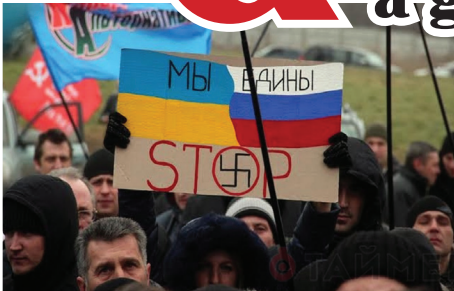


# Ukraine

## U.S./NATO-backed fascist coup



## a growing people's resistance



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## WAR ALERT

# UKRAINE: What the media isn't telling you

*From an International Action Center fact sheet, March 2014*

Corporate media have always lied about the reasons for war, from Vietnam and Iraq to Libya and Syria. If you turn on CNN or FOX News, read the *New York Times* or listen to NPR, you aren't getting the real story. Here are 10 things the U.S. corporate media won't tell you about what's happening in Ukraine..

### **1. Washington planned the coup in Ukraine.**

U.S. State Department official Victoria Nuland was caught on tape plotting who would be the next head of Ukraine. She bragged that the U.S. had spent \$5 billion funding the so-called democracy movement there. Senator John McCain went to Kiev, spoke at rallies and was photographed with the leader of the fascist Svoboda party. Neo-Nazi forces took over buildings and threw out the elected government in a coup d'etat, then passed new laws with no quorum in the parliament.

### **2. There has been no Russian invasion.**

Washington officials have threatened Russia for "invading" Ukraine. It's a Big Lie meant to cover up U.S. involvement in the coup. Russia has a military base in Crimea, a predominately Russian ethnic area, and is legally allowed to station up to 25,000 troops in the country. On March 16, Crimean voted in a democratic referendum to leave Ukraine and join Russia.

### **3. The U.S. war buildup.**

The Navy has deployed the USS Truxton, a warship armed with guided missiles, to the Black Sea. Six F-15 fighter jets and 60 military personnel have been sent to Lithuania, in addition to those already stationed there. The U.S. and EU are imposing sanctions and travel bans on Russian officials. Politicians from Hillary Clinton to John McCain have compared Russian President Vladimir Putin to Hitler. When preparing for war, the U.S. always uses this bogus comparison to demonize leaders of opponent countries.

### **4. Neo-Nazis dominate the new government.**

The openly racist, anti-Semitic and pro-Hitler Svoboda party is one of three major parties in the government. Svoboda led the street actions that forced elected President Yanukovich to flee. The Right Sector, armed fascists who have beaten opponents and vandalized public property, are now in charge of the military. Immediately after the coup, Ukraine's chief rabbi, Moshe Reuven Azman, urged Jews to flee Kiev. The government's first act was to ban the use of Russian and other minority languages. Opponents of the coup have been beaten, disappeared, or had their offices and homes vandalized.

## **5. Coup leaders hired snipers to justify their takeover.**

A leaked call between Estonian and European Union officials reveals that people behind the new government hired snipers to kill protesters and police in Kiev. President Yanukovich was blamed for the killings and this was used to justify the coup.

## **6. Wall Street and Big Oil want to control Ukraine — and Russia.**

Oil and gas pipelines in Ukraine bring fuel from Russia to Europe. Big Oil wants to control the pipelines to cut the flow from Russia and hike their own profits. The U.S. has even offered the new government gas from dangerous fracking drilling here! Russia is the world's largest producer of gas, oil and industrial minerals. Wall Street would love to get its claws deeper into Ukraine and Russia—to drive up profits and push down wages for workers here and there.

## **7. NATO's drive to expand.**

As part of the Western drive to dismantle Russia, the Pentagon wants to establish military bases on the Ukraine/Russia border. The U.S. dominated NATO alliance has expanded aggressively into eastern Europe in the past 20 years, adding 12 countries to its roster so far. U.S./ NATO forces continue to occupy Afghanistan to the south.

## **8. Billions for coup in Ukraine, cuts for food stamps in U.S.**

In early February, Congress and the Obama administration agreed to cut SNAP food assistance benefits for hungry families by \$8.7 billion, claiming there's no money. Yet just weeks later, they announced \$10 billion in assistance to the neo-Nazis in Kiev. Secretary of State John Kerry personally delivered the first billion on March 4.

## **9. Power for the 1%, misery for workers.**

The new regime has appointed wealthy oligarchs as governors of rebellious regions of Eastern Ukraine. It's also agreed to an IMF austerity plan drafted by Washington to cut workers' pensions, unemployment insurance and social programs—just like the cutbacks workers from Detroit to Greece face.

## **10. People across Ukraine are fighting back.**

People in Southeastern Ukraine and throughout the country are organizing against the coup. Some have taken over regional and city buildings and refused to hand them over to the new authorities. In cities like Kharkov, Odessa, and Donetsk, the people are organizing grassroots defense against the fascists. A common demand throughout the region is for a referendum on regional autonomy or independence. The people of Ukraine remember well what Nazi rule was like during World War II, and they will not stand for it again.

**Find more information on Ukraine and upcoming actions:** [www.IACenter.org](http://www.IACenter.org)

**Download a printable fact sheet:** [www.IACenter.org/pdf/ukraine-fact032114.pdf](http://www.IACenter.org/pdf/ukraine-fact032114.pdf)

# 'The people continue to fight' coup regime's attack in Ukraine

*By Greg Butterfield on April 11, 2014*

April 10—Desperate to stamp out a popular uprising in southeastern Ukraine, the fascist junta in Kiev—which came to power through a violent coup against elected President Viktor Yanukovich—is moving to crush the newly declared People's Republic of Donetsk and rebellions in other cities.

But anti-fascists throughout the region continue to resist in the face of increasing repression by the U.S.-backed regime.

Arsen Avakov, the junta's interior minister, arrived in the southeast of the country on April 9, delivering a 48-hour ultimatum to protesters occupying government buildings in Donetsk and Lugansk to surrender or face military attack. The deadline expires at nightfall on April 11.

Avakov, a leader of the far-right Fatherland Party, was tasked with bringing the various neo-Nazi groups under the regime's discipline. To this end, he created a "National Guard" composed of members of the Right Sector, the Euromaidan Self Defense Forces and other racist gangs from western Ukraine.

The Communist Party of Ukraine's headquarters in Kiev was set on fire April 9, just hours after a court ordered the Interior Ministry to remove fascists who've



Arson at Communist Party headquarters in Kiev. Photo: Communist Party of Ukraine



occupied it since the coup. Euromaidan Self Defense goons, now employed by the Interior Ministry, were photographed tearing up red flags outside the building shortly before it was torched.

In the southeast, police and military units unwilling to act against the local populace have been replaced by “special task forces” from western Ukraine.

According to Ukrainian and Russian sources, Avakov has also enlisted foreign mercenaries from the U.S.-based Greystone Ltd., which describes itself on its website as “providing protective support services and training.”

U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, in charge of NATO forces in Europe, told the Associated Press on April 10 that U.S. troops could soon be deployed in the region. NATO has scheduled an “emergency meeting” on Ukraine for April 14.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy destroyer U.S.S. Donald Cook was expected to arrive in the Black Sea near Russian waters, where it will join other U.S., Bulgarian and Romanian warships in provocative “war games” aimed at Russia, on April 10.

All of these forces are now deployed against the popular resistance in the largely Russian-speaking southeast, where the anti-fascist and working-class traditions of Soviet times still run deep, and where some look to Russia as a last line of defense against the neo-Nazi threat from Kiev.

But instead of intimidating the resistance, the fascists have angered those fighting back and the struggle has spread. After losing ground earlier in the week, anti-fascists in Lugansk held onto government buildings. Miners in the Donbas region have downed tools to go to the defense of Donetsk. Hundreds have remained in the streets of Kharkov despite a ban on protests.

And even in the western Ukraine city of Lviv, near the Polish border, progressive forces briefly seized the local prosecutor’s office to protest a new appointment by Kiev.

## **Donetsk prepares to fight**

In Donetsk, capital of the Donbas mining region, protesters seized the Regional State Administration building on April 6 and declared an independent People’s Republic of Donetsk. The new People’s Council, with the support of thousands of demonstrators in the main square, announced a referendum for May 11 to determine the future of the region.

The demand for a referendum has gripped the masses throughout the southeast, who want autonomy or independence from the fascist, pro-NATO regime in Kiev, which is in the process of imposing austerity in return for International Monetary Fund loans.

Calling for a general mobilization of the populace, the People’s Council said April 9: “According to information from our activists at civilian roadblocks, Ukrainian armored vehicles are on their way to Donetsk. The Kiev junta has decided to solve the problem posed by our protest by military force.



Barricades outside the People's Council building in Donetsk.

“But their politicians and security forces are afraid of the presence of civilians near the building, where a large number of foreign journalists are also present.

“Last night, thanks to the presence of thousands of people around the Lugansk state security headquarters, people formed a human shield around the building to protect it and the presence of militias barricaded inside prevented police from carrying out their orders to kill our comrades.

“Let’s be worthy of our comrades from Lugansk! Protect our militia guarding the building of the People’s Council! Let’s defend our independence and freedom!”

And the people responded.

Activists and volunteers, including many youth and retirees, have built barricades around the RSA building and other protest strongholds, set up checkpoints on roads, gathered food, water and medical supplies, and joined defense trainings against the expected military assault.

On the night of April 9-10, teams of activists blocked several military buses and prevented them from deploying troops near the RSA.

“We will be on duty here all night, because the assault could begin at any moment,” one activist on night-watch duty told Ria Novosti.

Sergey Tsyplakov, deputy director of the People’s Militia of Donbas, said: “In Donetsk airport, about 100 people from the National Guard have been housed. Around 100 Right Sector bandits are also in the city, as well as a hundred employees from a private U.S. military company operating under contract with the Kiev junta.

“In total, there are around 300 professionals or well-trained and motivated fanatics,” Tsyplakov said. “This is a major force, but we are ready to fight.”



## **Kharkov: 'Resistance does not subside'**

In the city of Kharkov, where the struggle has been led by the People's Unity coalition and the leftist Union Borotba (Struggle), protesters seized the local RSA building and declared a People's Republic on April 7.

The People's Council called for regional autonomy, including independence from NATO, renationalization of former Soviet industry and priority to collective forms of ownership.

That night, hundreds of fascists and mercenaries wearing Special Forces uniforms attacked the building. They arrested 70 people and dispersed the protesters — but only temporarily.

Kiev-allied city officials declared they would ban mass protests in Freedom Square and the city center.

But the next day, hundreds again gathered on the square and outside the fascist-occupied RSA building.

On April 9, more than 500 people turned out to demand the release of the detained activists, Borotba reported. The fearful authorities had the courthouse surrounded by 1,000 police and refused to admit members of the public.

People picketed the courthouse for several hours, chanting "Power to the people! Freedom for the Kharkov defenders!" while parents shouted, "Free our children!"

The activists were sentenced to two months imprisonment or a fine of 180,000 hryvnia — about \$14,000 each.

Simultaneously, hundreds more rallied at Freedom Square ahead of a court hearing on the planned demonstration ban. "The ban is aimed not only at us, but at all Kharkovites," charged Borotba's Svetlana Tsiberganova.

Borotba and People's Unity have called for a major demonstration on April 12 in defiance of the ban.

"Despite the repression, the resistance does not subside," declared Borotba coordinator Sergei Kirichuk. "The people are going to continue the fight." □

*Thanks to Dmitry Kolesnik for invaluable assistance with translation and sources.*

# Ukraine: People's power vs. fascist repression

*By Greg Butterfield on April 8, 2014*

Dramatic events April 6-8 have brought Ukraine to the brink of civil war.

The rebellion by Ukraine's Southeastern region—very working class and predominantly Russian speaking—against the far-right coup regime in Kiev has escalated to a crisis of dual power in many cities.

In Donetsk, Kharkov, Nikolaev and Lugansk, thousands of anti-fascist protesters rooted in the local communities have seized government administration buildings, police headquarters and banks, and declared independence from the U.S.-backed junta that came to power in February following the ouster of elected President Viktor Yanukovich.

The anti-fascists have set May 11 as the date for regional referenda, when local residents should democratically decide their future status—whether for broad autonomy within Ukraine, independence or in some cases affiliation with Russia, as the people of Crimea chose on March 16.

The demand for a referendum has been eagerly seized by the masses of workers, retirees and youths throughout the region, and it is their support that fuels the rebellion.

The referendum deadline falls two weeks before presidential elections set by Kiev for May 25. The coup regime, dominated by fascist and far-right organizations like Svoboda and Fatherland, has rejected any referendum.

The regime has labelled those advocating a democratic vote as “terrorists” and paid agents of Russia. On April 7, Acting President Alexander Turchinov declared that “coercive measures” would be used against referendum supporters.

Acting Deputy for Presidential Administration Andriy Senchenko told journalists in the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) on April 8 that the Ukrainian military had been authorized to “shoot the terrorists ... if necessary to protect the territorial integrity” of Ukraine. (RBC-Ukraine)

Members of the openly racist and anti-Semitic Svoboda party physically attacked Communist Party representatives on the floor of parliament April 8 after Communist leader Peter Simonenko dared to assert that the coup regime was responsible for the unrest in the Southeast. (Neues Deutschland)

The resistance, including the leftist union Borotba (Struggle), says there can be no legitimate elections without a referendum.

## People's Republics declared

April 6 was a major, coordinated day of action by anti-fascists in Southeastern Ukraine. Demonstrations in several cities grew in intensity and continued into the evening.

Overnight April 6, activists seized the regional assembly building in Donetsk and proclaimed an independent People's Republic of Donetsk. The protesters declared that they are now the region's only rightful authorities.

After the declaration was read, the "Internationale" and Soviet national anthem were broadcast over loudspeakers in the main square to thousands of cheering residents.

The revolutionary authorities appealed to the Russian Federation to send peacekeepers to protect the May 11 referendum.

Donetsk, in the Donbas mining region, is a traditional stronghold of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

Hours later, in Kharkov, thousands of anti-fascists led by union Borotba and the People's Unity Coalition seized the Regional State Administration building and proclaimed a People's Republic of Kharkov. New regional councilors were elected from the assembled workers, youth and retirees.

The anti-fascists took action after the Kharkov Regional Council failed to act on a petition presented at a mass demonstration on April 6. The petition called on the council to set a referendum on three points: Should Ukraine be a federal country? Should the Russian language be legal? Should Ukraine be a non-aligned country—without NATO?

The declaration of the People's Republic of Kharkov calls for an end to the exploitation of labor and gives priority to collective forms of ownership.

In both cities, military personnel and police refused orders to move against the anti-fascists.

## Fascist forces attack

As revolutionary actions were unfolding in the Southeast, the crisis-ridden regime in Kiev met in a marathon session to pass new "anti-terrorist" laws to further criminalize the anti-fascist resistance.

