

Advancing a Constructive Agenda for U.S. - Russia Relations

*September 8 - 9, 2014
Moscow, Russia*

The current state of U.S. - Russia relations is coming to resemble the confrontational Cold War era. This is extremely harmful to both nations and underscores the urgency for a more proactive diplomacy to reestablish mutual security through political, commercial, scientific, educational, and cultural cooperation.

The Forum will be held at the President Arbat Hotel and Moscow State University. The agenda will feature many insightful panels with the leading American and Russian experts.

In addition to the Forum and its abundant networking opportunities, the participants will have ample time and a great starting point to sightseeing and exploring the cultural riches of Moscow.

For additional information and registration please visit

www.RussiaHouse.org/wrf.php



The argument that Putin can end Ukrainian civil war is preposterous.

*Interview with Prof. Stephen Cohen
on CNN with Fred Zakaria*

ZAKARIA: So what role did President Putin play in the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 and how should we respond?

Steve, let me ask you. The Russian government's position is that this is the Ukrainian government's fault because not only does it control, is meant to control the territory of Ukraine but more importantly that Kiev, the government in Kiev has been fomenting conflict and behaving irresponsibly. This is a charge that you support and outline in a big article in "THE NATION" magazine.

Why do you think the Russians are right?

STEPHEN COHEN, PROFESSOR RUSSIAN STUDIES, NYU AND PRINCETON: The late Senator Moynihan said that all of us are entitled to our own opinion but not to our own facts. The biggest fact missing from the story of the tragedy of the airliner is, is that for weeks and months now, the government in Kiev which is a government supported 100 percent by Washington has been bombing cities in eastern Ukraine. Bombing them, destroying them. Leveling them. We probably have about 250,000 to 300,000 refugees having fled to Russia or other parts of Ukraine. That's a humanitarian catastrophe. We don't know how many civilian casualties there are but probably at least 2,000 or 3,000. In response these rebels, whether we like them or not, have declared that they will try to shoot down incoming Ukrainian warplanes and they have been doing so.

It was in this context that this tragedy happened. Without that fact, we are dealing with opinion and I don't think we honor the people who died by this orgy of political opinion that is coming out of the United States and particularly out of Kiev which is producing a lot of, if not false, misleading information.

So I think that's where things stand and we need all -- the entire picture to put this tragedy in context.

ZAKARIA: Steve, what's Putin going to do?

COHEN: I don't know what Putin is going to do, but I just don't understand something absolutely fundamentally.... Given the historical divisions in Ukraine, this is a classic example of a profoundly divided country... We had a poll just two days ago and one-third of people in Ukraine generally taking in East and West, and remember the West is [anti]-Russian, say they favor the Russian position in this conflict. This -- whether we like it or not [Ukraine] is a divided country. You could say -- wait a minute. You could say things, the same thing about the American Civil War. The 60 percent favored the Union, and - here is --

ZAKARIA: One side had to prevail. Doesn't the Ukrainian government have to take control of the territory? After all ...

COHEN: No. Absolutely.

ZAKARIA: If Putin says the Ukrainian government is responsible because it is in charge of Ukraine, well, then let it be in charge of Ukraine.

COHEN: The strategic argument now is that Putin can end this. This is preposterous.... This is a profoundly complicated political, social [issue]-- if tomorrow Putin went on Russian and Ukrainian television and said, guys in Eastern Ukraine, put down your arms, you really think [they] would do it? Moreover and this is the failure point, at the end of June, France, Germany, our allies and Russia asked the president of Ukraine to continue the cease-fire so there could be negotiations. The government of Ukraine did not. It intensified the war with the backing of Washington. So we are deeply complicit in the horrors that are going on there. Now, the light is, maybe this tragedy will bring about a cease-fire where people can talk again.

ZAKARIA: All right, we are going to have to leave it at that, I will refer people to your article in "The Nation" magazine, because you're right that you are somewhat outnumbered, so you deserve more - you deserve more than you got.

*FAREED ZAKARIA the GLOBAL PUBLIC SQUARE,
CNN.com*

Lessons from the Liberation of Majdanek



July 23 marks the 70th anniversary of one of the most important liberations of World War II. On that day in 1944, troops of the Soviet Second Tank Army liberated the Majdanek death camp near Lublin in Poland.

They also deserve primary credit for ending the Holocaust. On September 23, 1944, the same day the Second Tank Army liberated Majdanek, troops of the Soviet First Belorussian Front also liberated the extermination camps at Sobibor and Treblinka. On January 27, 1945, they liberated the biggest and most diabolical murder factory of them all - Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Almost halfway through the second decade of this 21st century, this proud and crucial record has been entirely forgotten in the West. No senior Western leader took part in any ceremonies to commemorate the liberation of Majdanek. No major Western leaders currently plan to honor the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army next January.

Instead, the United States and its NATO allies continue to encourage new Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and his ultra-nationalist allies, some of whom openly identify with the World War II Nazis, in their use of lethal military force to kill hundreds of civilians in Eastern Ukraine.

The bravery and sheer decency of the millions of ordinary Russian, Ukrainian and other nationalities in the Red Army who won the war and liberated the worst death camps needs to be remembered and honored, not forgotten in the West, or swept under the carpet. Their achievements should be the lasting foundation for a new generation of understanding and mutual respect between the thermonuclear superpowers.

Martin Sieff is chief global analyst at The Globalist and a senior fellow of the American University in Moscow - RT



OPINION: U.S. Administration Should Not Sit On MH17 Information

WASHINGTON, July 22 (RIA Novosti) – The Obama administration should be forthcoming in producing all relevant information on the crash of Malaysian Airline flight MH17, which led them to come to broad conclusions on the causes and responsibility for the crash, former ambassador to Russia, Thomas Pickering, said in an interview with RIA Novosti Monday.

