves chapter there before proceeding all along eastern Ukraine as a kind of Harley-bound fifth columnist. Soon came whispers about a Russian corvette being spotted at Balaclava Bay. By around 1 p.m. GMT, the Associated Press carried an item that the Ukrainian border agency confirmed 30 Russian marines, all from the 810th brigade of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, had “taken positions outside [Ukraine’s] Coast Guard base in Sevastopol.” Reuters clarified that it was in fact 20 men, all armed with machine guns, one of whom told the news agency: “We are here ... so as not to have a repeat of the Maidan.”

By mid-afternoon, Yanukovych gave his Caligula-meets-Gaddafi speech at Rostov-on-Don in which he insisted he was still Ukraine’s rightful president (Moscow agrees) and that “[e]verything that is happening in Crimea is a response to what happened in Kiev.” Yanukovych denied, however, that he had sought any Russian military intervention in Ukraine: not that he had to, of course, since the nice thing about Russian military interventions is that you never have to ask for them to happen. They just do.

For its part, Russian Foreign Ministry finally copped to moving its troops around Crimea, but nevertheless insisted that these were only from previously stationed garrisons and that Kiev had been informed of all martial activities: “The Ukrainian side was also passed a note regarding the movement of armoured vehicles of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea,” the Ministry posted to its website Friday, “which is happening in full accordance with the foundation Russian-Ukrainian agreement on the Black Sea Fleet.”

Except that the seizing of Ukrainian coast guard bases doesn’t track with any known Russian-Ukrainian agreement. Nor did the Kremlin actually inform Kiev of the full extent of what it’d got up to. As the newspaper *Ukrainskaya Pravda* would later observe: “On Friday, the State Border Service tracked the flight from the direction of Kerch to Ukraine of more than 10 Russian military helicopters. Ukraine received the appropriate notification for only three of them from the Black Sea Fleet.”

By around 3:30 p.m. GMT, more solid evidence emerged that the Russians were actually importing servicemen from Russia, not just relying on Crimean garrisons. *Radio Svoboda* reported that “400 Russian paratroopers from Ulyanovsk arrived today in Sevastopol, ships with [Russian] marines on the way.” *The Aviationist* website also noted that “[a]mateurl video uploaded on Youtube shows eleven Mil Mi-24 helicopters allegedly flying towards the military airport at Sevastopol early in the morning of Feb. 28.”

Soon followed the interdiction of Crimea’s roadways. *The Wall Street Journal*’s Paul Sonne observed first-hand that “Crimean special forces and local militiamen with Kalashnikovs and masks have hoisted Russian flags and set up checkpoints on the only two highways that connect the Black Sea peninsula to mainland Ukraine.” Two highways in particular, Chongar and

Armyansk, both of which connect Crimea to the rest of the country, were blocked off by checkpoints, said to be manned by Night Wolves. Some Western journalists were attacked by these militiamen. AP journalists further observed “a convoy of nine Russian armored personnel carriers and a truck on a road between the port city of Sevastopol and the regional capital, Simferopol”—and all the vehicles were festooned with Russian flags.

Making good on speculation that Moscow was planning to offer easy citizenship to Russians in Ukraine, the Foreign Ministry announced on its Facebook page Friday that the Consul General of the Russian Federation in Simferopol has been “assigned to immediately take all the necessary measures to begin handing out Russian passports to soldiers of the Berkut detachment.” The reinstatement and rehabilitation of the Berkut so soon after their summary dismissal by Kiev was clearly not a spontaneous gesture but rather a carefully coordinated move by Moscow and its agents in Simferopol. Not only had Yanukovich in his speech praised the notorious riot police, who were guilty of shooting Euromaidan protestors dead in a bloody rampage last week (evidently with the guidance of a Russian military intelligence official), but Margarita Simonyan, the ridiculous editor-in-chief of RT, “welcome[d]” them (in Russian) on Twitter and invited them to take tea with her. Then the Verkhovna Rada announced the formation of a “Crimean Berkut special division to protect public order.” Thus a kind of Putinist deep-state Hezbollah was born in advance of what the Russian State Duma announced was its own legislative measure to ease the integration of foreign territories into the Russian Federation. This would give *de jure* legitimacy—at least according to Moscow—to any future annexation of Crimea.

At around 6 p.m. GMT, Crimea’s airspace was reported as completely shut down, with all national and international flights cancelled, except perhaps for Russian helicopters and military transport aircraft. “We are experiencing an invasion by air, land, and sea. There are Russian vehicles all over,” declared a correspondent for Crimean Tatar television channel ATR.ua.