The far-right Minister of Interior Arsen Avakov was placed in charge of the "anti-terrorist" offensive. (*LifeNews.ru*)

Avakov's main task has been to bring the competing neo-Nazi tendencies in Western Ukraine under the regime's discipline by integrating them into a so-called National Guard and joint patrols with police.

For weeks, the Interior Ministry has been sending Right Sector and other neo-Nazi goons to infiltrate the rebellious regions. Police and military agencies have also transferred personnel to replace those reluctant to attack the local populace.

On the night of April 7, these forces were unleashed against the people of South-eastern Ukraine.

The Right Sector attacked an anti-fascist camp in Nikolaev. One man was reported killed and others were seriously injured. In Lugansk, three were shot dead, and another was reported killed in Odessa.

In Kharkov, Right Sector and Maidan “Self-Defense” agents, dressed in Special Forces uniforms, were deployed against the people’s forces holding the Regional State Administration building. The fascists set fire to the building and dispersed the protesters. At least 70 people were arrested and immediately deported to Kiev.

Activists report that among the repressive forces were English-speaking mercenaries, whom they believe work for the U.S. company, Greystone Ltd., whose presence has been reported elsewhere in Ukraine since the coup. Greystone is a division of the notorious mercenary firm formerly known as Blackwater USA.

The offices of Borotba and People’s Unity in Kharkov were seized and occupied by the fascists.

An April 8 statement issued by Borotba says, “Despite the repression, the resistance does not subside. Now people are returning to the State Administration building to continue the fight.”

Videos posted on April 8 showed running clashes continuing in Kharkov’s streets. In one video, protesters prevented Special Forces agents from leaving a bus.

## **Donetsk prepares**

According to a report by Ivan Pobedonoscev in Donetsk, posted by the Russian communist website RedTV, the new people’s government in Donetsk is preparing to repulse a military attack on the Regional State Administration building it occupies, perhaps as soon as the night of April 8.

On the morning of April 7, workers at the Yasinovka steel plant in Makeevka stopped work and organized buses to join the Donetsk defenders, vowing to stay and protect the protesters as long as necessary.

Volunteers are building barricades and mobilizing supporters to defend the People’s Republic of Donetsk. They have issued an urgent call for people to bring rations, beverages, fire extinguishers, gas masks and medical supplies.

Kiev has reportedly flown in Alpha special security forces from Western Ukraine, equipped with SWAT team weaponry and full armor. Greystone mercenaries are said to be among them, disguised as soldiers. Military equipment has been moved to encircle Donetsk. The RSA building’s electricity was cut off.

The Russian Foreign Ministry urged Ukraine on April 8 to “halt any interior military preparations which could instigate a civil war.” □

# U.S., EU strengthen grip on Ukraine

*By Fred Goldstein on April 1, 2014*

March 31 —The U.S. imperialists are trying to strengthen their grip on Ukraine, having seized the reins in Kiev through a fascist-led coup against the elected government of Viktor Yanukovich.

In the wake of the coup, the new, unelected puppet regime has signed an “associate agreement” with the European Union that opens wider the Ukrainian economy to European big business. The regime has been promised an International Monetary Fund loan of \$18 billion, to be doled out over two years. In return, Kiev has accepted draconian austerity conditions that will strike directly at the masses. The loan also requires that *Naftohaz*, the state-owned oil and gas company, operate on a market basis. Already, the unelected regime in Kiev has announced a 50 percent increase in gas prices, effective May 1.

The IMF is also demanding cutbacks in government spending, including wages and pensions; a devaluation of the currency, which will make imports much more expensive; and other austerity measures.

## **Billionaires running in election**

Rush elections were set for May 25 (they had originally been called for December) in which both leading presidential contenders are reactionary, pro-imperialist billionaires: Yulia Tymoshenko of the Fatherland Party and Petro Poroshenko of the Solidarity Party. Tymoshenko is a gas billionaire and Poroshenko is one of the ruling oligarchs who owns chocolate factories, auto and ship factories, among other enterprises.

Secretary of State John Kerry met for four hours with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on March 30. At the end of the meeting Kerry accused Russia of violating international law because of its incorporation of Crimea—after a democratic referendum in which over 90 percent of the Crimean people voted to affiliate with Russia. Kerry’s charge was a brazen “big lie,” especially given the fact that he was there to defend the coup government in Kiev.

The U.S. is intransigent in its position of holding onto the pro-imperialist stooge government in Kiev, which seized power through a struggle that relied on armed pro-Nazis, anti-Semites and fascist sympathizers of the Right Sector, the Svoboda Party and other assorted right- wingers. Washington is trying to force Russia to recognize this coup regime as legitimate.

## **Russian proposals would loosen U.S. grip**

Russia, on the other hand, is trying to find ways to loosen Washington’s political grip on Ukraine by a series of proposals that so far have been completely ignored.



Among the proposals are:

- Constitutional reform in Ukraine to set up a federal structure that would allow for a high degree of autonomy in the regions, giving them the ability to veto reactionary proposals from Kiev and carry on external economic relations.
- Declaring Russian to be the second official language.
- A formalized pledge of military neutrality with Ukraine, regardless of the government in office. This is an attempt to nullify the Pentagon's intention to bring Ukraine into NATO or to coordinate with NATO. It aims to stop NATO from basing anti-missile installations in Ukraine directed at Russia.
- An end to the either-or ultimatum from the EU and Washington requiring Ukraine to shun ties to Russian-sponsored regional economic organizations.

These and other Russians proposals are basically demands to recognize its fundamental, life-and-death economic and security interests that are profoundly threatened by the U.S. seizure of Ukraine.

Washington has raised a hue and cry over the presence of Russian troops inside their own country, near the border with Ukraine. Meanwhile, NATO is preparing to carry out war games in Eastern Europe. The British have announced their intention to join these games, sending British Typhoon aircraft to Estonia to police the skies around the Baltic region. In addition, an extraordinary session of the Ukraine-NATO Commission is taking place in Brussels on April 1-2.

### **Pentagon grabs last buffer state**

The Pentagon has steadily expanded NATO's presence toward Russia for the past 15 years, in complete violation of U.S. promises to the contrary. Back in 1990, then Secretary of State James Baker "promised Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that if the Soviets allowed Germany to reunify, NATO—the U.S.-led Western military alliance that took form after World War II—would not expand 'one inch' further east, not even into the former East Germany itself." (*The Atlantic*, March 3)

Today, however, almost every one of the countries of Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics on Russia's western and southern borders have been pulled into some form of collaboration with the NATO military alliance.

Ukraine was the last buffer state between the Western imperialists and Russia. The coup in Kiev was aimed at eliminating that buffer and bringing imperialism right to Russia's 1,500-mile border with Ukraine.

Washington has been at this project at least since 2004 and the so-called "Orange Revolution," run by the CIA and various imperialist-sponsored nongovernmental organizations. At that time, Washington got its candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, into

office after a phony third round of elections, but there was not yet enough support to rush Ukraine into the EU and NATO.

Washington and the EU had to wait 10 more years for another try. And this time they were not going to be deterred by an elected government.

This bold act of aggression-by-subversion is an attempt to dramatically change the relationship of forces between Western imperialism and Russia. Washington has changed the international situation by attempting to tighten the ring around one of its few competitors that has the capability of significant military resistance.

The attempt to seize Ukraine is a long step toward a cherished 23-year goal of Washington: to undermine and weaken Russia to the point that Wall Street and U.S. big business can move in with a free hand and reduce this huge country to an economic colony. U.S. monopolies are dreaming of getting hold of Russian oil, gas, gold, timber and other resources, industrial and commercial empires, and so on. The pressure in this direction grows greater as the global economic crisis constricts the expansion of monopoly capital.

Unlike the European imperialists, who would be content to continue doing business with Ukraine and Russia from a position of economic strength, the adventurists in Washington have gigantic ambitions to subdue a government that has nuclear weapons.

They hope to undermine its capitalist economy and turn the Russian ruling class against the Putin regime. That is what the sanctions are aimed at. Unfortunately for Washington, its junior imperialist partners in Europe are more vulnerable to lost markets and lost investments than Wall Street, so it is hard to get them to bite the bullet in order to fulfill the Pentagon's dreams.

## **Collapse of USSR and socialist camp opened the door**

With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Washington became infected with just such ambitious goals. Socialism had barred the way to the conquest of the Soviet Union for 74 years. But the capitalist counterrevolution brought a U.S. stooge, Boris Yeltsin, to power. Wall Street rapidly moved in and together with the IMF administered "shock therapy" to dismantle the nationalized economy and wipe out social and economic benefits that had prevailed under Soviet socialism.

The socialist economy had been built up through planning and sacrifice that eventually made the world's poorest capitalist country, beset by illiteracy and rural backwardness, into the second-greatest economic power. Within a year, Yeltsin, under the guidance of his U.S. handlers, broke up the socialist economic structure and sold it off for a song to the new capitalist oligarchs.

The USSR had never been an international debtor. Capitalist Russia, however, quickly fell into debt and was on the road to becoming a thoroughly dependent economy. However, Vladimir Putin, representing a wing of the oligarchy, rebelled against being reduced to such dependency.

While protecting capitalism and backed by a section of the ruling class, he pushed back against the trend to reduce Russia to a financial colony of the West. That is why Putin is demonized by the big business media in the U.S.

But Washington reached too far when it tried to seize Ukraine and hopefully push the Russian Black Sea Fleet out of Crimea. Moscow reacted sharply and decisively, disregarding all imperialist threats.

There is now a momentary pause in the acute phase of the struggle. But Washington's imperial intransigence, its arrogant belligerence is bound to trigger future escalation.

While Russian capitalism is no savior for the Ukrainian masses or for the exploited Russian working class, a victory for U.S. imperialist expansion into the Ukraine would strengthen Wall Street, the Pentagon and the White House—the enemies of the world's people.

While having no confidence that the capitalist regime in Moscow will consistently confront imperialism, revolutionaries and progressives must find a way to stop Washington's new drive to war. □

## A growing club

How Nato has expanded since its founding in 1949



Graph from *The Independent*, April 3, 2008 ([www.tinyurl.com/lth4bjn](http://www.tinyurl.com/lth4bjn))

# Anti-fascists organize resistance as crisis grips Ukraine coup regime

*By Greg Butterfield on March 28, 2014*

Just a month after a U.S.-backed coup d'état in Ukraine brought to power a regime dominated by neo-Nazis and pro-Western capitalist politicians, the ruling junta finds itself in deep crisis.

Threats from the government in Kiev and its U.S. and Western European patrons were unable to intimidate the people of the Crimean autonomous region, who voted overwhelmingly to break away from Ukraine and affiliate with Russia on March 16. Russian President Vladimir Putin and local leaders made it official on March 18.

Now infighting has exploded among the fascist factions in the ruling coalition in Kiev.

The International Monetary Fund, meanwhile, has agreed to give the coup-makers an \$18 billion loan—but only if they accept painful austerity measures. These are almost certain to throw Ukraine deeper into chaos.

Further, Kiev has been unable to subdue the rebellious eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, where anti-fascists are digging in to organize grassroots resistance.

People in these major working-class industrial and mining areas are rising to oppose the junta and demand political and economic autonomy. They reject the rule of the billionaire oligarchs appointed as new regional governors by Kiev. Some are even calling for re-nationalization of privatized industries.

At this time, most are not calling for separation from Ukraine.

## **Thieves fall out**

Overnight on March 27-28, members of the neo-Nazi Right Sector gang surrounded the Ukrainian Rada [parliament] and threatened to storm it—much as they had done a month earlier, when the elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich was toppled.

But this time, the Right Sector was protesting its own erstwhile partners, some of whom were barricaded inside, including members of the far-right Fatherland party and neo-Nazi Svoboda party.

European television broadcast images of Svoboda politicians hanging out of windows shouting epithets while Right Sector goons hurled rocks at them from the street.

What happened?

On March 24, Right Sector leader Aleksandr Muzychko was shot dead during a police raid in the western city of Rovno. Muzychko had a long history of fascist



Marchers in Odessa defy threats, demand a referendum on autonomy and an end to political repression, March 23. Photo: Borotba

terrorism and was on several international “most wanted” lists—a Ukrainian version of the anti-Cuba terrorist Luis Posada Carriles.

The assassination of Muzychko was followed by raids on Right Sector hideouts and seizures of weapons.

The hit came on orders from acting Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, a representative of the Fatherland party associated with former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

Avakov has established a “National Guard” under his command to deputize the fascist gangs and bring them all under the junta’s control. He also masterminded the joint neo-Nazi/police patrols that have suppressed any resistance in the western cities.

Avakov represents the coalition of far-right forces that control the commanding heights of police, military and prosecutorial powers of the new regime.

Some forces in the Right Sector, like Muzychko, didn’t want to follow orders. Avakov and his colleagues decided that those who wouldn’t play ball must be eliminated.

The fascist street gangs served their purpose as the violent fists of the Euro-maidan protests that ousted Yanukovich. But when it comes to investments and military strategy, Washington, Bonn and the IMF prefer to work with well-groomed, business-suited fascists like Avakov and Svoboda leader Oleh Tyahnybok.



## **Tymoshenko: 'Grab a machine gun'**

On March 16, the New York Daily News reported that 1.4 million people in New York City—about 1 in 5—now rely on charities, food pantries and soup kitchens to eat. That's an increase of 200,000 over the last five years. It's a crisis echoed in cities, towns and rural areas across the U.S.

Yet what is the top priority of political leaders in Washington? According to a headline in the March 25 *New York Times*, "Ukraine Aid Leads Agenda as Congress Returns."

Why?

U.S. imperialism has big plans for Ukraine. First, it contains pipelines that control much of the flow of oil and gas between Russia and Western Europe. In addition, stationing NATO troops and weaponry there is also key to U.S. plans to isolate and dismember Russia.

Even after promising the Kiev junta \$10 billion in loans, Washington is worried about the stability of the coup. Means have to be found to stabilize the country—that is, make it profitable for the Western imperialists. That means not only controlling the far-right factions in the western part, but quelling the anti-fascist resistance in the south and east.

While the inter-regime crisis was unfolding in Kiev, a leaked phone call posted online revealed more about the fires of war that the Obama administration and congressional leaders are furiously stoking.

The call was from former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, considered a leading candidate in the presidential elections planned for May 25. Tymoshenko, a leader of the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004, was imprisoned for corruption before the coup.

Speaking with a former military official after the Crimea referendum, Tymoshenko urged her supporters to "take up arms and kill the fucking Russians along with their leader."

Tymoshenko also said she was ready to "grab a machine gun and shoot [Putin] in the head."

The recording ends with Tymoshenko threatening to use nuclear weapons against the 8 million Russian-speakers living in Ukraine.

After the call went public, Tymoshenko claimed the part about using nukes was manipulated. The rest, she confirmed, was accurate.

## **Anti-fascists build resistance**

In the cities of southern and eastern Ukraine, the leftist union Borotba (Struggle) is one of the groups organizing anti-fascist resistance.

