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An Interview with "The Saker"

The Ukraine, As We Know It, Is Gone Forever

by MIKE WHITNEY

The Saker is an ex-military analyst who was born in Europe to a family of Russian refugees. He now lives in Florida where he writes the [Vineyard of the Saker blog](#) and is a regular contributor to Russia Insider. The international community of Saker Blogs includes, besides the original Saker blog, French, German, Russian, Oceania and Serbian members and will soon include a Latin American member. – Mike Whitney

Mike Whitney: *Is the United States responsible for the troubles in Ukraine?*

The SAKER: Yes, absolutely, there's no doubt about it. While it's true that the Ukrainian people were unhappy with the corrupt Yanukovich regime, the coup itself was definitely CIA orchestrated. The EU was also involved, especially Germany, but they didn't play nearly as big a role as the U.S. The taped phone messages of (US Undersecretary of State) Victoria Nuland show who was really calling the shots behind the scenes.

Mike Whitney: *What role did the Obama administration play in Kiev's decision to launch a war on its own people in the east of Ukraine?*

The Saker: A central role. You have to understand that there is no "Ukrainian" power in Kiev. Poroshenko is 100% US-run as are the people around him. The head of the notorious Ukrainian secret police (the SBU), Valentin Nalivaichenko, is a known CIA agent. It's also true that the US refers to Poroshenko "our Ukraine insider". All of his so called "decisions" are actually made by U.S. officials in Kiev. As for Poroshenko's speech to Congress a few weeks ago, that was obviously written by an American.

Mike Whitney: *The separatists in the East have been very successful in repelling the Ukrainian army and their Neo Nazi counterparts in the security services. What role has Russia played in assisting the Novorussia militias?*

The Saker: Russia's role was critical. While Russian troops were not deployed across the border, Moscow did allow volunteers and weapons to flow in. And while the assistance was not provided directly by the FSB (Russia's Federal Security Service) or the military, it was provided by various private groups. Clearly, the Kremlin has the power to help-out when it chooses to do so. In one instance, there appears to have been direct artillery support from across the Russian border (in the so-called "southern cauldron"), but most of the aid has been covert. Besides the covert assistance, Russia has also provided intelligence, logistical and political support for the Novorussians. Without Russia's support, the Novorussians never would have been able to turn the tide in the war.

Mike Whitney: *Did Putin send Russian troops to Crimea and illegally seize the area or is that a fiction that's been propagated in the western media?*

The Saker: It's actually a technicality. Yes, Putin did send Russian troops to Crimea, but no, they never exceeded the limits allowed under current agreements between

Russia and the Ukraine. Remember that the Black Sea Fleet was already headquartered in Sevastopol, so there were plenty of troops available locally. Also, there was a large group of local volunteers who perform essential operations. Some of these volunteers were so convincing that they were mistaken for Russian Special Forces. But, yes, at the critical moment, Putin did send additional special forces to Crimea.

Was the operation legal? Well, technically it didn't violate treaty agreements in terms of numbers, but did it violate Ukraine's sovereignty. The reason Moscow did this was because there was solid evidence that Kiev was planning to move against Crimea. (possibly involving Turkey and Crimean Tatars) If Putin had not taken the initiative, the bloodbath in Crimea could have been worse than it's been in Novorussia. Also, by the time Putin made the decision to protect Crimea, the democratically-elected President (Yanukovich) had already been removed from office, which created a legal vacuum in Kiev. So the question is: Should Putin have abided by the laws of a country that had been taken over by a gang of armed thugs or should he have tried to keep the peace by doing what he did?

What Putin chose to do was allow the people of Crimea to decide their own future by voting freely in a referendum. Yes, the AngloZionist propaganda says that they were forced to "vote at the barrel of a gun", but that's nonsense. Nobody disputes the fact that an overwhelming majority of Crimeans (95%) wanted to leave Ukraine and join Russia. All the "polite armed men in green" did was make it possible for the people to exercise their right of self-determination, something that the junta in Kiev never would have permitted.