By mid-to-late evening, there was overwhelming evidence that Russia was using a mix of mercenary and conscript forces. Lev Shlosberg, a journalist with *Pskovskaya Guberniya*, noted on his personal blog: “According to one of the participants in the operation, officers and contractors of the 76th Shock Troops Division have been re-locating to Ukrainian territory since last week. By early this week, there were already more than 100 soldiers. The last of the famous detachments was sent on Thursday, 27 February. They are fully armed, with 5,000 rounds of ammunition per person. There is one truck per 10 soldiers, and they are completely loaded with weapons including flame-throwers. Upon arrival on the territory of Ukraine, they did not report their geographical locations to people, and they were assigned local tasks. Most likely, this was Sevastopol and Simferopol. Emergency troops remain in Yysk, and did not take part in the operation. The barracks of the 76th Storm Troops Division on Margelova Street in Pskov is practically empty.” Senior Ukrainian official Sergiy Kunitsyn told Crimea’s ATR television channel that about 2,000 Russian troops had been flown in on 13 IL-76s transport planes.

Crimean television networks then got commandeered. Here’s Ayder Muzhdabayev, deputy editor of *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, posting on Facebook at around 7:30 p.m. GMT: “Armed divisions have seized the state television station (GTRK) of Crimea. All the staff have gathered together at the Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR, hundreds of others have come. They are waiting for the seizure. Several APCs have arrived. For now, they’ve passed by. They are also expected seizure of the building of the Crimean Tatar’s Medjlis [Assembly]. People are already going there. Everyone is afraid of what will happen tonight. There it is. Friends, colleagues, take care of yourself! Don’t resist the military. God save Crimea!”

There were signs, too, that Russia *wanted* a Ukrainian counter-response to its aggression. Dmitry Tymchuk, director of the Kiev-based Center for Military Political Research, offered these sequential updates of Russian paratroopers attempting a “provocation” at the 36th Brigade of Ukrainian Navy Coastal Defense, designed to get the Ukrainians to shoot at them:

"This is an invasion! Russian paratroopers with torn-off chevrons are seizing military bases. Russian IL 76s are landing at airfields. Now there is a storming of the 36th Brigade. Ukrainian troops are completely demoralized—there is no resistance. There is information from many local sources. This is war. Or to be more precise—takeover.

"It has just been reported that the 36th Brigade has kept its distance. The personnel are trying to defend themselves.

"At 21:40 the storm seemed not to have succeeded (or was postponed). It is possible that there was a provocation in order to force Ukrainians to open fire. The question of the fleeing command of the brigade remains open.

"At 22:00 from two sources: The provocation against the brigade was neutralized. The command is evidently in place and is in control of the situation. We will hope that these little Russian soldiers won't continue their experiments. God willing!"

What CNN claimed were "tanks" (but were really 122-millimeter self-propelled guns) started rolling down dirt streets of Sevastopol just after midnight GMT. By 1:35 a.m., a Tatar-majority district, Kirovske, saw its military airfield sacked by yet another contingent of professional troops. According to censor.net: "16 military trucks jam-packed with soldiers entered the grounds of the airfield. The trucks were travelling with an escort of 2 or 3 hummers."

By late night Friday, the Night Wolves were photographed riding through the streets of Simferopol and planning a motorcycle rally (for humanitarian aid!) throughout Crimea on Saturday. Local photojournalist Andrei Kanishchev signed off with this post-blitz commentary: "I don't know if I can get out to walk tomorrow ... General impressions—everyone is sort of crushed, in anticipation, the city has emptied out toward evening, and not only in the cordoned-off zone."

As of this morning, March 1, the Ukrainian Defense Minister Igor Tenyukh informed his government in its first cabinet session that Russia had sent in total 30 APCs and 6,000 troops to Crimea—just shy of what the U.S. dispatched into Grenada in 1983.

The fall of Crimea to Russia, in other words, was over almost before it began.

And it's obvious that Putin calculated correctly yet again. The United States was gulled into thinking that Russia would forbear this time because the *siloviki* gave assurances to a U.S. diplomatic corps eager to believe anything that it would do. Washington's own intelligence community, fresh from proclaiming a year ago that Bashar al-Assad had "weeks left" in power, assessed yesterday that "we don't have any reason to think" that the surprise drill of 150,000 soldiers announced overnight by Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu would amount to "more than military exercises." And given that the United States has yet to definitively label what transpired eight months ago in Egypt a "coup," the Kremlin must have also reckoned that a rapid takeover of Crimea would be all over but for the shouting as Washington sputtered to define exactly what had just transpired, much less attempted a coherent response to yet another international crisis. Who needs "fraternal assistance" when American officials themselves have coined the unbeatable euphemism "uncontested arrival" to describe a Russian invasion of one of its neighbors?

The last five years have been plenty instructive to Putin about what America is prepared and willing to do, even when it sets its own standards of supposedly intolerable or unconscionable behavior. At worst, he knows, the superpower will send emissaries to Turtle Bay, leaving him free to send APCs to Simferopol or attack helicopters to Damascus. Putin knows exactly what he's up against. America still pretends it doesn't.