Borotba's central office in Kiev was ransacked after the coup and its activists forced underground. Outside Kiev, Borotba and other anti-fascists work in a hazy



Photo: Borotba

state of semi-legality, operating more or less openly depending on the level of organized resistance in each city.

This creates special challenges for organizers. For example, print shop owners refuse to print flyers or newspapers due to threats from the fascists. However, Borotba has managed to get help from sympathetic workers to publish its materials.

A 10,000-copy run of “Front,” the first issue of a newspaper published by Borotba and the Antifascist Resistance Center, sold out in just three days.

Borotba activists have set up tents and information tables to spread their message and recruit people to local anti-fascist defense committees composed of activists, workers, youths and former Red Army soldiers.

In Kharkov, where the Right Sector murdered two anti-fascists on March 14, Borotba plays a leading role in organizing mass resistance.

On March 22, some 2,000 people defied a ban and rallied at Freedom Square for a people’s speakout initiated by Borotba. A major goal of the event was to recruit supporters for the local defense organization, People’s Unity.

The following day, hundreds marched down Rymarska Street to remember the two slain activists. They chanted: “Fascists kill! Power covers up!”

Police then charged Borotba leader Denis Levin, a convener of the rally, with violating the ban and ordered him to appear in court on March 26. After a crowd of supporters picketed the court during his hearing, the judge dismissed the charge as “baseless.”

In Odessa, Borotba activists took up the case of Anton Davidchenko, a local resistance leader who was seized by the “Alpha” special police unit on March 17 and kidnapped to Kiev, where he is being held incommunicado.

Some 1,000 people defied fascist threats and rallied at Odessa’s Kulikovo Field on March 23 to demand a referendum on autonomy. Led by Regional Council Deputy and Borotba activist Alex Albu, they marched to the prosecutor’s office to demand Davidchenko’s release and an end to the regime’s political repression.

### **Communist Party holds congress**

The Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) has also been targeted by the junta.

On its first day, the new regime threatened an outright ban of the KPU. The party’s headquarters in Kiev was trashed and is still occupied by the Right Sector. Party members have been attacked and beaten.

KPU leaders have continued to assert their membership in the parliament although they have been effectively banned from Kiev since the coup.

On March 26, the KPU held its 47th Extraordinary Congress in the eastern industrial city of Donetsk. The party nominated its general secretary, Peter Simonenko, to run for president in the May elections.

It is unclear whether the KPU will be allowed on the ballot, or what dangers party candidates might face.

Emphasizing the need of the party to preserve its cadres and organization, Simonenko said: “We have grounds for optimism. In a short time, the new regime showed its anti-people nature and incompetence, its inability to govern. The inevitable deterioration of the situation of workers as a result of the requirements of the IMF will inevitably create the basis for a new protest movement.”

Workers, youths and retirees alike are determined to defeat the far-right gangs and push back Western imperialism. They remember their history as part of the Soviet Ukraine, which defeated the fascist occupation during World War II, with support from the Red Army. □

# Moscow rally supports Ukraine anti-fascists

*By Greg Butterfield on March 27, 2014*

Hundreds of communists and other leftists turned out for a rally and concert in Moscow entitled “Ukraine without Fascists or Oligarchs” on March 22. The event was initiated by Red TV to establish an “Antifascist Resistance Center” in solidarity with those organizing against the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine.

The action grew out of a “Statement of Communist, Left and Anarchist Forces of Russia on Events in Ukraine,” previously reprinted by Workers World newspaper. Many of the signing organizations were represented on the speakers’ platform, including the Russian Communist Workers Party, ROT Front, Left Front, Kolonna Bush and the United Communist Party.

While these organizations present differing views on the role of Russian capitalism in the current crisis, all agreed with the slogan “Fascism is a product of capitalism” and expressed their solidarity with the anti-fascists in Ukraine. For these reasons, organizers said, they believe the rally was a step forward toward building a united anti-fascist front of the Russian left.

A message of solidarity from the union Borotba (Struggle) and Antifascist Resistance Center of Ukraine stressed: “Today, the leftist movement in Ukraine suffers from systematic pressure from the Kiev junta, and is in dire need of international support. With the victory of the coup, the left are forced to work illegally in many areas—including in Kiev, where the offices of Borotba and the Communist Party of Ukraine were destroyed.

“We thank you for your solidarity and support, which is crucial today to the Ukrainian left and for Ukraine’s future. We feel it, and it helps us to maintain morale and strengthen our political work.” □



Youth were among those who rallied in Moscow against fascism, March 22. Photo: Kolonna Bush

# What a fascist video looks like

*By Deirdre Griswold on March 26, 2014*

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Shouldn't a moving picture be worth even more?

Take the video that spread widely across the Internet for a while—until someone claimed it was copyrighted and it got pulled off a lot of websites.

But not all of them. You can still find it on several sites if you google “Ukrainian fascists attack television director.”

The six-minute video shows half-a-dozen burly men from the Svoboda Party in Ukraine attacking Oleksandr Panteleymonov, the acting director of NTU, the state-run television.

The leader of this March 18 attack was Igor Miroshnichenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament's new committee on “freedom of speech.” His Svoboda Party clearly wants to intimidate anyone not under their thumb: it filmed the attack.

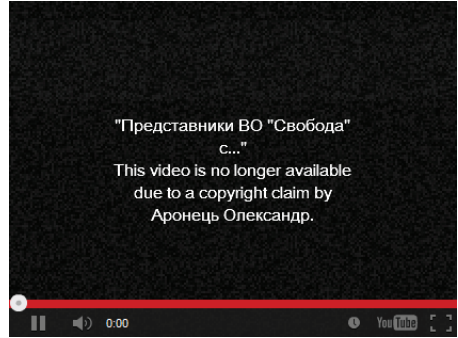
This party has five key ministerial posts in what the West calls the “democratic” new Ukrainian government, including those of vice prime minister and minister of defense, in addition to the position of prosecutor general.

In the video, Miroshnichenko calls the TV director an “animal” while he and several others push him, punch him in the head and face, and grab him around the throat. They demand that he sign the letter of resignation that they shove at him. According to several published accounts of the incident, after they got the letter signed they took him out of the building, bundled him into an SUV and drove off. His whereabouts are unknown, as of March 24.

Yes, this was a real fascist attack by the new “defenders of freedom” in Ukraine. They are vital to the pro-West, unelected government, which got in through a coup that depended a great deal on street fighting by fascist groups like Svoboda and the Right Sector—as well as support from the U.S. and NATO.

The U.S. government knew exactly what Svoboda was. For example, in December, while these groups were leading the violence in the streets of Kiev that brought about the collapse of the elected government, Miroshnichenko himself was in the news—for defaming Hollywood actor Mila Kunis.

He wrote on his Facebook page that although Kunis was born in Ukraine, she wasn't really Ukrainian because she's a “zhydovka”—a very offensive term used by anti-Semites to describe Jewish women. Many of her relatives died in the Holocaust





when Germany invaded Ukraine during World War II.

The Svoboda Party is descended from a group that fought alongside the Nazis at that time until they were defeated by the Soviet Red Army.

The U.S. government supports Israel because of the pro-imperialist role it plays in the Middle East, but Washington is totally silent about its anti-Semitic friends in Ukraine.

And don't look for news of this outrage on prime time. Don't expect the talking heads or columnists to admit it happened. Ditto for the great "freedom-loving" politicians who are railing at Russia right now for allowing the people of Crimea to separate from the thug regime in Kiev.

Nor is there anything on the website of the Committee to Protect Journalists about the fascist assault on the TV director. Although this committee claims to be "Defending Journalists Worldwide," it has an agenda that mirrors Washington's. □



Pages where excerpts of the video may still be available:

[www.tinyurl.com/ukr-tv-boss1](http://www.tinyurl.com/ukr-tv-boss1)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5GeBpZ5VHY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5GeBpZ5VHY)

# U.S. bombing of Serbia, after 15 years

By Sara Flounders on March 25, 2014

*The following statement was issued March 24 by the International Action Center in advance of a demonstration outside the United Nations in New York set for 5 p.m. on the same day. It was 15 years ago on this day that the United States began bombing Serbia in its quest to break up Yugoslavia and further expand NATO. The demonstration will demand recognition of Kosovo as part of Serbia and U.S./NATO hands off the Balkans, Ukraine and Russia.*

On the 15th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Serbia, and as new, even more ominous dangers arise in Ukraine and Crimea, it is important to remember history.

Wall Street dominates peoples through the destructive strategy of “divide and rule.” In the Balkans and in Eastern Europe this has meant policies aimed at breaking solidarity among different nationalities and religions by imposing sanctions and economic destabilization and by funding right-wing and fascist organizations and granting immediate recognition to their regimes.

It was U.S. and European Union criminal policy that broke the Yugoslav Federation into six unstable, impoverished micro-states. They executed this crime by bombing Bosnia in 1994 and carrying out a 78-day bombing in 1999 of Serbia, especially the Serbian province of Kosovo. These wars aimed at expanding the U.S.-commanded NATO alliance into the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics.

Despite U.S. and German commitments to the former Soviet Union not to expand NATO one inch further if Soviet troops were withdrawn from East Germany, NATO has now expanded to 12 countries in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and former Soviet Republics.

After the massive destruction of schools, hospitals, industries and communication in Yugoslavia in 1999, Washington still agreed, in the imposed ceasefire and in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, that Kosovo is historically part of Serbia and would remain an autonomous part of sovereign Serbia, although under U.S./NATO occupation and administration. In 2008, in violation of this signed U.N. agreement, the U.S. recognized the puppet government it had set up and that government’s illegal declaration of independence for Kosovo. The overwhelming majority of the people of Serbia of all nationalities opposed this theft of Kosovo by NATO. They continue to raise the slogan: “Kosovo is Serbia.” □



Protest at United Nations in NYC March 24 of war on Yugoslavia. WW photo: Sara Flounders.



In **New York City**, people joined a militant rush-hour protest outside CNN's offices at Columbus Circle on March 14. Picketing outside the opulent Time Warner Center, protesters chanted, "CNN lies, people die, in Ukraine and Venezuela!" and "[Anderson] Cooper, [Wolf] Blitzer, stop supporting fascists!"



Protest in New York. WW photo: John Catalinotto

At a closing rally outside the Fox News studios, Larry Holmes of the People's Power Assembly said, "We demand to know why CNN and Fox are not talking about the prominent role played by neo-Nazis in this coup d'état in Kiev. Why aren't they talking about how these fascists are displaying the Confederate flag out of some sick nostalgia for slavery?"

Lourdes Vela, representing the New York Bolivarian movement, said: "In Venezuela, the government is doing everything it can to stop the fascists who are trying to carry out a coup. There are paramilitaries and Colombian mercenaries that have entered the country and are trying to infiltrate into all corners. They are doing this because they have lost power."

### John McCain receives indictment

Other actions included a march on the offices of warhawk U.S. Sen. John McCain on March 14 in **Tucson, Ariz.**, where a People's Indictment was read charging McCain with three counts of "material support for terrorists" based on his support of reactionary movements in Ukraine, Venezuela and Syria. An enlarged copy of the indictment was taped to the door.

In **Los Angeles**, protesters from several organizations and communities overflowed the corner of Echo Park Avenue and Sunset Boulevard on March 14. In front of a large banner reading "White House, CIA, Pentagon—Hands Off Ukraine,



Los Angeles and Huntington, W.Va. Photos: Mike Chickey (Left), Benji Pyles (Right)



Banner in Buffalo, N.Y. and Protesters in Durham, N.C.  
Photos: Garrett Dicembre (Left), Bryan G. Pfeifer (Right)

Venezuela and Syria,” they distributed hundreds of flyers countering U.S. media and government lies.

Activists in **Huntington, W.V.**, also came out March 14, calling for “U.S. hands off Ukraine! Money for people’s needs, not war!”

At **Boston**’s annual St. Patrick’s Day Peace Parade on March 16, the Team Solidarity Sound Truck helped spread the anti-war message while contingents carried signs reading “U.S. imperialism—Hands off Ukraine, Venezuela and Syria.” An informational picket was called by Workers World Party in **Durham, N.C.**’s, Brightleaf Square Historic District on March 14. Protesters called for “Money for unemployment insurance, food stamps and higher wages, not war!” and distributed fact sheets to passersby.

Actions were also held in **Buffalo, N.Y.**; **Houston**; and **Minneapolis**. □

*Greg Butterfield, Steven Ceci, Terri Kay, Bob McCubbin, Frank Neisser, John Parker, Bryan Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Benji Pyles, Paul Teitelbaum and Dan Van Dandervance contributed to this report.*



# Ukraine crisis sets back NATO's eastward advance

*By Fred Goldstein on March 20, 2014*

## **Strategic blow to Pentagon in Crimea**

March 19—The overwhelming, popular turnout of the Crimean masses who affirmed their decision to separate from the Kiev coup regime in Ukraine and associate with Russia is the first great setback for the U.S. and NATO in their 15-year march to the East.

This constitutes a turning point in the international situation. The irresistibly expansionist imperialist establishment in Washington has engaged Russia in a direct confrontation by seizing control of the Ukrainian government.

The Russian nationalist Putin regime of counterrevolutionary oligarchs is no answer to the problems of the masses of people in Crimea or the workers and farmers in Ukraine. The workers' organizations and the communists must retain their class independence in this struggle, promote class solidarity and be careful not to fall prey to Great Russian chauvinism or bourgeois nationalism.

But at the same time, they should oppose any victory for Washington's war drive in the region, which is the greatest danger.

Since the fall of the USSR and Eastern Europe, NATO has swallowed nine countries from the former socialist camp in Eastern Europe and three formerly Soviet Baltic republics. This expansion toward Russia's borders has taken place in steps, with little resistance.

In NATO's march to the East—a march to encircle Russia on its western border—the seizure of Ukraine was a final and decisive step. But the militarists and expansionists in the Pentagon, the White House and the State Department forgot what the actual relationship of forces was on the ground.

They seem to have forgotten that Russia has a powerful military, including nuclear weapons and a large army. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and other neocons and right-wingers in Washington who were running the Ukraine operation were so narrowly focused on grabbing political power that they disregarded the history of Ukraine. They mistook the pro-imperialist oligarchs and Ukrainian nationalists in Kiev, Lviv and other parts of western Ukraine for the entire country.

## **Washington underestimated Ukrainian masses**

Above all, they never foresaw the possibility of the intervention of the Ukrainian masses, particularly in Crimea and the eastern and southern parts of the country. They seem not to have noticed all the statues of Lenin, streets named after communists and monuments to the victories over fascism. Even the counterrevolutionary Ukrainian oligarchs had not dared to take them down.



After years of Washington and NATO running completely roughshod over country after country in the former socialist camp, this is their first land grab that has run into the dual resistance of the local population and the Russian state.