“I think it’s important to produce the information that they believe they have available as a contribution to an investigation. Certainly, given the horrendous nature of the action and the deep concern felt around the world, they should not sit on information they have,” said Pickering referring to evidence the US administration has used as the basis for its recent official statements.

According to Pickering, President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry felt “strongly enough about the situation now and confident enough about the information they have to say what they have said.”

Pickering continued, “I think they have come to a conclusion that the flight was downed by a missile that, from their perspective, at least there was a good chance the missile was either in the hands of the separatists or in the territory controlled by the separatists, maybe in the hands of Russian experts.”

However, the statements by Kerry and Obama have been interpreted throughout western media since the July 17 incident have laid responsibility for the incident at the doorstep of Russia and President



Thomas PICKERING, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States in Russia (1993-1996), at the roundtable discussion: Russian-U.S. meeting of ambassadors. The discussion is dedicated to the 80th anniversary since USSR-U.S. diplomatic relations were established. Alexander Natruskin, RIA Novosti

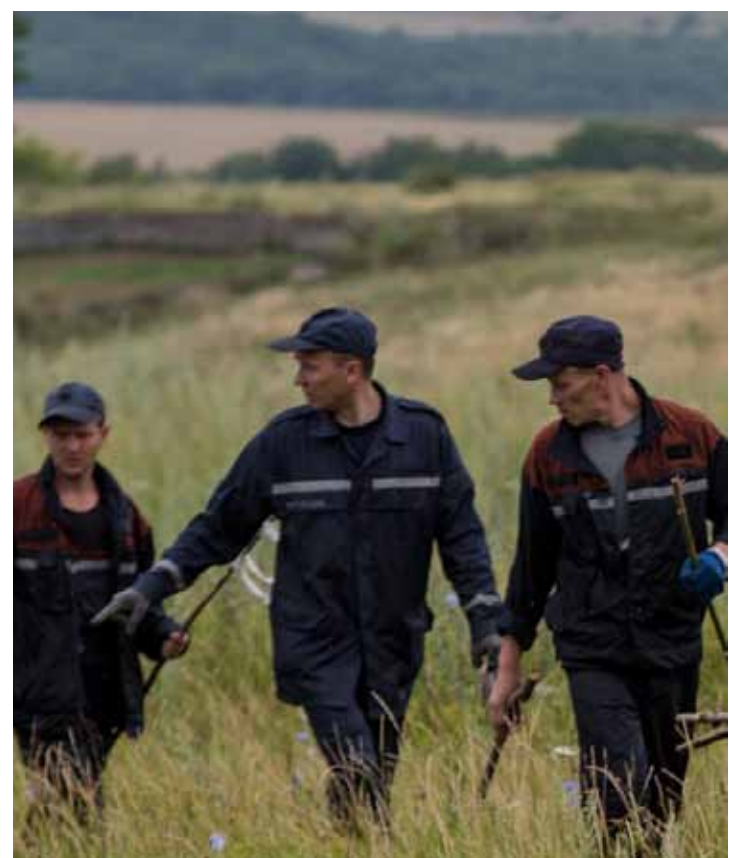
Vladimir Putin.

On Monday, Obama stated, “President Putin has a direct responsibility to compel [independence supporters] to cooperate with the investigation.” This came after

and has offered his support for a UN led investigation. Further, a Russian General Staff official stated on Monday that Russia has never delivered air defense missile systems or any other type of weaponry to independence supporters in eastern Ukraine.

Asked by RIA Novosti what the consequences could be if any side in the conflict were found responsible for the disaster, Pickering explained, “This is a disaster in every sense of the word. It’s hard to believe that any side would deliberately shoot down an innocent civilian airliner with 298 people aboard for any purpose.” He cited as significant the recent evidence of eastern separatists shooting down four Ukrainian aircraft, including an AN transport aircraft. “It appears to me that whatever happened could more than likely have been a horrible mistake.”

Pickering concluded, “One has to be careful in reaching conclusions about this, not to jump too far ahead.”



Local rescuers at the crash site of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 near Shakhtyorsk, Donetsk Region. Andrey Stenin, RIA Novosti



OSCE experts at the crash site of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 aircraft near Shakhtyorsk, Donetsk Region. Andrey Stenin, RIA Novosti

Sunday statements by Kerry saying there is “an enormous amount of evidence...that points to the involvement of Russia” in providing anti-aircraft systems and training to those the US believes are responsible for the downing of the airliner.

Immediately following the incident, President Putin called for an unbiased international investigation into the tragic crash

“Pravda” on the Potomac

With regard to Ukraine and Russia we have already reached impressive slam dunk levels of confidence and outrage. Would it be so if uncertainty could be abandoned so easily? Take [July 20] issue of the Washington Post. The lead front page headline: “Ukraine: Rebels hiding evidence.” Subsidiary headlines: “Official claims proof that Russia supplied missile” and “Ukraine says missile systems were removed to Russia.” It’s interesting to see the level of confidence that is placed in “Ukraine says” material. Buried in the Post’s story: “The claims could not be immediately confirmed.” Life would be simpler for Johnson Russia List and its readers if one could also follow the example of the Washington Post editors and provide commentary only from Anne Applebaum (“Look at what Russia has done”). Of course, what the Post is doing is little different from most other media. Such are the wonders of slam dunk journalism. Exposes of absurd Russian materials doesn’t absolve one from responsibility for one’s own work.

David Johnson - Johnson’s Russia List, a project of the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (IERES) at The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs



Left: Alexander Borodai, Prime Minister of the Donetsk People’s Republic, during ceremony of transferring flight recorders of B-777 airliner that has crashed in Ukraine to Malaysian experts. Mikhail Voskresenskiy, RIA Novosti