Explainer: The Budapest Memorandum And Its Relevance To Crimea

by Ron Synovitz

RFE/RL.org, 28 February 2014

With tensions rising in Crimea and pro-Russian forces controlling the peninsula's main airports, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has called on Russia to "not violate the Budapest Memorandum." So what is the "Budapest Memorandum" and what does it have to do with Crimea?

What exactly is the "Budapest Memorandum"?

The "Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances" is a diplomatic memorandum that was signed in December 1994 by Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

It is not a formal treaty, but rather, a diplomatic document under which signatories made promises to each other as part of the denuclearization of former Soviet republics after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Under the memorandum, Ukraine promised to remove all Soviet-era nuclear weapons from its territory, send them to disarmament facilities in Russia, and sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Ukraine kept these promises.

In return, Russia and the Western signatory countries essentially consecrated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine as an independent state. They did so by applying the principles of territorial integrity and nonintervention in 1975 Helsinki Final Act -- a Cold War-era treaty signed by 35 states including the Soviet Union -- to an independent post-Soviet Ukraine.

Which principles in the Helsinki Final Act, reiterated in the "Budapest Memorandum," are relevant to the current situation in the Crimea?

In the "Budapest Memorandum," Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States promised that none of them would ever threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine. They also pledged that none of them would ever use economic coercion to subordinate Ukraine to their own interest.

They specifically pledged they would refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation or engage in other uses of force in violation of international law.

All sides agreed that no such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal and that the signatories would "consult in the event a situation arises which raises a question concerning these commitments."

Is there anything legally binding about the "Budapest Memorandum" regarding Russia's obligations to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity?

"That's actually a much more complex question than it may sound. It is binding in international law, but that doesn't mean it has any means of enforcement," says Barry Kellman is a professor of law and director of the International Weapons Control Center at DePaul University's College of Law.

"The 'Budapest Memorandum' follows the Helsinki Final Act and essentially reiterates its provisions. There are confidence building measures and then a host of other broader obligations -- primarily negative obligations. Don't interfere."

Kellman concludes that there are a host of other sources of international law that oblige Russia to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity -- including the provisions of the CSCE treaty and the UN Charter.

#15

Putin's Reckless Ukraine Gambit

By Eugene Rumer and Andrew S. Weiss

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1 March 2014

Vladimir Putin's surprise decision to ask for a Russian-style War Powers resolution from his parliament dramatically ups the ante in the Ukraine crisis and positions Russia for full-scale military action. It also signals Putin's commitment to use all necessary means—many of which have already been in use in Crimea—to keep Ukraine in Russia's orbit. If Putin follows through on his threat to invade Ukraine, he will signal yet again that the post-Cold War era that began with the "Velvet Revolutions" of 1989 has ended. The damage to Russia's relations with the West will be deep and lasting, far worse than after the Russian-Georgian war. Think 1968, not 2008.

President Barack Obama's handling of the Western response to the Ukraine crisis is now arguably the biggest test of his presidency. It is a crisis that no one anticipated and that the West has been frustratingly divided over since the European Union's original, misguided attempt to force Ukraine to make an either-or choice about going east or west. For too long we have heard U.S. officials say repeatedly, "The Europeans are taking the lead." That needs to stop. Russia rolled over tiny Georgia with ease and the military phase of the crisis ended quickly. Ukraine will pose a much bigger challenge to Russia militarily, and the crisis will be more protracted and take a far less predictable path. The country is badly divided, of course, but anti-Russian sentiments are strong and undoubtedly growing in many parts of Ukraine. The forces of Ukrainian nationalism are on the rise throughout much of the country, provoked by Moscow's disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty and irresponsible attempts to portray the Maidan revolution as a fascist triumph—patently offensive to a nation that suffered so much during World War II.

We should not take for granted that even in Ukraine's east and south, where so many ethnic Russians live, that a military occupation will be a cakewalk. Many local residents surely do not want to become Russia's 90th province. In Ukraine's west, where the Soviet Army had to fight a protracted counterinsurgency campaign after WWII against Ukrainian nationalist guerrillas, armed resistance is certain to be strong. During the revolution, many army depots and armories were overrun so there are more weapons floating around Ukraine than at any point since 1991. And the leadership of the main instruments of coercion – the Army, the Interior Ministry, and the intelligence service – are all in the hands of political leaders with strong Ukrainian nationalist credentials.

Any invasion—which is what it would be—of a vast country of 46 million in the heart of Europe, sharing borders with NATO allies Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, would pose a major security challenge for the United States and other key European powers. Even without further Russian action, allies such as the Baltic countries will be seeking U.S. reassurance. Lithuania has already asked for Article IV consultations under the NATO Treaty in response to a clear threat to its security.