Washington gained its objective in Kiev by political subversion and by mobilizing fascist forces for the overthrow of the legally elected government, headed by Viktor Yanukovych. It then installed an unelected puppet government and gained political control of Kiev.

But with the seizure of the government of Ukraine in Kiev by Washington and its junior partners in the European Union, quantity has turned into quality. The imperialists in Washington have plunged across a red line and been caught flat-footed by the swift and forceful response they received, especially in Crimea.

Washington suffered a humiliating rebuff by the massive democratic turnout in Crimea. The U.S. warnings to Russia against federating with Crimea were demonstrably futile and ineffectual. And to make matters worse for them, the unelected puppet regime in Kiev has not been able to establish its authority, as shown by growing unrest and resistance in large and key industrial sections of the country in the east and the south.

To be sure, the U.S. and the EU still have the stronghold of Kiev, fortified by the fascists in the Svoboda Party and the Right Sector. This is just the first battle in a war which will be filled with future political, economic and military twists and turns that cannot be foreseen.

### **Pentagon wanted to oust Russian navy from Crimea**

A measure of the setback, particularly for the Pentagon, can be seen in the howls and cries of the capitalist politicians over Crimea's federation with Russia and the swiftness and decisiveness with which this was accomplished.

The howling seems truly disproportionate—but only if you leave out the fact that pushing the Russian Black Sea Fleet out of Sebastopol was a prime strategic objective of the Pentagon. The hope was that by capturing the regime in Kiev, it would become possible to invalidate the lease under which the Russian fleet is stationed there.

Much attention has been rightfully focused on the U.S. goal of bringing NATO into Ukraine. But little has been said about the desire of the U.S. high command to push the Russian navy out of Crimea. The base at Sebastopol is Russia's only warm-water port and is its strategic entry to the Mediterranean and Syria as well as Iran.

Syria is now in great danger of attack, as the new cold war heats up.

After the takeover of the government in Kiev, there was talk about canceling the Russian navy's leases for Sebastopol. According to the *London Telegraph* of March 1, "Vitaly Klitschko, the champion boxer who is now a candidate for president in May's elections, joined other leaders of the revolution with a call for a 'general mobilization' against the Russian threat. He called on the government to cancel the lease on the Russian naval base in Sebastopol."

## **Economic austerity will undermine political situation**

The strategists in Washington have seized control of a bankrupt government that owes money to foreign banks and is running out of cash. Washington and the EU have promised to bail out the regime. Of course that means to bail out the bankers and other investors to whom Kiev owes money. But this will require International Monetary Fund loans, which will only be given on condition of austerity cuts to the government budget and privatization of state enterprises.

Specifically, the IMF will require cuts to natural gas subsidies to the population, which will run into billions of dollars. It will mean less government spending on social welfare, services and government enterprises. And it will mean cuts in pensions.

The economic agreement with the EU and the IMF was to be signed on March 21. But this has been postponed by the regime, for fear of rushing too quickly to level an economic attack on a population that is already aroused.

However, IMF loans can only be postponed for a short time because the regime is running out of cash reserves with which to pay its debts. It won't be long before the regime in Kiev faces bankruptcy. In order to avoid that, it will have to submit to IMF terms, meaning a big economic attack on the masses. The workers in Ukraine will quickly see the consequences of "turning toward Europe" and its so-called "democracy"—that is, democracy for the rich.

The exuberance emanating from Washington after the fascist shock troops forced the Yanukovych government from power has been transformed into outrage among the hawks in the capitalist press, the political establishment and the militarists.

The right wing of the U.S. ruling class is growing more and more frustrated at having their expansionist aims stymied by what they consider to be Russian interference with their goals in Syria, Iran and elsewhere. John McCain and all the mouthpieces of the Pentagon hawks are pushing for a new cold war.

The Putin government, on the other hand, has watched NATO expand to Russia's western borders. Moscow has seen the so-called "Rose Revolution" in Georgia in 2003, the "Orange Revolution" of 2004 in Ukraine, the failed "Denim Revolution" in Belarus in 2005 and 2006, and the attempt to overturn the government of Uzbekistan in 2006. All these so-called "color revolutions" were funded by the U.S.: the National Endowment for Democracy—which is really an arm of the CIA, Freedom House, the Soros foundations and others of their ilk.

The Pentagon is pushing in the direction of a new cold war. There may be a slow-down or a temporary pause in the conflict as both sides take a step back to assess their positions—especially Washington and the EU. But that does not remove the danger of further conflict, which will affect the workers and the oppressed everywhere.

The insatiable ambition of the imperialists to expand the boundaries of their domination led Washington and the Pentagon to seize Ukraine and bring a mortal threat to the doors of Russia. For the moment, the ball is in Washington's court. □

# Behind the coup in Ukraine: Oil and gas as a weapon

By Chris Fry on March 20, 2014

What do oil and gas have to do with the U.S.-sponsored crisis in the Ukraine? Lots. But that is barely mentioned in the mass media here. And it's not the first time.

When the U.S. military invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq, the story was that it had to do with "combating terrorism" and "eliminating weapons of mass destruction."

But neither the Taliban regime nor the Iraqi government were in on the 9/11 attacks. And the claims that Iraq had nuclear, biological or chemical weapons were also boldface lies.

In fact, these were wars for oil profits—for a key pipeline in Afghanistan, and for the lion's share of the world's second-biggest oil supply in Iraq.

Now, U.S. imperialism is gearing up a conflict with the people of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. This time, oil and gas are not the primary goals—not at first. Instead, they are weapons to subject the Ukrainian and Russian people to the rule of U.S. banks and big corporations and to strengthen Wall Street's hegemony over its European "partners."

Washington has been working to strengthen its hand in Ukraine for some time. In 2004, the Bush administration gave \$65 million to supply "democracy training" to opposition leaders. This program was stepped up under the Obama administration. In a speech last December to the National Press Club, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland confirmed that the U.S. had invested "over \$5 billion" to "ensure a secure and prosperous and democratic Ukraine." This is the same Nuland whose phone conversation picking the new prime minister of the Ukraine got leaked.

A U.S. State Department-sponsored report published in 2004 noted that "Ukraine's strategic location between the main energy producers (Russia and the Caspian Sea area) and consumers in the Eurasian region, its large transit network, and its available underground gas storage capacities" made the country "a potentially crucial player in European energy transit."

But, the report continued, Ukraine's dependence upon Russian energy imports had "negative implications for U.S. strategy in the region," in particular the strategy of "supporting multiple pipeline routes on the East-West axis as a way of helping promote a more pluralistic system in the region as an alternative to continued Russian hegemony." ("Ukraine's Energy Policy and U.S. Strategic Interests in Eurasia," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, cited in *The Guardian*, March 3, 2014)

Currently, Russia supplies half of Ukraine's natural gas and 30 percent of Europe's. Last November, Ukraine signed a \$10 billion shale gas deal with the U.S. oil giant Chevron that would introduce the environmentally disastrous method called

“fracking” to tap Ukraine’s own gas supply. That would supposedly end Ukraine’s reliance on Russia’s natural gas by 2020. This was a key part of an overall deal that Ukraine was negotiating with the European Union.

But then the Russian government offered Ukraine a far better deal: a 30 percent reduction in the price of its natural gas, as well as a \$15 billion aid package. The Ukraine government reversed course and agreed to this. That was when the U.S.-sponsored opposition launched its struggle for control of the Ukraine government.

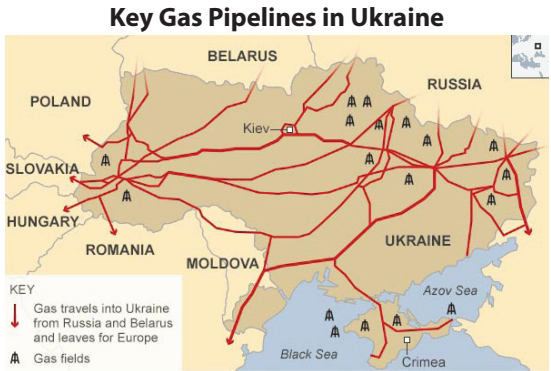
U.S. corporations have massively increased both natural gas production, through fracking, and oil production from new fields in the Bakken region of North Dakota. The U.S. also imports shale oil from Canada. Given this abundance of oil and gas, the imperialists have been ceaselessly plotting to find new markets.

Currently, the U.S. exports none of its natural gas. But plans are underway to complete gas liquefaction plants by 2015, which will allow the energy giants to begin shipping large quantities of liquefied natural gas to Europe. The “liberal” *New York Times* editorial board has concluded that “natural gas exports could serve American foreign-policy interests in Europe.” (“Natural Gas as a Diplomatic Tool,” *New York Times*, March 6) The entire U.S. establishment agrees on letting the fracking continue. Because Europe had a mild winter this year, its current natural gas supplies are high, giving the U.S. more time to develop an export infrastructure.

On the same day that the newly appointed “prime minister” of Ukraine was visiting the White House, the U.S. government announced that despite the glut of oil supplies from its new-found sources, it was selling 5 million barrels of oil from its emergency stockpile, the first such sale since 1990. “Oil traders noted that Russia’s effort to take over the Crimean region from Ukraine has prompted calls for use of booming energy resources to relieve dependence on Russian natural gas by Europe and Ukraine.” (Reuters, March 12)

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has for years been in favor of “channeling the domestic energy boom into a geopolitical tool to advance American interests around the world.” In 2011, she set up an 85-person Bureau of Energy Resources in the State Department to do just that. (*New York Times*, March 5)

All the concerns about global climate change, fracking, pipeline leaks and oil train explosions go right out the window as the U.S. government helps position its energy billionaire pals to grab ever more wealth and power—in Ukraine as well as here at home. □



Source: [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26387353](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26387353)

# U.S. hides Russian proposal to end crisis in Crimea

*By Fred Goldstein on March 18, 2014*

March 18—The voters in Crimea on March 16 overwhelmingly voted to separate from Ukraine. The leaders of Crimea then signed a treaty to join the Russian Federation.

Meanwhile, the Western imperialists have tried to bury a Russian proposal to solve the crisis, which was presented to the U.S. and the EU before a meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in London on March 14.

In addition, fascist forces are mobilizing to try to beef up the dwindling authority of the Kiev puppet government in major cities in Ukraine’s east and south.

The overwhelming majority of the electorate in Crimea has voted to separate from the reactionary, right-wing regime in Ukraine. By most accounts, 83 percent of those eligible turned out to vote, with well over 90 percent voting to separate and spurning the choice to remain in Ukraine with autonomy.

The expansionist aggressors in Washington and their European partners declared the popular referendum “illegal” and put sanctions on Russian, Crimean and Ukrainian officials. Washington’s hypocrisy is shown by its dismissal of the Crimean masses’ popular vote for separation while applauding the violent overthrow of the legally elected Ukrainian government of Viktor Yanukovich by U.S.-backed fascist forces from the Right Sector and the Svoboda Party.

The big business media have depicted the referendum as Russians versus Ukrainians. But people of Russian ancestry are just 58 percent of the population of Crimea, which has 1.5 million eligible voters. If you do the math, somewhere around half a million Ukrainians in Crimea voted for separation.

It is important to note, when assessing the referendum, that Crimea has a long history of association with Russia. It was not politically part of Ukraine until it was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954 by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Its historical, economic and cultural development is different than the rest of Ukraine. It is also separated geographically as a peninsula and has been home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet for over two centuries.



## **Russian plan to end crisis buried by U.S./EU**

Meanwhile, Washington and Brussels have completely ignored a Russian proposal for solving the crisis. Details of the proposal are coming out now only because they have been announced in the Russian press.

The major points covered in the English-language press so far (*Financial Times*, March 17) include the following:

- To recognize the referendum in Crimea as legal and legitimate and to allow the people of Crimea to determine their own destiny.
- To legalize Russian as an official second language.
- To call a national conference to redraw the Ukrainian constitution and create a federal structure that would give recognition to the needs of various regions and allow for autonomy in the social, economic and cultural spheres and in foreign trade.
- For the EU, U.S., Russia and the U.N. to guarantee the geopolitical and military neutrality of Ukraine.
- To confiscate all illegal arms and ban Nazi and other fascist propaganda.

The provisions of this proposal and the fact that it was quietly refused have been buried by the Western capitalist mass media. This indicates that the hawkish, confrontational policy of U.S. imperialism in the Ukraine crisis is dominant and growing stronger.

## **Kiev authority under attack in eastern Ukraine**

Washington and its puppets are showing signs of desperation because Kiev, which staffed its government with fascists in key posts, is losing its authority over sections of the country in the east and the south.

Thousands of demonstrators in the eastern cities of Donetsk, Kharkov, Lugansk, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa and Nikolaev have rebelled in the streets against the Kiev authorities. Demonstrators have stormed government buildings, evicted pro-Kiev officials, held popular referendums and passed out petitions that denounced the oligarchs appointed by Kiev. Some called for a federated Ukraine, some for separation and new elections. The resistance to the puppet regime is growing. (video and printed reports, *rt.com*, March 16)

The people of the eastern and southern regions are steeped in the struggle against fascism and the Nazis. There is a strong Soviet/Russian culture in the region. Red flags with hammers and sickles are sprinkled among Russian flags in the demonstrations. Monuments to the victory over Hitler in World War II abound. Monuments to war heroes and statues of Lenin are common. Defense guards have been posted to protect them from fascist forces organized by the regime.

The masses know that the new Kiev regime has appointed fascist elements to some of the most important state positions—those in charge of the various armed



forces. Defense, Internal Affairs, National Security and the Defense Council are all now headed by members of the fascist-leaning Svoboda Party or the openly fascist Right Sector.

These forces are attacking communists, progressives and anti-fascists around the country. Two people were shot dead by Right Sector forces in Donetsk and also in Kharkov. (Read WW article at [tinyurl.com/o4mcym7](http://tinyurl.com/o4mcym7))



Mass rally in Kharkov against right-wing junta.  
Photo: Borotba

The Kiev regime has called up 20,000 soldiers from the regular military and, more ominously, 20,000 national guards. Given the fascist leaders in the Defense Ministry and the Ministry of National Security, this call-up is meant to deputize the right-wing and fascist forces for combat.

There is fear in Kiev and in Washington that, having lost Crimea, they are losing control over much of the population in Ukraine and the resistance is spreading. This worry is reflected in a sudden pronouncement by the virulently anti-Russian, pro-NATO, pro-EU Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk on the morning after the referendum and Crimea’s decision to affiliate with Russia.

Yatsenyuk, who generally speaks in Ukrainian, gave a 10-minute televised address to the country in Russian. He declared that a new constitution should move toward “decentralization,” that joining NATO was “not on the agenda,” that the Russian language was fully legal, that the economic part of an Association Agreement with the EU had been “put on hold,” that he wanted good relations with Russia and that relations with the EU and Russia were not an “either or” proposition. [Reuters, March 18]

In other words, Yatsenyuk had to speak to the entire Russian proposal to end the crisis, which is gaining ground in the country. Of course, every word that fell from his lips is a complete lie, spoken out of political weakness and fear. His speech was undoubtedly approved by, if not written by, his masters in Washington.