These countries likely will also ask for hard reassurances—such as deployments of U.S. and other allied troops and equipment on their territory—as Turkey did in 2012 when Syria shot down a Turkish jet. They will also need help to shore up their eastern borders and prepare for possible flows of refugees from Ukraine. The Baltic states will probably ask for similar reassurances. One can also expect cyber attacks and intrusions, false alarms and an atmosphere of tension the likes of which have not been seen since the worst days of the Cold War.

Post-revolutionary Ukraine is in bad shape. Its economy is wrecked. Government institutions

broke down completely after the Yanukovych government disappeared overnight. Corruption and criminality, Ukraine's twin scourges, remain basically intact. Thanks to Russia's unexpected moves in Crimea, the West will now have to put Humpty Dumpty back together on its own. These tasks demand that the president designate a senior point-person for coordinating Ukraine policy in all its complexity. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, one of America's ablest diplomats and an old Russia hand, is the obvious choice.

The break in the West's relations with Russia is bound to be deep and lasting. The G-8 will be its first casualty with the Western powers likely to reconstitute the G-7 in its original form as a direct rebuff to Putin. Other important international mechanisms —the U.N. Security Council, ad hoc diplomatic efforts on Syria, the P5+1 process on Iran, the Six-Party talks on North Korea, and so on—will be filled with renewed acrimony and dysfunction. Some may break down entirely. Inevitably, there will be congressional calls for sanctions against Russia, which the White House will be hard-pressed to resist no matter how much it may want to preserve the shreds of cooperation with Russia on Iran, Syria or Afghanistan. The West and Russia are in uncharted waters.

#16

Beneath the Hypocrisy, Putin is Vulnerable

Here's Where His Soft Spots Are

by Timothy Snyder

The New Republic, 1 March 2014

In dispatching troops to Ukraine, Russia has violated international law, flouted multiple treaty commitments, and set the stage for a European war. It has no *casus belli*, aside from an eccentric understanding of the domestic politics of a neighboring country. The Kremlin's surreal warmongering is bad enough, and obviously demands a response from the European Union, the entity that, beyond Ukraine itself, is most immediately concerned. Ukraine borders on four European Union members, and its new government has made joining the EU its foreign policy priority.

Russian intervention in Ukraine is directed against the EU, which Moscow has now decided is a threat to its interests and indeed a civilizational challenge. President Putin's global crusade against gays has become, during these last few weeks, a specific foreign policy doctrine directed against the EU. The Kremlin has made clear that control of Ukraine is one step towards the creation of a Eurasian Union, a rival organization to the EU which will reject European "decadence" in favor of a defense of Christian heterosexuality etc. For months press organs close to the Kremlin have referred to Europe as "Gayropa."

How can Europe respond to the immediate problem of military intervention in Ukraine and the more fundamental political challenge to European values and achievements? It goes without saying that the EU cannot act alone. In 1994, the United States, Great Britain, and Russia guaranteed Ukraine's territorial inviolability in exchange for Kiev's agreement to destroy its stockpile of nuclear weapons. Now that Russia has violated this agreement and rejected American proposals to begin consultations based upon its premises, London and Washington are directly implicated in the crisis. Ukraine also borders four members of NATO. The United States is the relevant military power.

Yet the EU might hold stronger cards than the Russians think. Russian propaganda about depraved Europe conceals an intimate relationship. Tourism in the European Union is a safety valve for a large Russian middle class that takes its cues in fashion and pretty much everything else from European culture. Much of the Russian elite has sent its children to private schools in the European Union or Switzerland. Beyond that, since no Russian of any serious means trusts the Russian financial system, wealthy Russians park their wealth in European banks. In other words, the Russian social order depends upon the Europe that Russian propaganda mocks. And

beneath hypocrisy, as usual, lies vulnerability.

Soft power can hurt. General restrictions on tourist visas, a few thousand travel bans, and a few dozen frozen accounts might make a real difference. If millions of urban Russians understood that invading Ukraine meant no summer vacation, they might have second thoughts. If the Russian elites understood that invading Ukraine meant dealing with their disaffected teenagers on an indefinite basis, they too might reconsider. If wealthy Russians understood that their accounts could be frozen, as has just happened to Ukrainian oligarchs, that might affect their calculations as well. These punishments might seem minor compared to the crime, but Putin is gambling that the EU will not do even this. These measures would have costs, of course. But the price of a military conflict in the middle of Europe would be far higher.

Of course, such steps, which can be taken immediately, would precede a general reconsideration of overall EU-Russian relations. The European Union is by far Russia's most important trading partner, although the reverse is not the case. The EU relies upon Russia for natural gas and oil, and sends in return finished goods. Given that Russia has twice in recent years tried to use natural gas supplies to threaten the EU, and has begun to intervene militarily in a country across which the pipelines flow, now might be a good time to reconsider energy policy. A simple announcement of the intention to investigate Norwegian and American hydrocarbons might make a difference. Over the long run, of course, the EU has every incentive to develop fusion and other alternatives that would free it from its artificial dependence upon a bellicose petrol state.