But it shows that the imperialists, having tried to seize Ukraine by subversion and force, may have bitten off more than they can chew in the long run. The Ukrainian masses and the Russians may give them a rebuff they had not bargained for. □

# NATO expansion—Yugoslavia to Ukraine

*By Sara Flounders on March 18, 2014*

Behind Washington’s hypocritical talk of “national sovereignty,” “territorial integrity” and “international law” in its efforts to undercut the overwhelming vote of the people of Crimea to join Russia stands a stark struggle over whether Ukraine will be dragged into the ever expanding, U.S.-commanded NATO military web.

Since 1995, the year NATO waged its first aggressive war against Yugoslavia, NATO has expanded into nine countries of Eastern Europe and three former republics of the former Soviet Union.

The Obama administration is using more than words in this deepening struggle.

The Pentagon has moved F-16 fighter-bombers, F-15 fighters, C-130 transport planes and RC-135 aerial tankers to Russia’s borders and sent the USS Truxtun destroyer, armed with cruise missiles, which can carry nuclear warheads, into the Black Sea. Washington threatens economic sanctions, putting pressure on Germany and other EU members to join in. A lot is at stake.

NATO membership was a key provision in the agreement that Ukraine’s President Viktor Yanukovich balked at signing with the EU last November. The Maidan Square occupation in Kiev, the capital, aimed at stampeding the government into joining the EU and NATO. Fascist ultraright paramilitary organizations, such as Right Sector and the neo-Nazi Svoboda party took the lead.

During the Kiev occupation and since, these openly armed terror organizations burned political offices of communists, pulled down revolutionary statues, attacked gay people and defaced homes of Ukrainian Jews. Despite their open fascist symbols and criminal acts, Arizona Sen. John McCain, Secretary of State John Kerry and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland openly met with and embraced these reactionaries.

On Feb. 21-22, the fascist forces overthrew the elected government, seized Parliament and expelled government officials, even though Yanukovich had just reached an agreement with the EU, including many concessions and the scheduling of new elections. The first act of the coup government, after deposing Yanukovich in a rump parliament, without a quorum, was to ban Russian and Greek language usage by Ukrainian minorities and to end Crimea’s autonomy within Ukraine.

Within days, the coup regime named fascists to key posts in the new state—the Svoboda Party’s Andriy Parubiy as secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, Right Sector head Dmytro Yarosh as his deputy and Svoboda’s Ihor Tenhyok as minister of defense. The U.S.-favored right-wing banker Arseniy Yatsenyuk became prime minister.

The immediate attack on Crimea's autonomy confirms how well the coup government fell in line with NATO's plan for expansion. The Crimea is the only non-Arctic base to provide a port for the Russian Navy.

Washington and Berlin immediately granted recognition to this coup government. In an effort to lend further legitimacy, the unelected Yatsenyuk was invited to a meeting at the White House and to the United Nations Security Council.

It should be no surprise then that the gut response of most of the population of the Crimea to this fascist threat was to hold a referendum on whether to continue autonomy or rejoin Russia. Nor that Russian Prime Minister Putin decided to order Russian troops, whose presence in Crimea is approved of by treaty with Ukraine, to secure their position in the peninsula. The collective memory of the Russian-speaking majority in Crimea is shaped by stories of the Nazi invasion and massive destruction in World War II.

### **Remember Croatia and Kosovo**

This is not the first time that U.S. imperialism has used terror tactics and economic destabilization, and publicly embraced paramilitary monsters.

The videos of Blackwater mercenaries and right-wing militias operating in eastern Ukraine and movements of Ukrainian military and National Guard raised great apprehension.

If the fascist coup government could in one measure end Crimea's long held autonomy, the likely next step would be to order the Russian Navy out of its own base. Perhaps it would expel a large part of Crimea's population. If that seems unbelievable, consider what happened in other U.S. supported rightist coups in Croatia and in Kosovo, a province of Serbia, and their similarities with the Ukraine situation.

During World War II, the fascist Ustashe had welcomed the Italian fascist and German Nazi occupation and carried out genocide against the Jewish and Serbian populations of Croatia. A united multinational partisan resistance movement throughout Yugoslavia finally defeated the fascists, drove out the German army and laid the basis for the Yugoslav Socialist Federation as the war ended.

The return of this same criminal Ustashe organization, its 1991 declaration of independence for Croatia and separation from the Yugoslav Federation were immediately recognized by Berlin and soon by Washington. This political support for a right-wing separatist movement by the U.S. and Germany, combined with the 1995 attack on Bosnia and the 1999 NATO air war, led to the breakup of the Yugoslav Socialist Federation.

After declaring Croatian independence in 1991 and taking command of the police and military, the Ustashe carried out attacks on the Serbian population. It outlawed the rights of the Serbian minority, who had lived in Croatia since the Middle Ages, expelling them from their farms, evicting them from apartments, firing them from

state jobs and cancelling their pensions and social services.

Fearing the mass executions like those these fascists had carried out during World War II, the Serbs in Croatia resisted and civil war broke out. By 1995, more than 200,000 Serbs had been driven from the Krajina region in Croatia.

Similar rightist forces unleashed the civil war in Bosnia, another republic of the Yugoslav Federation. This led to even deeper ethnic divisions, great destruction and loss of life.

Before the Ustashe seized power in Croatia, the annual U.S. Foreign Appropriation Law 101-513 in 1990 created a political and economic crisis in the Yugoslav economy. It cut off all aid, trade, credits and loans until each of the six Yugoslav republics held separate elections for independence. At the same time, secretly funded mercenaries and militias flooded into the region, spreading terror.

In both Russia and Ukraine, many are aware of the U.S. role in shaping the civil war in Bosnia to justify NATO intervention. First, in 1995, U.S./NATO used 400 aircraft and 5,000 personnel from 15 nations in the 21-day bombing of Serbian-held positions in Bosnia. Then, Washington imposed the Dayton Accords, which stationed 60,000 NATO troops in Bosnia.

This bombing and occupation of Bosnia was the first crucial step in the expansion of the NATO military alliance into the Balkans, and then into East Europe and the former Soviet republics.

### What is NATO?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a military-machine alliance under U.S. domination and run to project Wall Street’s interests. NATO has a U.S.-commanded military structure imposed by U.S. corporate policy since it was founded in 1949, at the peak of U.S. power.

Since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has aggressively expanded until it is now the biggest political-military alliance in history, with 28 member countries. Its “partnership programs” bring the total number of countries trapped in this U.S.-spun military web to 70 countries. U.S. taxpayers pay 70 percent of NATO expenses, a huge subsidy to U.S. military corporations.



The combined defense expenditures of all 28 NATO countries in 2013 amounted to \$1.02 trillion or over \$1 million millions. In comparison, Russia spends \$90 billion. Iran spends under \$7 billion. (Stars and Stripes, Feb. 25—[tinyurl.com/o332a4e](http://tinyurl.com/o332a4e))

In addition, NATO troops are part of the 13-year continuing U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. From 2004 to 2011, tens of thousands of troops under NATO command participated in the eight-year occupation that destroyed Iraq.

Starting March 24, 1999, NATO carried out a 78-day bombardment of Serbia that included 38,000 combat missions, using 1,000 aircraft along with cruise missiles fired from aircraft carriers, destroyers and submarines. The targets were overwhelmingly civilian, including bridges, railroads, factories, refineries, power stations, telecommunications facilities, embassies, 480 schools and 33 hospitals.

NATO cut Kosovo province out of Serbia, creating a NATO protectorate with 50,000 troops and building Camp Bondsteel, a massive U.S. military base. Despite the U.S. pledge that Kosovo was historically part of Serbia and would remain so, Washington quickly recognized Kosovo's independence in 2008.

In 2011, NATO bombed Libya for 220 days, with 26,500 sorties, overwhelmingly flown by the U.S. Air Force, but with 19 countries pulled into the imperialist aggression. Communications centers, apartment buildings, water networks and the electric grid were targeted. The reactionary militias that U.S./NATO funded and backed up militarily brutally tortured and murdered Moammar Gadhafi, the leader of this African country.

The imperialists fraudulently called each of these blatant aggressions “humanitarian acts” to prevent “genocide” or to protect peace. In fact, each NATO operation was a brutal act of colonial conquest and expansion.

## **Transforming NATO**

NATO's main task at its 1949 founding was to confront and challenge the Soviet Union. But it was also established to secure U.S. military and economic domination in Western Europe, a check against working-class uprisings and the rise of any imperialist competitors. It wasn't until 1955 that the USSR and East European countries established the Warsaw Pact to counter NATO's Cold War pressure.

In 1990, as the Soviet Union was retreating under the pressure of 45 years of Cold War, U.S. Secretary of State Baker and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl made a commitment that was quickly broken. They said NATO troops would not expand “one inch” further east, not even into the former German Democratic Republic.

The USSR's conciliatory Mikhail Gorbachev leadership swallowed this commitment and agreed to withdraw the 380,000 Soviet troops from East Germany, where by treaty they had a right to be stationed since the end of World War II in 1945. This in effect ended the Warsaw Pact military alliance. (*Counterpunch*, March 13; *The Atlantic*, March 3)

Despite these talks and agreements, the expansion of NATO right up to the borders of Russia has been the focus of U.S. policy through both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Although U.S. policy had long been to support and fund dissident individuals and organizations of opposition throughout the Warsaw Pact countries, after 1990 the floodgates opened. Western corporations and banks sought resources. Exiled wealthy families surged back into the region to attempt to reclaim ownership of industries, vast estates and swaths of land they had previously owned that had been collectivized.

Fascist groups from the Ustashe in Croatia to Svobodo and the National Socialist Party in Ukraine, the war criminals whom the CIA had smuggled west at the end of WW II and helped to secretly maintain in exile for decades, surged back in. They returned awash in funds for offices, staff, publications, political parties, nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. They drafted and printed anti-communist schoolbooks full of extreme sectarian nationalism and ethnic hatred. They also established militias and hired armed thugs to defend their newly seized assets.

For the past 20 years, a handful of pirates and privateers in each of the formerly socialist countries were absorbed in laying hold of every resource, industry or source of formerly collective wealth and making deals and partnerships with U.S. and EU corporations and moving vast sums of money to the West.

These new oligarchs assumed that they would be offered an equal seat at the capitalist table. They foolishly did not realize that they were the main course. This is the age of capitalist overproduction, decline and commodity super abundance. There is no more room at the table.

By clear majorities, country polls of almost every new NATO member showed that the people opposed joining NATO. But imperialist conquest takes place through stealth and deception and through bloody wars and massive destruction, not democratic choice. The lessons of past NATO crimes and the rich history of resistance to fascism throughout the region serve as a model for the anti-fascist, progressive and working-class forces throughout Europe today. The only way to defeat fascism and imperialist domination is through multinational working-class unity, organization and a will to struggle. □

The author was in Yugoslavia during the 1999 U.S./NATO bombing and witnessed the massive civilian destruction. She is a co-author and editor of *NATO in the Balkans* (1998), and *Hidden Agenda—U.S./ NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia* (2002), both published by the International Action Center.



# Pro-West gangs attack Ukraine anti-fascists

*By Greg Butterfield on March 18, 2014*

Emboldened by the U.S.-orchestrated coup d'état in the capital city of Kiev and Pentagon military posturing against Russia, fascist violence in Ukraine has escalated from vandalism to arson, beatings to shootings, and now—the brazen murder of anti-fascist activists. To answer these attacks, progressive and communist forces are continuing mass actions and organizing self-defense.

The murder happened near midnight on March 14 in Kharkov, one of many eastern cities in open rebellion against the Kiev junta. Members of the Right Sector fascist movement were officially deputized as part of a “National Guard” under new Interior Minister Arsen Avakov and dispatched from western Ukraine to infiltrate Kharkov.

These gangsters first staged a drive-by shooting aimed at anti-fascist defenders protecting a statue of communist leader V.I. Lenin. Their assault was successfully repulsed.

But activists recognized the SUV the neo-Nazis were driving. Days earlier, the Right Sector had used it when shooting into the crowd at a large demonstration on International Women’s Day. The Kharkov defenders pursued the van.

They found it parked near the office of “Enlightenment,” a far right organization. As anti-fascists and community members gathered on Rymarskaya Street, armed neo-Nazis opened fire from inside, killing two activists on the spot. They also took three people hostage in an adjoining building.

The Right Sector immediately boasted of the murders on social networks, posting photos of their victims and bragging that none of their number were injured.

According to the leftist movement union Borotba (Struggle), a key organizer of the Kharkov fightback: “Local authorities went to negotiate with the killers, who were confident of their impunity. They declared themselves part of the National Guard and brazenly demanded to be given a bus to leave and take their weapons to Poltava and Kiev. ...

“However, the authorities did not dare, since Rymarskaya Street was already filled with hundreds of angry Kharkovites, who came from all over the city. Under their pressure, the Right Sector had to surrender and they were taken to jail. However, there is every reason to believe that those responsible for the shooting and killing will be released soon.”

By the time the fascists surrendered, a U.S.-style media spin was well underway. Newly appointed regional governor Igor Balut—a multimillionaire oligarch and protégé of the coup-makers—turned the massacre on its head, claiming that “the assault on Enlightenment is a well-planned provocation by pro-Russian activists.”

Activist Sergey Yudaev, who live-streamed the attack, told the RT news service that local authorities were trying to cover up the fact that the Right Sector had established a hideout with a weapons cache in the building.

### **Provocations, resistance in run-up to referendum**

But if the Kiev junta and its Washington patrons thought the murders would intimidate the people of Kharkov, they were wrong.

On March 16, some 6,000 people marched in defiance of a government ban, according to the French news agency AFP. Demonstrators, many waving red flags, came out to support the right of people in Crimea to hold a referendum that day. They also held their own symbolic referendum demanding autonomy from Kiev.

People in Simferopol, Odessa, Donetsk, Lugansk, Melitopol, Yevpatoria, Kerch, Mariupol and other cities of Crimea and southeastern Ukraine have been in open rebellion against Kiev since the Feb. 22 putsch.

People's defense groups like the one in Kharkov formed quickly. These ad hoc alliances have brought together anti-fascist activists, communists, former Red Army soldiers, ordinary workers and community members to defend their cities against the neo-Nazis.

But these courageous workers, youths and retirees are coming up against an organized, well-armed and well-funded plan to spread fascist violence throughout the country. Activists believe the unelected government in Kiev is carrying out a campaign of provocations to justify a military crackdown on the eastern regions, get additional weapons and funding from the Western imperialist powers, and, perhaps, enable a direct NATO confrontation with Russia.

Just one day before the murders in Kharkov, a fascist gang carried out a violent attack in Donetsk, a working-class, coal-mining city. Posing as a small group of counterprotestors, and with cover from police, they attacked a much bigger, peaceful anti-fascist demonstration with baseball bats, pneumatic pistols, Molotov cocktails and knives.

In the ensuing melee, 28 people were injured, one critically. A fascist was killed.

In Donetsk, too, people refused to be intimidated. Some 4,000 took to the streets on March 16, the AFP news service reported. Protesters seized the chief prosecutor's office and besieged the offices of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU), a political police agency similar to the FBI. They demanded the release of Pavel Gubarev, the "people's governor," arrested 10 days earlier on charges of promoting separatism.

Numerous attacks were reported as Crimeans prepared to go to the polls on March 16.

Crimean people's defenders prevented an attempt to sabotage a gas pipeline at the Arabat Spit, Crimean Prime Minister Sergey Aksyonov reported. The saboteurs had claimed they were officers of the Border Guard.

In Simferopol, the Crimean capital, fascists posing as police officials were detained after they damaged and stole people's passports and other identification to prevent them from voting in the referendum. A similar scam was uncovered in the city of Saky.

Nevertheless, at least 93 percent of Crimeans who went to the polls March 16 voted to separate from Kiev and join Russia.

### **Anti-communist witch hunt**

On March 14, the website of the Communist Party of Ukraine was knocked out by what was described as "a major hacker attack."

Immediately after the February coup, the home of CPU leader Peter Symonenko's son was ransacked and burned down. Rightists trashed the CPU headquarters and other anti-fascist sites in Kiev. The communists are still being prevented from reoccupying their offices in the capital.

In an interview published in the German left daily *Junge Welt* on March 10, Borotba leader Sergei Kiritschuk described how members of his organization were forced to go underground or flee to eastern regions to avoid capture.

Anti-fascist demonstrations are currently impossible in the capital, he said. "Every demonstration with a red flag would be immediately attacked by fascist gangs."

Kiritschuk described how a CPU member visiting Kiev in early March was detained by the Right Sector, kidnapped and beaten. Only through the intervention of a volunteer medic was the man freed and put on a train to Moscow. He was hospitalized there with lung injuries and broken ribs.

But the persecution also takes official channels, as neo-Nazis associated with Svoboda, the Right Sector, the Maidan Self-Defense and other groups have assumed the most powerful roles in the new government with control over the military and police agencies.

For example, in Odessa, Borotba leader and regional council deputy Alexie Albu was pursued and questioned by the SBU.

On March 3, Albu had introduced a proposal in the Odessa council calling for a referendum on the creation of an autonomous republic. Although the proposal was defeated 14-39, it proved very popular with local residents, who occupied the council chambers and took up the demand for a referendum.

Albu presented himself at the SBU with a crowd of supporters. Afterward he said: "I'm not afraid of the security services. ... I did not testify in the investigation. I signed nothing."

As Washington's war propaganda reaches fever pitch in the aftermath of Crimea's referendum, workers, youth and anti-war activists in the U.S. must stand in solidarity with the anti-fascist resistance in Ukraine. □

# Say no to another war!

*By Editor on March 12, 2014*

The International Action Center has put out a call for a week of actions regarding Ukraine, lasting from March 10 to 17. We wholeheartedly endorse this call and encourage all our readers to take part in whatever way you can.

The U.S. government has engineered the downfall of the Ukrainian government in a coup spearheaded by known fascist groups. It is now attempting to maneuver NATO forces into the situation. If it is not stopped, this latest imperialist aggression can have the direst consequences for the region and the world.

Whether you're a worker struggling for a living wage, a person fighting racist or sexist abuse, or a youth trying to get a job or an education, you will be affected by this — just as previous generations were so terribly hit by the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Iraq War, the Afghanistan War and the many other atrocities that the profit-hungry rulers of this country dragged us into, from Yugoslavia to Libya.

The IAC call says in part:

“The threat is real. Sanctions, war buildup, warships with guided missiles to the Black Sea, F-15 fighter jets on Russia’s border are dangerous provocations. Washington has recognized and committed more than \$10 billion to an illegal right-wing government that seized power from elected officials.

“Actions large and small are urgently needed — informational picket lines, visits to congressional offices, protests at media centers against war propaganda, vigils, and challenges to government officials. Let’s make our voices heard.”

As of this writing (March 11), actions have already happened or been scheduled in scores of cities across the country. We urge you to find a way to participate in some of them. For a list of already scheduled events and info about what else you can do, see [iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org) or go to [tinyurl.com/mmxx4o](http://tinyurl.com/mmxx4o).

Let the world know that the people here won't be lied into another dirty war! □



Protest in New York City in March 2014. WW Photo

# U.S. whips up crisis over Crimea

*By Fred Goldstein on March 12, 2014*

March 10—In recent days the U.S. imperialists and their junior EU partners have escalated the confrontation against Russia and the Ukrainian people diplomatically, militarily and economically.

Washington is using the upcoming referendum in Crimea and the strengthening of Russian military positions on the peninsula as a pretext to inflame the situation in Ukraine and stoke the fires of confrontation.

Another sign of the intransigence of U.S. imperialism is that, on the diplomatic front, an expected visit by Secretary of State John Kerry to Moscow to discuss the crisis was postponed by Washington. And in a new provocation, President Obama has invited the illegally installed, right-wing puppet prime minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, to the White House. In addition, Washington has arranged for Yatsenyuk to go to the United Nations.

The U.S. diplomatic and political goal is to give official status to the pro-Western imperialist regime in Kiev. This regime was installed when the legally elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich was overthrown by U.S.-supported fascist shock troops, who drove him from office by means of armed street violence and terror.

## **Pentagon raising military pressure**

On the military front, the Pentagon is dispatching 12 F-16 fighter planes and 300 U.S. troops to Poland. All it took was one phone call from U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to Polish Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak to get Poland to “request” the aid.

Likewise, the U.S. is sending 4 F-15 fighter planes to Lithuania. In addition, NATO—primarily the U.S.—is dispatching AWACS planes to the region. AWACS planes are advanced airborne command and control centers, in addition to being spy planes. They will patrol the Ukrainian border and the eastern borders of Russia.

The USS Truxton, one of the largest destroyers ever built for the U.S. Navy, sailed through the Bosphorus Straits into the Black Sea for joint exercises with the Bulgarian and Romanian navies.

## **Crimea and separation**

President Barack Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and their echoes in the European Union have denounced the Crimean referendum and said in advance that “the international community,” i.e., the community of imperialist states, will not recognize the results.

But the people of Crimea have the right to separate in order to prevent coming under the rule of a pro-Western capitalist regime in Kiev. One of the first acts of

the regime was to revoke a law that had established Russian as an official language equal in status with Ukrainian. The majority of the people in Crimea speak Russian.

There is fear and anger in Crimea that the ministries and the parliament in Kiev are filled with fascists and ultra-right-wing nationalist forces. Members of the anti-Semitic, pro-fascist Svoboda Party and the outright fascist Right Sector have assumed high levels of authority. It is surely not forgotten that thousands of Crimeans were killed by the Nazis during their occupation of the area in World War II.

In addition, the government in Kiev is committed to bringing in the International Monetary Fund with its program of economic austerity. And another threat is that Western European and U.S. capital will flood into Ukraine as powerful exploiters.

Of course, West Ukrainian and Russian oligarchs are also exploiters. And trading one exploiter for another is not a program for the working class. Ethnic divisions can only damage the struggle of the Ukrainian masses. The best road to pushing back Kiev, Washington and the EU in their schemes to take over Ukraine is internationalist solidarity among all the peoples of Crimea and Ukraine as a whole in a common class struggle against Western imperialism, all oligarchs and capitalism itself.

### **Left internationalists in Ukraine**

This sentiment was expressed in a recent communiqué by the Borotba (Struggle) union. The group describes itself as representing four or five anti-capitalist and anti-racist groups, including former members of the youth organization of the Communist Party of Ukraine. Some of the members of the CPU split when the party backed the corrupt, bourgeois candidate Yanukovich.

The group is engaged in the struggle against Ukrainian fascists and has been under violent attack by the right wing. Their communiqué #4 read in part:

“... [I]n the context of mass mobilization the activists of Borotba union and Center of Anti-fascist Resistance put forward the following slogans:

“Not to defend the surrendered power [Yanukovich] but rather to build up people’s self-organization.

“Not to ignite ethnic and language conflicts but rather to defend values of international and peoples’ friendship.

“The only solution to the crisis created by the oligarchs, officials and politicians is creating a socialist society.” ([borotba.org](http://borotba.org))

### **Imperialism labels Russia’s defensive posture ‘aggression’**

Washington has engineered a fascist insurrection and illegally seized control of the government of this highly strategic country. Ukraine has a population of 45 million, is rich in resources and industry, and has 1,500 miles of border with Russia. After incorporating 12 other countries, all former Soviet socialist allies and republics, into NATO, the U.S. and the EU are now making threats because of Russian measures to counter this clear act of aggression.



Washington is demanding nothing less than capitulation from Moscow. Before Yatsenyuk's visit to the White House was arranged, Secretary of State John Kerry spent two days trying to press Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov into meeting with the puppet foreign minister, but Lavrov refused.

Washington then got British Prime Minister David Cameron to put pressure on Moscow, followed by phone calls from German President Angela Merkel. Obama himself spent hours on several phone calls with President Vladimir Putin.

All this pressure was to get the Russian government to reconcile itself to the seizure of governmental power in Kiev by the U.S. and the EU. Most important, all the phone calls and all the threats were designed to get the Russian government to accept a pro-NATO, pro-Western imperialist government on its borders.

### **Vulnerability of capitalist Russia**

Washington is also threatening economic sanctions. Therein lies Russia's greatest vulnerability, precisely because it is ruled by capitalist oligarchs, bankers and industrialists who are integrated into the world capitalist economy. The Russian ruling class has many tens of billions of dollars (in rubles) abroad. Either directly or through state companies the capitalists have investments from Ukraine to central Asia, the U.S. and Europe.

In sharp contrast, the Soviet Union was a socialist country with a planned economy and strong economic relations with its socialist allies in Eastern and Central Europe. It was not integrated into the world capitalist economy. On the contrary, the USSR was the victim of deliberate economic and technological isolation imposed by world imperialism.

During great crises, such as the invasion to crush the Hungarian counterrevolution in 1956, the intervention to stop a Western capitalist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1968, or the Berlin crisis of 1948-49, the imperialists had no significant economic leverage over the USSR.

In the present crisis, capitalist Russia is far more vulnerable. It is said that Putin anticipated such a development and has tried to get Russian financiers and investors to bring much of their money back to Russia from abroad. But that has limits. After two decades of integration into the world capitalist system, the U.S. and Europe have leverage.

The only saving grace is that this integration cuts both ways. The imperialists also have a lot to lose in an economic war.

Washington, the Pentagon and Wall Street have the immediate goal of enslaving the Ukrainian people. But their ultimate goal is to encircle Russia in the geopolitical struggle to dominate the territory of the former Soviet Union in its entirety.

The workers and the oppressed of the world will suffer if Washington is able to carry out its aims in the Ukraine and in Russia. The worst outcome in the present situation would be a victory for the U.S. Every effort must be made to stop this dangerous development. □

# Who killed 100 in Maidan Square?

*By John Catalinotto on March 10, 2014*

An intercepted phone call between two top-level European officials has raised this question: Was the “opposition” responsible for shooting about 100 protesters and police in Kiev during the week of Feb. 18, just before it took over Ukraine’s government with a coup?

The first bloody skirmish, on Feb. 18, killed eight protesters and seven police. This ratio is surprising unless the protesters were armed as heavily as the police.

The phone call was between European Union foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton and Urmas Paet, Estonia’s foreign affairs minister, on Feb. 26. Paet had just visited Kiev. These two pro-West officials would not lightly speak against imperialist interests.

Referring to a Ukrainian doctor whom he interviewed, Paet told Ashton he worried that the new, pro-West regime in Kiev would be discovered as being behind the killings: “[Olga] can say that it is the same handwriting, the same type of bullets, and it’s really disturbing that now the new coalition that—they don’t want to investigate what exactly happened. There is now stronger and stronger understanding that behind snipers, it was not Yanukovich, but it was somebody from the new coalition,” Paet told Ashton. (Guardian, March 6)

She replied: “I think we do want to investigate. ... I didn’t pick that up. That’s interesting. Gosh.”

“And second,” Paet continued, “what was quite disturbing, this same Olga [Bogomolets] told as well that all the evidence shows that the people who were killed by snipers from both sides, among policemen and then people from the streets, that they were the same snipers killing people from both sides.”

Ashton reacted to the information by saying: “Well, yeah ... that’s, that’s terrible.”

“So there is a stronger and stronger understanding that behind snipers it was not Yanukovich, it was somebody from the new coalition,” Paet says.

He later denied he blamed the new regime, but on the call his attitude was concern that the people would not trust the new regime as many of its members “had a dirty past.”

The file containing the recorded phone conversation was reportedly uploaded to the Web by officers of the Security Service of Ukraine.

There has been some speculation that the neo-Nazi Right Sector, which now form part of the new regime’s police and army, provided the snipers. Currently these fascist elements have been attacking the headquarters of left-wing groups and anyone who raises opposition to the new regime.

Dr. Olga Bogomolets, who is mentioned in the call, was responsible for the Maidan mobile clinic when people began to be killed in Kiev. Because so many of the wounds were to the heads, necks and hearts of those shot, she deduced that snipers had targeted them. In her interviews since the Paet-Ashton call was released, Bogomolets has denied that she blamed the new regime—for the deaths.

But one can clearly imagine that it would be dangerous to blame the coup regime for the deaths. Bogomolets still raises questions, however, in comments below, quoted in a letter from the legal firm Brimstone and Company to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

“I was a doctor helping to save people on the square. There were 15 people killed on the first day by snipers. They were shot directly to the heart, brain and arteries. There were more than 40 the next day, 12 of them died in my arms.”

“Our nation has to ask the question who was the killers, who asked them to come to Ukraine. We need good answers on the basis of expertise.” □



Image from canarias-semanal.org ([www.tinyurl.com/lb8w3e3](http://www.tinyurl.com/lb8w3e3))

# Why are Nazi & Confederate flags on display in Kiev?

By Sara Flounders on March 5, 2014

When Kiev’s City Hall was seized with guns and Molotov cocktails, one of the first acts of the Euromaidan street fighters was to unfurl a number of flags and insignia. Prominent among the flags were swastikas, Iron Crosses, Nazi SS lightning bolts, the Celtic cross used by the Ku Klux Klan, and the Confederate “stars and bars” flag of slaveholders in the United States. ([tinyurl.com/ltfu4vq](http://tinyurl.com/ltfu4vq))

This is no accident. The flag of the U.S. Southern slaveholders and the Klan cross are symbols understood around the world. They stand for racism, reaction, lynchings and mass terror, for keeping oppressive institutions intact and for beating down people of color and all those who struggle for a better world.