Russian propaganda derides Europeans as fey and helpless, and we too often tend to agree. But the European Union does have instruments of influence. Its greatest power, of course, is its attractiveness to societies on its borders, such as Ukraine. But even where membership is not an option, and the EU faces unambiguous hostility, it can act. Russia's very contempt for the European Union might force Europeans to undertake a more active foreign policy and to take responsibility for their neighborhood.

#17

Yanukovych Had Very Friendly Aspects With Deep Complexes

Interview conducted by Piotr Smolar

Le Monde (Paris), 27 February 2014

[translated by Isabelle Fortin for UKL]

The exceptional political crisis that Ukraine is going through has one surprising consequence: unlimited freedom of speech. What was concealed just a few days before is now told with a playful tone. Hanna Herman, a Rada MP, is one of the most well-known personalities from the Party of Regions, deposed President Yanukovych's party. She was above all one of his closest collaborators for the last ten years.

After her election in February 2010, Hanna Herman became deputy chief of the presidential administration before being relegated to the more basic post of advisor, passed over by the Donetsk circle, familiar and safe, formed around the president. During a long interview with *Le Monde*, carried in the Rada on February 25th, Hanna Herman gave her personal experience of power without hiding her own responsibility. Over the years, she was the spokesperson of a regime blight by corruption which reached extreme violence to stick to power.

Le Monde (LM): How do you assess the first steps of the opposition now in power?

Hanna Herman (HH): They are straying away from the law, from the rule of the law. We did the same thing. At the beginning, in 2010, we told ourselves: We must do everything very quickly, we must reform while turning a blind eye to the law. You can't put it aside and tell yourself that you will come back to it one day, if you claim to be building a democracy. On the hundredth day of the Yanukovych presidency, I was discarded as deputy head of the administration.

It was then that the process of concentrating powers in the same hands started. Outside the members of the presidential apparatus, American counsellors took care of it, starting with Paul Manafort (a well-known lobbyist who worked with George W. Bush). He was attending cabinet meetings, on Mondays, where the concentration of powers (ratified by a constitutional coup in fall 2010) was discussed. Paul Manafort was there until the beat-up of students on Maidan, last November 30th. He gave fairly wise advices. Yanukovych was not often agreeing, but Manafort followed his decisions.

LM: How did you lost your influence over the president?

HH: The president was mostly listening to his son Olexander (which became in four years a key oligarch). I had good relations with him. But when Olexander didn't like somebody, it was becoming very complicated for him. I didn't have influence on him anymore, I think, because of Serhiy Lavotchkin (head of administration) which was listening to my suggestions but was never acting accordingly to them.

I then decided to leave for the Parliament. Nobody held me back. I did work during ten years with Yanukovych. A heavy, cloudy, atmosphere was always around him. I've sometimes manage to have some weight, for example by getting out of prison, in Lviv, Andriy Parubiy's wife (commandant of Maidan's volunteers security corps) which was imprisoned without any reason.

When Yulia Tymoshenko was jailed two years ago, I went to say at TV that I would slap with my own hands the person who suggested this decision to the president. I was prosecuted for having threatened to strangle the attorney general. That's when my problems really started. So-called documents appeared, accusing me to have collaborated with the KGB in the 1970s. The problem was that they reproduced my signature as a married woman while I had another one when I was a young girl. I went to see the president who told me: "Well, they write rough things about you!" I replied: "But for our Donetsk constituents, KGB is very good!" He laughed.

LM: We don't understand why, in these conditions, especially with the crisis around Maidan, you haven't just resigned dramatically...

HH: When students were beaten up (November 30th), I wanted to get immediate access to the president. Lavotchkin told me he was not able to reach him. I sent him a SMS. Silence. I called his security officer who told me: I have no contact with him. I was finally able to talk with the president at 7 PM and I told him: "You have to condemn these acts and promise they will be investigated." Nothing came. But I knew that if I also left, nobody would say the truth to the president anymore. Around him, people were repeating that everything was fine.

LM: We understand even less the incredible opportunism of deputies from your party, the Party of Regions, who published a press release making Yanukovych the only responsible of all deeds.

HH: I told to our parliamentary group: "For years, you applauded everything, you had the possibility to get rich, you said nothing to the president and now you blame him for everything?" I am not denying my own personal responsibility. I could have done more, cut my hand, immolate myself. Once, with Lavotchkin, we told the president that he was mistaken. He answered: "But who are you to give me orders?"

Up until the very last moment, while we were losing power, his closest advisers didn't understand anything about what was going on. Andriy Klyuyev (Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine) and Serhiy Arbuzov (First Deputy Prime Minister) were debating about who would become prime minister. I wrote memo over memo, at the moment when there was a risk of state emergency, saying that we should absolutely avoid it. One night, he told me: "I don't need such a life!" I answered that, as president, his life didn't really belong to him.