Racists from across Europe have traveled to Kiev. Wearing these symbols on their helmets and jackets, these thugs roamed Kiev and defaced the homes of Jews. They destroyed memorials to those who fought the Nazi invasion and occupation of the Ukraine in World War II. Offices of the Communist Party of the Ukraine were ransacked and destroyed, revolutionary books publicly burned in bonfires. Twenty-five statues of Lenin have been destroyed, requiring heavy equipment. ([tinyurl.com/lfs734u](http://tinyurl.com/lfs734u)) Amidst this offense of fascist vandalism, progressive people have mobilized to protect progressive centers, monuments and government buildings.



A BBC story reported that Kiev’s city council, was adorned with a banner with a Celtic cross, a symbol of “white power,” an American confederate flag, and a portrait of Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian fascist leader during World War II. ([bbc.com/news/world-europe-26468720](http://bbc.com/news/world-europe-26468720))



Symbols send a message. They are shorthand to millions of people for the aspirations and goals of social and political movements.

Naming a street, boulevard, school or holiday for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks is recognition of the historic Civil Rights movement and Black liberation movement in the U.S. It resonates with all who stand against racism and oppression.

Certain symbols of revolution, resistance and liberation, such as the red flag, the red and black flag, the red star and the rainbow flag, are recognized around the world. The struggle to remove racist names of sports teams is well understood, as is the struggle to remove memorials to racists, slave owners and Confederates throughout the U.S. South.

Victoria Nuland, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, publicly bragged that Washington has committed more than \$5 billion to these “democratic forces” in the Ukraine. ([tinyurl.com/q577smd](http://tinyurl.com/q577smd))

Nuland, Sen. John McCain and other U.S. and German politicians have publicly embraced known fascist thugs. Open U.S. support for the Ukrainian Fatherland Party, the Svoboda party and Right Sector is hardly a mistake. It is sign of how the U.S. and European Union plan to impose austerity, cutbacks and rule by Western banks.

The display of hated racist and fascist symbols should serve as a dire warning of what is at stake in the Ukraine today for all progressive people fighting for change, liberation and human solidarity. All capitalism can offer in its state of decay is more poverty, repression, fascism and war. □

# Don't forget Ukraine's communist traditions

*By Stephen Millies on March 4, 2014*

Ukrainian workers over the past century have made heroic contributions to the struggle for socialism in Europe and North America. This should not be forgotten even though reactionary forces currently have the political ascendancy in Western Ukraine.

The toppling of a Soviet war memorial in the Western Ukrainian town of Stryi spits upon everyone who died fighting the Nazis. It's an attack on the millions of Ukrainians who fought heroically in the Red Army and the many thousands who were anti-Nazi partisans.

At least 25 statues of Lenin—the leader of the 1917 October Socialist Revolution—have been toppled. Meanwhile wreaths have been placed upon statues of the fascist Stepan Bandera, whose followers murdered Jewish and Polish people.

These actions go hand in hand with demanding a Ukrainian NAFTA-type agreement that would make the country a vassal of European and U.S. banks.

Hanging the Confederate flag of the U.S. slave masters inside Kiev's City Hall, as those who put the new Kiev regime in power did, dirties the revolutionary traditions of Ukrainian workers and peasants.

In the early 20th century, Ukrainian immigrants founded meeting halls in the United States and Canada called labor temples. The Ukrainian Labor Temple in Winnipeg, Canada, still stands, though it was raided by police during the 1919 Winnipeg general strike.

Over its entrance are two clasping hands reaching across a globe with the slogan "Workers of the World Unite." The pro-Soviet Ukrainian Labor News was published there weekly. (Manitoba Historical Society)

It was Ukrainian immigrants who were the backbone of the communist movement in Western Canada. Following the October Revolution, the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association founded 25 branches in Saskatchewan alone. (Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan)

This association supported the 1931 coal miners' strike in Bienfait, Saskatchewan. The workers were organized by the Workers Unity League, which was led by Communist Party members.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police killed three of these strikers on September 29, 1931, in nearby Estevan. The inscription "Murdered by RCMP" is on their tombstones. Many more workers were wounded or arrested.

The Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association was shut down by the "Mounties" in January 1940. The Association of United Ukrainian Canadians continues the ULFTA's progressive traditions. □



# Will coup in Ukraine divide U.S. and German imperialism?

By Rainer Rupp on March 4, 2014

*Rainer Rupp, currently writing for the German daily newspaper Junge Welt, was a high NATO functionary in Brussels from 1977 to 1989, who also reported to the German Democratic Republic's intelligence service HVA. Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto translated this article to make the voice of a progressive German analyst available for WW readers.*

Feb. 28—The armed coup over the Feb. 22-23 weekend in Kiev, which was with great probability supported by Washington, is momentous in many ways. Within hours the coup trashed the agreement that took so long to be hammered out in discussions led by the European Union and especially by Germany; this agreement involved Moscow and was signed by the Ukrainian opposition parties on the one hand and the government and President Viktor Yanukovych on the other. Thus, not everyone in the West shared in the exuberant joy shown after the overthrow. It has once again become clear that in relation to the Ukraine and Russia, the U.S. and the EU, specifically Washington and Berlin, act according to different and sometimes conflicting agendas.

U.S. commentators who are close to the Obama administration are openly celebrating the coup in Kiev as a successful blow against Moscow, indeed, as tit for tat for the Russian obstruction of U.S. war plans against Syria. They see that Ukraine gives them the potential to turn up or turn down a crisis to impose uncertainty and a strategic distraction on Moscow—if Russia continues to make trouble for the U.S. hegemon as the U.S. tries to enforce its plans for world order. In contradiction to this, the EU, once again led by Berlin, has tried to involve Moscow in coming up with a coordinated, mutually acceptable solution to the crisis in Ukraine, as Germany is particularly concerned with having good economic relations with Russia. For this the EU was denigrated with a contemptuous “f—k the EU” from President Obama’s East Europe and Russian political expert Victoria Nuland.

The German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen made the differences between Washington and Berlin clear with her comments at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels on Feb. 26. She repeatedly stressed that a solution to the crisis in Ukraine could be possible only through cooperation with Moscow: “Russia must be involved; there will be no solution found without Russia,” she said in an ARD [television] news report. She pointed out that there is also a NATO-Russia Council, in addition to the NATO-Ukraine Council. “The solution must be sought in common, both with Russia and with NATO and Europe.”

Demands from relevant German business circles followed the von der Leyen’s comments.

The chairperson of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations of the Federation of German Industries, Eckhard Cordes, had complained this week

in a statement about the anti-Russian policy of Berlin and demanded that “the EU and Russia together bring the contending parties in Kiev to the discussion table.” Similarly, even the experts of the German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP) think tank had taken a position in a study published two days before the coup that closer “cooperation between the West and Russia” will also be required in terms of Ukraine. Germany would have to “urge moderation of both camps in Ukraine and the constructive involvement of Russia,” according to the report (see *Junge Welt*, Feb. 26).

In contrast, as reported Feb. 26 by the European Policy Centre, a think tank in Brussels, British policy advisor Amanda Paul—representative of the neoconservative U.S.-British and European hawks—made demands on the EU with regard to Ukraine “for a tougher line against Putin. The young generation in Ukraine is well educated and is thus needed by the EU.” That’s why the EU must “cease to behave so cowardly, and instead be ready to tackle Russia before the high hopes of many Ukrainians in the EU are disappointed,” said Paul.

Against this background, the very short final declaration—254 words—allowed the NATO defense ministers, regarding their deliberations on the Ukraine on Feb. 26, to conclude, as was already shown at the NATO summit on the “new strategic concept” in Bucharest in 2008 and in Strasbourg in 2009, once again not to enforce the hard, confrontational line of Washington against Russia. Apart from the verbal pirouettes which aim to whitewash the violent overthrow of the president of Ukraine democratically elected by the majority of the people, it is particularly important what is omitted from the declaration: namely, there are no threats and warnings to Moscow, nor drawing of “red lines.” It is a completely different tone than that which was heard in the last few days from Washington and London. Also there appeared nowhere, not even indirectly, the demand for Ukraine’s joining NATO or the EU. The U.S.-British adventurers could obviously not prevail in Brussels.

At the same time, however, von der Leyen’s position—that is, “No solution without Russia”—is also missing from the defense ministers’ statement, even though it was strongly supported by Spain, among others. Implicitly, however, the text includes a requirement that, should it be fulfilled, would pave the way for an amicable solution with Russia and is contrary to the destabilizing power politics of the U.S. The relevant passage reads: “We stress the importance of a comprehensive political process based on democratic values, respect for human rights, the rights of minorities and the rule of law that meets the democratic aspirations of the entire (!) Ukrainian people.” This would remove the fascist and other ultra-nationalist forces in Ukraine from consideration.

Despite all the difficulties Moscow had in the past with [pro-West neoliberal billionaire] Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister or Viktor Yushchenko as president of Ukraine, it can work together with them quite satisfactorily, also thanks to the moderating influence of Berlin on Kiev. The great uncertainty is now, however, whether the West will get back under control the extremist forces it unleashed in the Ukraine. □

# U.S. imperialism's new Cold War and Ukraine

*By Fred Goldstein on March 2, 2014*

The following is a summary of highlights from a talk on the Ukraine crisis by Fred Goldstein to a Workers World Party meeting in New York on Feb. 28.

As internationalists living in the most powerful imperialist country in the world, it is incumbent upon us to always pay attention to the international situation. If you don't pay attention to it, it can overwhelm you. The present crisis in Ukraine is a case in point.

Tonight President Obama came on the 6 o'clock news and told Russia to refrain from intervention in Ukraine or there would be "consequences." After Obama, militarist hawk John McCain spoke for almost five minutes, followed by Gen. Wesley Clark, the former commander of NATO who orchestrated the bombing and destruction of Yugoslavia.

Both of them spoke with aggressive, red-baiting belligerence. Their argument was that Putin wants to restore the "Soviet empire." McCain and Clark represent the most aggressive elements within the Pentagon. Our party must take notice of this.

In 2012, at a human rights conference in Dublin, Hillary Clinton, then secretary of state, said the identical thing in attacking the Russian-sponsored Customs Union and Putin's proposal for a wider economic region, the Eurasian Union. "Call it what you want," said Clinton, "call it Customs Union, call it Eurasian Union, Putin wants to 're-Sovietize' the region." Clinton was an ally of McCain and went to Afghanistan with him to bolster the U.S. war there.

Right now the crisis is over the Russians sending troops to the Crimea. The Crimea is a peninsula that was part of the Russian republic during the Soviet era. In 1954 USSR Premier Nikita Khrushchev transferred the Crimea from Russia to the Soviet Republic of the Ukraine. It is where the Russian navy has a vital military base in Sebastopol on the Black Sea.

## **NATO's drive to the east**

Now, we must look at things from the perspective of Moscow and Putin. The U.S. and the European imperialists have just seized Ukraine. They do not have it consolidated, but they have the commanding heights. They have Kiev and other places in the western part of the country. They have a puppet government that will dance to their tune.

To appreciate the view from Russia, we must look at what has happened over the past 20 years since the collapse of the USSR. NATO, the military organization of Western imperialism, has advanced steadily to the east, swallowing up a dozen former Soviet republics and former socialist allies of the USSR in Eastern Europe.

NATO has put anti-missile systems in the Czech Republic and is planning them for Poland.

NATO has advanced to the northern and eastern borders of Russia. If it can consolidate its victory in Ukraine, it will be on Russia's southeastern border, in a very important and strategic country. Ukraine has the most fertile soil in Europe, heavy industry, a scientific establishment and mineral resources.

From the perspective of Moscow, this is a dangerous leap toward the encirclement of Russia. Let's go over how this happened.

### **EU offers loan — with austerity**

The Yanukovich government, with all its numerous defects and all that it has done against the working class, was nevertheless the legally elected government of Ukraine.

In November of last year the European Union called a meeting to gather a number of former Soviet republics into an association with European capitalism. Key to the success of this plan was to get Ukraine on board. The EU offered very little to the economically distressed Ukraine: a few billion dollars in loans and the right to trade with the EU, but of course tied that to the right of the EU to carry on its exploitation in Ukraine.

A little-known part of the deal, in small print, was that Ukraine would be part of military coordination with Western military organizations — i.e., NATO.

Ukraine was also supposed to reduce its gas subsidies to the population, devalue its currency and suffer other austerity measures like those imposed by the IMF in other economically distressed countries around the world.

### **Russia's counteroffer enrages imperialists**

When the time came for the Yanukovich government to make a decision and sign, Russia and Putin stepped in. They offered a \$15 billion loan, a one-third reduction in the price of Russian-supplied gas (55 percent of the gas consumed in Ukraine) and favorable trade treaties, reducing or eliminating tariffs.

Of course, the Yanukovich government rejected the EU deal and signed for the Russian aid package, which the imperialists interpreted as a prelude to Ukraine becoming part of the Russian-sponsored Customs Union, together with Byelarus and Kazakhstan.

The imperialists were outraged. That is when demonstrations began in Kiev demanding union with Europe. The demonstrations were similar to ones staged in 2004, during the so-called Orange Revolution, when a variety of nongovernmental organizations worked to get Ukraine aligned with European imperialism.

The current demonstrations began in late November 2013 and lasted for three months. They crescendoed at the height of the Olympic Games in Sochi. The demonstrations got more and more aggressive until finally, in February the Yanukovich

government entered into negotiations with the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland, with a Russian observer present.

The negotiations lasted 30 hours. A bad agreement was finally arrived at, as the EU leaders tried to finesse a smooth takeover. Among the elements of the deal were a change in the Ukrainian Constitution reducing the powers of the president (Yanukovich) and elevating the Parliament. Elections were moved back a year and set for December 2014. And a “national unity” government was to be formed, including Yanukovich and the opposition factions.

### **Relations between EU and U.S.**

But the European Union and U.S. imperialism were on different pages. Pro-U.S. forces from the Fatherland Party in the Parliament called a rump session when around 100 members of the Party of the Regions, Yanukovich’s party, were absent.

With Right Sector fascists armed and threatening violence outside in Maidan Square, the Parliament pulled the police off the street and forbid the army from interfering. Thus, the stage was set for an offensive by the fascists to terrorize and intimidate the Yanukovich government, ultimately driving him out.

It is a matter of debate whether he should have stayed and tried to fight them off. But that is another matter. The main point is that the legally elected government was driven out by a combination of subversion by a pro-U.S. rump Parliament and fascist storm troopers on the streets.

It is important to go back to the tape-recorded phone conversation between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and Geoffrey Pyatt, the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. Nuland’s infamous “F... the EU” comment was part of the conversation. But the plotting between them about how to arrive at a government is more important, especially in light of the unfolding events.

Yanukovich was still in office, but they were discussing the next government. After rejecting Vitali Klitschko, the person Germany wanted, and others, they declared that “Yats” should be the head of the government.