LM: Who bears the responsibilities for police killings on Maidan over the week of February 17th?

HH: It is too simple to say it is all president's fault. I think that a third force weighed in in what happened. I don't have any proof, but a definite idea (she refuses to mention Moscow). But his indecisiveness condemned him. Yanukovich refused the European integration but also to go towards Putin. He thought he could avoid either side.

I don't think he could have decided and lead the killings on Maidan. Every time we were on the right track with him, the phone rang, we then had to leave. When we were coming back, he was different. The snipers, I don't know where they were coming. Berkuts (antiriot troops dismissed last Wednesday by the Ministry of Interior), they are poor miserable guys. Everyone is falling on them. I saw them for weeks at the presidential administration's headquarters, half-starved, sleeping on the floor, with wet clothes. I opened my office for them, so they could call their mom. Them too hated everything that was happening. I was feeling for them because they were defending bastards with their own life. Ten of them are dead; they also have a right to remembrance.

LM: But Yanukovich bears a huge responsibility in the death of 82 citizens.

HH: We should not make him a devil. His son Olexander had exerted a strong influence. Yanukovich abandoned his children's mom and has a guilty feeling towards them. His personality had very friendly aspects, with deep complexes. Everything started when he was a kid. Yanukovich became an orphan, his dad remarried, the second wife abused him very much, he was taken up by his grandmother. He ended up on the streets among bandits. He went to prison, first as a minor, then as an adult, for brawl fights. Afterwards, he had always the ambition to become rich and take his revenge.

LM: But you still followed this former criminal for ten years.

HH: During this time, I had the illusion that he was becoming another man. When I first arrived, he had a lot of strength and money but he was chaotic in his thoughts and manners. People who went to prison should never accede to power, whatever the reasons. Prison breaks a man. By saying that, I'm also thinking of Yulia Tymoshenko.

The whole problem of Yanukovich and Yulia is that they couldn't mutually forgive themselves all past events that happened between them. I remember an incredible moment, at our party's offices, in 2005. One day, I'll tell it in a book. We were the opposition, President Yushchenko had just fired her as prime minister. I came out in the hallway and I smelled a sweet perfume, Angel. It was Yulia's. I followed the smell up to Yanukovich office. The secretary put a finger over her mouth while pointing to the office. I waited. An hour, two hours, five hours! Then I saw Yulia, magnificent in her blue suit, as if she was coming down from heaven. "Yulia Vladimirovna, what a pleasure to see you!" She's a good actress, but she was unhappy to see me. They discussed about the possibility of building a coalition against Yushchenko at the Rada. I then entered in Yanukovich's office. He is always reticent towards feminine charm. "So, did she pleased you?" It was like he woke up and he told me: "She is so vile that if I had to fuck her, I couldn't do it!"

LM: Do you think that there is a nationalist threat in Ukraine?

HH: Pravyi Sektor (grouping of the most radicalized organisations on Maidan) do everything Moscow wishes for. They are burning houses, they beat up people. Everything needed to let people in the East say: "My God, how will we live in this country?"

When everything started three months ago, my parents' house in Lviv (nationalist stronghold in Western Ukraine) was burned down. My mom died a couple of months before. During the war, Germans came without burning the house. In 1945, Soviets took my father's sister, who was 16 years old and was already part of the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army). She was deported in Siberia, at Vorkuta, for ten years. But they didn't burn the house. Now, they burned it. Yesterday, a high-ranking independent M.P. came to see me. He told me that for a sum of money, he would

ask Parubiy (commandant of Maidan's volunteers security corps) to save my house in Kiev. I saw Parubiy who denied everything. But intermediaries have already appeared, saying that they can deal with problems.

LM: But Maidan is first and foremost a civic movement, a coalition of citizens...

HH: Everything is not as simple as it seems. There are a lot of very good people on Maidan. I told it right away on TV. For three months, I accommodated three friends who were going there. I can give their names and addresses. I was even driving them there on the way to work. But I told them: I know what politics do to people. You'll see how they will use you. There were also a lot of bandits on Maidan and money coming from oligarchs. They were supporting the fall of the power since everything was falling in the same hands. The son Olexander was ruling everything.

LM: So Yanukovitch's demise was caused by...

HH: The system was such that everybody wanted its end. Simple people, Moscow, oligarchs' interests coincided. It was impossible to overcome. When he fled on Friday, he called me from Kharkiv to thank me for everything. He told me that the following day, he would go to a meeting of local and regional elected officers in that city. I told him: "Don't go there, it's a separatist meeting!". He didn't go. On Saturday morning, I talked with him again, encouraging him to sign all the laws adopted by the Rada. But his declaration later that day was totally different, denouncing "Nazis" and "Fascists". I haven't had contact with him since. There is just Klyuyev with him now.