When the smoke cleared on the Maidan and the Yanukovich regime was driven out, who emerged as the prime minister? Arseniy Yatseniuk, “Yats,” the head of the Fatherland Party. The acting president is Oleksander Turchinov, also of the Fatherland Party, in line with the U.S./Nuland conspiracy.

How could Russia sit by and allow the European Union and especially the U.S. imperialists to seize this strategic country and turn it into a weapon against Russia and, we might add, against the Ukrainian masses?

### **Imperialists allow fascists to surface**

The atmosphere in Kiev is saturated with right-wing and fascist political yearnings. To be sure, not all western Ukrainians are fascist or right wing. Many Ukrainians died in World War II in the struggle against the Nazis. But right now the fascist

right wing has the upper hand.

This past January there was a demonstration of 15,000 in Kiev celebrating Stephan Bandera. Who was he? A notorious Nazi collaborator and ultra-Ukrainian nationalist whose group, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, participated in the extermination of Jews, Poles and other nationalities during the Nazi occupation. Bandera helped to train Nazi battalions at the end of World War II.

Right now, monuments to the victory over the Nazis in cities like Kiev and Lviv are being desecrated because the Soviet Red Army defeated the Nazis. In other words, the fascists and the right wing are outraged because their side lost.

Such an atmosphere is fully understood in Moscow. Anything can happen under these circumstances, and we as a party must be ready for all eventualities.

The Russians may very well invade as a last resort if they do not find any other way to get the imperialists to back away from this takeover. We are not advocating it or promoting it. But it may very well happen and we must be prepared.

In an attempt to block the imperialist takeover of Ukraine, whether we agree with how they are doing it or not, we must take sides and demand that the imperialists get out. We must be able to explain to the masses of workers how the Russians were provoked by U.S. and European subversion and takeover by fascist methods.

We are opposed to the capitalist government of Putin, which sits astride a government of oligarchs who got rich on the basis of breaking up and dividing among themselves the dismembered components of the socialist economy of the Soviet Union.



Young communists in Kiev carry photos of Komsomol resistance fighters executed by Nazis in occupied Ukraine 71 years before, on Feb. 8, 1943



But as Marxists, we must see where the interests of the masses lie in this situation. The worst thing that could happen would be for U.S. imperialism to expand its empire by taking over Ukraine and the rest of the former Soviet republics and weaken and eventually dominate Russia itself.

This would immeasurably strengthen Wall Street and the Pentagon in their struggle to subjugate the world. And it would strengthen their oppression and exploitation of the masses at home. In this crisis, our party will find a way to take an independent anti-imperialist position and do all it can to stop our enemy—the one right here at home.

A final point: The European imperialists are promising their puppets in Ukraine, which is facing bankruptcy, tens of billions of dollars in assistance. But talk is cheap. These bankers in Berlin and Paris are spending billions to bail out governments in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy. They tell the workers in those countries that they have to sacrifice and endure austerity. How are these bankers going to turn around and tell the masses of Europe that they now have tens of billions of euros for the counterrevolutionaries in Kiev?

The imperialists have only hardship to offer to the masses in Ukraine. This may eventually help the workers in all the Ukraine to wake up to what has just gone down. It could eventually rekindle the class struggle there and allow the workers of Ukraine to throw out all the rascals and take the country back for themselves.

### **Points raised during question-and-answer period**

The political problems involved in explaining our position in the present crisis are greater than in recent crises, such as in Libya, Syria, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. When a great imperialist power attacks an oppressed country, there should be absolutely no question about opposing imperialism.

But in this crisis, the situation is more complicated. It is not like Syria or Libya. An attack on Russia by U.S. imperialism is not a case of an attack on an oppressed country. Russia is not an oppressed country. If anything, it carries on its own oppression in some areas.

It has a mighty industrial establishment, rich banks, a strong military and nuclear weapons. This is what makes it different from Syria and Libya. This is what requires a more thoughtful elucidation of our position in order to help people take the correct side in the present struggle.

We must explain that Washington wants to weaken Russia geopolitically, militarily and economically. The U.S. government and ruling class want to undermine Russia, foment a right wing that is pro-imperialist and reduce it to a colony—which is where it was headed during the period of Boris Yeltsin, right after the collapse of the USSR.

This struggle is illuminated by the remarks that both McCain and Gen. Clark made about how the Russians interfered with their opportunity to bomb Syria. In

their view, Russia's proposal to remove Syria's chemical weapons gave Obama an alternative to bombing the country.

Of course, Washington doesn't want the Russians to have a naval base in Syria on the Mediterranean, and they don't want Russia to interfere with their votes against Iran in the Security Council or to help undermine the effectiveness of the economic blockade of Iran.

This is a struggle of a great reactionary, decadent, Western imperialist power against a lesser power in the East. Washington hovers over the countries of the East the way the tsarist empire hovered over eastern, central and southern Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Marx wanted a war against tsarism because it fostered European reaction everywhere.

Wall Street and the Pentagon are the tsars of the 21st century, hovering and waiting for an opportunity to promote reaction and expand their empire to the East.

Historically, in the struggle between the West and the East in Europe, whenever the relationship of forces has changed against the East, in this case Russia, in favor of Western capitalism and imperialism—including the U.S.—the West has moved aggressively toward conquest. This is what big wars are made of. That is what is going on today; only today it is U.S. imperialism that is the driving force toward war.

Following the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc, Germany and then the U.S. destroyed and swallowed Yugoslavia. They could never have done this during the era of the USSR. The destruction of Yugoslavia was the beginning of the eastward march toward Russia, which continues to this day.

I think we need to stress the expansionary and adventurist nature of U.S. imperialism. We need to show the similarities between Nazi imperialism and Japanese imperialism, both of which were adventurist and aggressive, and U.S. imperialism.

The expansionist nature of Wall Street is driven by the continuous development of the more and more powerful productive forces. Germany and Japan were capitalist powers with strong industrial development, but they came late on the scene of imperialism. They were shut out of the colonial areas dominated by Britain, France and the U.S. and needed desperately to seek outlets for the export of their capital, markets for the excess commodities and wage slaves to super exploit.

So it is with Wall Street now. It is finance capital that compels the expansionist aims of the White House and the Pentagon. It is not just a subjective drive for profits; it is a law of the system.

The ever-slowing rate of growth of capitalism, along with the rapidly growing development of productivity, technology and capacity to produce, is strangling the system. They cannot get out of the unemployment crisis, the revenue crisis, the budget crisis, and they cannot garner the massive profits they seek by expanding production. The capitalist productive forces are rapidly outgrowing the markets.

Only socialism can allow the mighty productive forces in the U.S. and Europe to flourish and expand. Only when production is geared to creating use values to enhance human life, instead of creating commodities for sale to enhance corporate profits, can the drive to war be stopped.

Imperialism was contracting for 74 years, from 1917 to 1991. In 1917 the imperialists lost Russia with its 11 time zones and one-sixth of the earth's surface. In 1949 they lost China, one quarter of humanity. They then lost north Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Laos, Cambodia, Angola and Ethiopia. Their power was diminished in numerous formerly oppressed countries during the anti-colonial revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The imperialists are bent on pushing back any revolutionary developments, particularly in Central and Latin America in the more recent period, with their dirty wars against Nicaragua, El Salvador and now attempts at destabilization in Venezuela.

Today, the imperialists want to take back all those territories that they lost. For this, they must turn to an era of imperialist expansion. They must expand or die.

It is important not to fall into the trap of branding nationalities or regions as this or that politically. Much of that is being done in the present crisis. It is important to remember that while there was collaboration with Hitler in the Ukraine, 150,000 Ukrainian partisans fought against the Nazis.

The fascists have the upper hand now, but they do not represent the working class of Ukraine. Let us stick to a class point of view. Statues of Lenin are being toppled in Kiev and Lviv. But that raises the question of what the statues are doing there in the first place? Those statues represent the progressive sentiments left over from the Soviet era. The Ukrainian Communist Party is reported to have 115,000 members, a significant number considering that the USSR was overthrown more than 20 years ago.

These are the sentiments that can resurface in the struggle and can turn the tables on imperialism. □

# Statement of communist, left and anarchist forces of Russia on events in Ukraine

*By Workers World staff on February 27, 2014*

The following statement was issued Feb. 26 by an array of communist, left and anarchist forces in Russia.

The longstanding policy of the bourgeois government of Ukraine, as well as the global economic crisis, have created intolerable living conditions for the majority of its citizens. During the last half of the Yanukovych regime, a significant part of the solution to the economic problems was promised through European integration. The sudden abandonment of the announced plans provoked widespread discontent and actions. The process was classless and largely spontaneous. A nationalist movement was used by the liberal opposition as the street strike force, and thereafter the nature of the protest acquired anti-communist or even fascist traits.

The new government resorts to the power of force exactly as did the Yanukovych bureaucracy, unable to meet the needs of the people and solve their urgent problems. Western and Russian imperialism do not feel any real sympathy for the people of Ukraine, and only take advantage of the situation in their favor. That is, [they] attempt to gain financial benefit, and—in the case of the West—to create chaos on the borders of Russia. All these forces are interested in living off the people and will do it secretly or openly.

Anti-communist and anti-Russian furor, the abuse of our common Soviet past, are the main features of the emerging nationalist state now. Information concerning the pogroms on the headquarters of the Communist and leftist parties, the beatings of ordinary communists and labor activists, and the demolition of monuments to Lenin clearly show that the fascist backlash that we previously observed in the Baltic States and Europe, has already overwhelmed brotherly Ukraine.

We, the undersigned leftists, communists and anarchists of Russia, declare our protest and demand an end to the persecution of our comrades! We invite all citizens of Ukraine, using any available resources, to immediately express their distrust of the deputies of the Ukrainian Parliament, organize the community and the workforce to create self-defense groups, local governments and reliable mechanisms

of popular will. We call upon the citizens of Russia to be ready to take a direct part in helping the Ukrainian people, to contact the Anti-Fascist headquarters in assistance to Ukraine.

We urge the communist and leftist parties and anti-fascist organizations around the world to put pressure on their governments to prevent the establishment of a fascist regime in Ukraine.

Workers of all countries, unite!

Statement Signed By:

Interregional Association of Communists

Moscow City Communist union

Russian Communist Workers' Party, the Communist Party  
(CPSU-EIF)

Working Foundation Academy

Revolutionary Workers Party

Movement Communards

The New Left

Communist Youth Union

Left Front

Revolutionary Communist Youth League

The Other Russia

Individual Action (social revolutionary)

Institute of Globalization and Social Movements

The initiative group for the referendum "for the responsibility  
of government" (IGPR CALL )

Vanguard of Red Youth – Labor Russia

(AKM–TR) (partial support)

Institute of Innovation Development

Fund "The new political system"

"Kolomna bush"

All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) (VKP(b))

Pravda.info

Red TV

# U.S. officials caught in Ukraine plot

*By John Catalinotto on February 13, 2014*

U.S. spying devices record phone calls of enemies, allies, neutrals and bystanders alike. Do U.S. officials think no one records their own calls?

It seems that one such call was recorded and leaked to the Internet. It revealed much about U.S. and European Union imperialist intervention in Ukraine as well U.S.-EU tactical differences.

On Feb. 6, Victoria Nuland, U.S. assistant secretary of state for European affairs, discovered that someone considered her recent phone discussion with the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, too frank and pithy to remain in the archives.

First of all, their conversation showed Washington considered it perfectly normal and reasonable not only to have an opinion on who among the Ukrainian contenders should run the country, but to intervene to make sure a U.S. favorite won. In addition, it showed that the U.S. is contemptuous of the role of its EU partners, who are also imperialist rivals.

In December, after handing out pastries to opposition demonstrators in Kiev, Nuland returned to boast to a Ukrainian-American group in Washington that the U.S. had invested \$5 billion in establishing a Western-friendly government in Ukraine.

It is worthwhile to listen to the Nuland-Pyatt chat, which is still easily available all over the Internet. Her frank “F... the EU” got the most media play, but more revealing than her apparent frustration with EU tactics was her matter-of-fact attitude toward manipulating Ukrainian politics.

Nuland and the U.S. diplomat discussed various leaders of the official rightist opposition in Ukraine—excluding the fascist Svoboda and other neo-Nazi parties. Nuland particularly disliked letting the ex-heavyweight boxing champion, Vitaly Klitschko, play a leading role. Klitschko is considered close to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and it is assumed he has EU backing. (*Der Spiegel*, Dec. 10)

Nuland’s comments also unleashed a defensive reaction from EU politicians. Merkel called Nuland’s comments “completely unacceptable.” EU diplomats—including a senior German diplomat, Helga Schmid—complained to the European Union envoy in Kiev about “unfair” U.S. criticism of Europe’s diplomacy. That phone conversation was also recorded and broadcast.

The EU reacted mainly to insist that its intervention in Ukraine was just as effective as Washington’s. No one even tried to deny that both imperialist blocs were pushing to sever Ukraine’s close economic ties with Russia and move Ukraine under Western imperialist domination.

As we made clear in our last article on Ukraine, the revival of capitalist relations in Ukraine and Russia since 1991 has virtually collapsed the Ukrainian economy.



Currently the country is on the verge of declaring bankruptcy and failing to pay its debts, and its population has declined by 6 million, mostly migrant workers who went to Europe or Russia.

Citing instability in Kiev, the Russian government has withdrawn its offer of \$15 billion to help Ukraine pay its debts. Meanwhile the EU is offering nothing substantial but demands that Ukraine open its markets to EU goods, impose austerity and borrow more money.

Fascist anti-Russian groups have been more and more active in the streets, battling the government's police.



Leftists demonstrate at U.S. Embassy in Kiev, resist imperialist attempt to colonize Ukraine.

### **Left group demonstrates against imperialism**

Some Ukrainians are beginning to fight back. One group, Borotba (Struggle), describes itself as representing four or five anti-capitalist and anti-racist groups, including former members of the youth organization of the Communist Party of Ukraine. They organized demonstrations at both the U.S and British embassies in Kiev on Feb. 5 and 6, respectively. The main slogans were “Ukraine is no colony,” “Against the oligarchs and fascists” and “No civil war in Ukraine.”

In a statement at the U.S. Embassy protest, Borotba said of Western politicians:

“At present they brutally interfere in Ukrainian domestic affairs, pushing us into the abyss of civil war. Some Western politicians—baroness Catherine Ashton, Czech ‘euro-commissioner’ Stefan Fule, ex-president of Poland Alexander Kwasniewski, U.S. right-wing senator John McCain, Irish neoliberal Patrick Cox and a number of other high-ranking officials—visit Ukraine nearly every week to intimidate corrupted officials in the Yanukovich government and to lend full support to the right-wing opposition.

“The ambassadors of the leading EU countries and the U.S. don’t feel embarrassed to visit personally the bases of the ‘Right Sector’ to express their favor to these Nazi militants—those who unleash street violence and torture innocent people in Ukraine. There is no doubt that they give not only full moral support (thus legitimizing Nazism) but actually finance civil war in Ukraine.” ([borotba.org](http://borotba.org)). □

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