LM: Where?

HH: I won't tell you. I had a precise idea when I talked to him. I know he never have laptops or cellphones around him. I know the approximate time necessary to print the notes I've sent to him, the car speed of his bodyguards that brought them to him. I think he left Kharkiv. I called his sons, his wife. I didn't want him to go away in shame but I wanted him to loose with dignity so he could have a chance of revenge. I didn't succeed. I will never be able again to help him. He will probably be arrested if he's alive. If he dies, it will be his salvation from shame. His killers will take his sins upon themselves.

#18

As His Fortunes Fell in Ukraine, a President Clung to Illusions

by Andrew Higgins, Andrew E. Kramer, and Steven Erlanger
New York Times, 23 February 2014

KIEV, Ukraine — As his allies deserted him and throngs of people bayed for his blood almost within earshot of his office, President Viktor F. Yanukovich took time out on Friday to celebrate Ukraine's first gold medal at the Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. In a message of congratulations to the women's biathlon relay team, he praised its "power and will to win."

Shortly before issuing that message, Mr. Yanukovich, still driven by a "will to win" of his own that many others in his crumbling administration had abandoned, signed an agreement with three opposition leaders that he hoped would keep him in power until December, and perhaps longer.

"He was fighting hard to preserve whatever he could and yield the least," said Radoslaw Sikorski, the foreign minister of Poland, who spent hours with Mr. Yanukovich as part of a team of European diplomats who mediated the accord. "His big miscalculation, as always, was to leave things too late. Timing is everything."

By late Friday afternoon, Mr. Yanukovich's time had run out. Between the signing ceremony for the peace deal, held at the vast, colonnaded building that houses Ukraine's presidential

administration, and his break for Olympic cheerleading, the president's prospects had taken a drastic turn for the worse: Hundreds of riot police officers guarding the presidential compound and nearby government buildings had vanished.

"It was astonishing," said Mr. Sikorski, who, while leaving the presidential building, watched in dismay as police officers jumped into buses and drove off. "That was not part of the deal. Astonishing."

The departure of the police had been days in the making, a result of a sequence of events that began late on Wednesday with the seizing of an Interior Ministry armory in the western city of Lviv and the transportation of those weapons to the outskirts of Kiev, the capital. Violent clashes on Thursday, which left more than 80 protesters and many police officers dead, enraged the opposition and sapped the will of Mr. Yanukovych's enforcers, if not Mr. Yanukovych himself.

By the end of Friday, the deal that Mr. Yanukovych had believed would win him at least a few more months in office was dead, discarded the moment enraged protesters in Kiev's Independence Square learned of it. But Mr. Yanukovych was on a plane to the eastern city of Kharkiv, a planned trip that he still appeared to believe would be just another official visit in his four-year-old presidency.

The political crisis erupted in November after Mr. Yanukovych rejected, at the last minute, a trade deal with the European Union that he had been promising to sign for months. Throughout, the president displayed an almost delusional disregard of the forces gathering against him, along with a misplaced trust in his supporters' loyalty and determination to defend him.

"He was living in an illusion right to the end," said a Ukrainian politician close to the president's entourage who asked not to be named because, like many in Mr. Yanukovych's camp, he feared attracting unwelcome attention. "He did not believe it was over."

Like Nicolae Ceausescu — the brutal and sinister Romanian leader who, even after being taken captive in December 1989, continued to believe that he would prevail — Mr. Yanukovych seemed to persevere in the belief that he could hold on. After misjudging the mood on the street time and time again, he was simply overtaken by reality.

In a television interview given in Kharkiv on Saturday after protesters had taken control of his offices, his palatial residence outside Kiev and other once-impregnable centers of power, Mr. Yanukovych complained indignantly that the events in Kiev had prevented him from attending a Soviet-style congress in Kharkiv of politicians and dignitaries from eastern and southern Ukraine.

"I wanted to take part in today's congress," he said, dressed in a dark blue suit as if attending an official engagement, "but it turned out I could not attend. I could not waste time because I had to be in communication all the time" with Kiev.

He went on to declare that he had not resigned and had no intention of doing so, denouncing "traitors" in his own camp and dismissing protesters as hooligans and vandals who had staged a coup. Recalling that he had bounced back from trouble before and rebuilt his political power base, the Party of Regions, after the tumult of Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, he vowed to stay in the country and make a public report every day on what he was doing to re-establish his position as president.

Mr. Yanukovych has not been heard from since. Even his official presidential website, which was still under his control through the takeover of Kiev by protesters on Saturday, finally died on Sunday. At the same time, his last allies jumped ship, with his party issuing a scathing statement denouncing him as a coward, a criminal and a crook.

The events that led to his ouster accelerated early last week after a month of relative calm. On Tuesday, empowered by a new aid package from Russia announced the day before, Mr.

Yanukovych pressed to remove an encampment of antigovernment activists from Independence Square, where they had been cursing his government since November. Squads of riot police overpowered the outer ring of defenses protesters had set up and advanced to within 25 yards of a stage in the center of the square, called the Maidan. Running out of options, the protesters mounted a final, desperate defense, a so-called ring of fire stoked with tires, firewood and even their own sleeping bags and pads.

But Andrei Levus, deputy head of the Maidan “self-defense” forces, the umbrella organization of militant activists fighting the government, knew he had reinforcements on the way. Protesters in Lviv had overrun an Interior Ministry garrison and were en route to Kiev with the captured military weapons.

“I’m reluctant to talk about this because we are protesters and not illegal armed groups,” Mr. Levus said. “But the square was about to look different. There would be more people, and they would not have had empty hands.”

Despite the dwindling of the protective fires, the protesters decided to hold on to the square long enough for both sides to consider the significance of the arrival of the weapons in the capital.

Using a member of Parliament as an intermediary, Mr. Levus opened a line of communication with a deputy interior minister, whom he declined to name. It appeared that Mr. Yanukovych, perhaps sensing that his security forces were reluctant to press the crackdown, was inclined to turn to the army for help. He had fired the armed forces chief of staff, Col. Gen. Volodymyr Zamana, on Monday.

“We understood they had a few hundred fanatical riot police, but the rest of the police would not fight,” Mr. Levus said.

Several street fighters who were on the barricades early Thursday morning said that they saw police officers walking away from their positions, and that this emboldened them. Some protesters fired hunting rifles and shotguns. Police lines crumpled.

“Our people are ideologically motivated, and on the contrary, they were demoralized,” Mr. Levus said. “They did not want this fight. And he understood that our people were ready to run against gunfire.”

Mr. Levus said he received a call on his cellphone around noon on Thursday from the deputy interior minister. “I told him, ‘We will guarantee the safety of the police if they leave the city,’ ” he said.

The deputy minister agreed first to a cease-fire until 3 p.m., when Parliament was set to meet. With support from some members of Mr. Yanukovych’s quickly disintegrating Party of Regions, Parliament voted to support the protesters’ demand that the police demobilize.

Mr. Yanukovych, for his part, had begun discussions with the European mediators. According to Mr. Sikorski, the Polish foreign minister, the president was digging in his heels, telling the French, German and Polish diplomats that he was not to blame for the crisis and refusing even to consider setting a date for an early election.

Mr. Sikorski said he told Mr. Yanukovych that the only way to sell a deal to the opposition was to specify when a new presidential election would be held. “You need to declare on what date you’ll resign,” he said he told the president.

Mr. Yanukovych “went white,” Mr. Sikorski said. But the deadlock lifted after the Ukrainian leader received a phone call shortly afterward from President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. “He came back, he was agreeing to limit his time in office,” Mr. Sikorski said. “That made everything

possible.”

At the same time, the police and Parliament had their own deliberations underway. On Friday morning, Parliament passed a motion dismissing Mr. Yanukovych’s hated interior minister, Vitaly Zakharchenko, for using violence against protesters. And the protesters’ fighting groups held talks with individual police commanders about how their officers would withdraw, in keeping with an earlier resolution by Parliament calling on the riot police to stand down.

“We negotiated with the commanders of different units,” Mr. Levus said. “They called and asked simply to be allowed to safely leave the city. We made a corridor, and some buses were escorted by our cars.”

By late Friday afternoon, just as the European diplomats were leaving the presidential offices after the signing of the peace deal, police officers at the most sensitive positions around Mr. Yanukovych’s office compound and the Cabinet of Ministers building were withdrawing.

When the protesters in Independence Square heard the details of the deal, they made clear it was a nonstarter. Furious that Mr. Yanukovych would be allowed to stay in office until December, the crowd chanted, “Out, bandits,” and “Death to the criminal.”

Volodymyr Parasiuk, a leader of one of the fighting units, took to the stage and announced that his men would begin armed attacks if Mr. Yanukovych had not resigned by morning.

By dawn, well-organized groups of protesters armed with clubs and shields, but not guns, were already swarming toward Mr. Yanukovych’s offices, the Cabinet of Ministers building (the headquarters of the government) and Parliament. With the police forces gone, they met no resistance.

Vadim Ovad, who used to work as a driver and bodyguard, said he reached the Cabinet of Ministers building around 6 a.m. and joined other members of his unit in guarding it. As the sun came up and news spread that Mr. Yanukovych had left Kiev, people from across the city began flooding into the area to savor a victory few had expected.

“I have never seen so many people smiling,” Mr. Ovad said. “Everyone is overflowing with delight.”

Andrew Higgins and Andrew E. Kramer reported from Kiev, Ukraine, and Steven Erlanger from Paris.

UKL 468, 2 March 2014

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