Mike Whitney: *What influence does Obama have on Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's decision-making? Is Washington actually running the show?*

The Saker: Yes, totally. Obama gives the orders and Poroshenko obeys.

Just as they do everywhere, the US uses local oligarchs to colonize a country. Take for example Russia between 1991 and 1999. It was run by oligarchs behind a drunken figurehead. (Boris Yeltsin) Everyone knew that Russia had become a American colony and that the US could do whatever it wanted. It's the same today.

Yanukovich was no more pro-Russian than any other Ukrainian President. He's just an oligarch who's been replaced by another oligarch, Poroshenko. The latter is a very intelligent man who knows that his survival depends on his complete obedience to Uncle Sam.

I wouldn't put it past the US to dump Poroshenko and install someone else if it suits their purposes. (Especially if the Right Sector takes power in Kiev.) For now, Poroshenko is Washington's man, but that could change in the blink of an eye.

Mike Whitney: *How close is the Obama administration to achieving its goal of establishing NATO bases (and, perhaps, missile sites) in Ukraine? What danger does this pose for Moscow?*

The Saker: The only place where NATO bases really make sense is in Crimea, and that option is no longer available. But there's more to this issue than meets the eye, that is, if the US continues to pursue this provocative policy of establishing NATO

bases on the Russian border, then Russia will withdraw from the INF Treaty (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) and deploy advanced versions of the SS-20 (Soviet Nuclear Ballistic Missile) closer to Europe. The point is, US meddling could lead to a confrontation between nuclear-armed adversaries.

Mike Whitney: *The European Commission has created a number of obstacles to prevent Russia from building the Southstream pipeline which will diversify export routes for natural gas from Russia to central and southern Europe. Critics have said that the Obama administration is behind the move, and that powerful US energy giants want to either block or control the flow of energy from Russia to Europe. Is this the broader context of the troubles in Ukraine, that is, are we really seeing an energy war unfold in real time?*

The Saker: This is an important part of the equation, but not the central one. The central one is the mistaken belief (put forward by Zbigniew Brzezinski) that without the Ukraine Russia cannot be a superpower, and the equally mistaken belief (put forward by Hillary Clinton) that Putin wants to re-create the Soviet Union. For the Anglo...s, the Ukraine is a zero-sum game in which the US must either control the Ukraine or destroy it, but not allow Russia to have it. The problem with this theory is that Russia doesn't really want or need the Ukraine. What Russia wants is a stable, dependable and neutral partner with which it can do business. Even now, while the Novorussians are demanding full independence, Russia has been pushing a different plan altogether. Moscow wants a unitary Ukraine in which each region would have de-facto autonomy but still be part of the same state.

Powerbrokers in the West are so maniacally obsessed with controlling the Ukraine, they can't imagine that Russia doesn't want the same thing. But Russia doesn't want the Ukraine. It has no need for a broken, dysfunctional, failed state with massive social problems, that will require billions upon billions of dollars to rebuild.

Sure, there are cultural, historical, religious and even family ties between Russia and the Ukraine, but that does not mean they want to run the place. Russia already got what it wanted, Crimea. As for the rest, Moscow's attitude is, "You broke it, you own it."

Mike Whitney: *What's the endgame here? Will Poroshenko succeed in keeping Ukraine together and further isolate Russia from Europe or will Ukraine splinter along political lines? Or is there another scenario that you see as more likely?*

The Saker: Crimea is gone forever. So is Novorussia. But in the case of the latter, there might be a transitional phase in which Kiev retains some degree of sovereignty over areas in the east.

In the near term, there could be more fighting, but eventually there will be a deal in which Novorussia will be given something close to independence. One thing is certain, that before reaching an agreement on final status, two issues will have to be settled:

1— There must be regime change in Kiev followed by de-Nazification.

Neither Russia nor Novorussia will ever be safe as long as the Nazis are in power in Kiev. That means that these russophobic, nationalist freaks will have to be removed

before final status issues can be resolved. The Russians and the Novorussians are somewhat divided on this issue. While the Novorussians want their independence and say “To hell with the Nazis in Kiev”, the Kremlin wants regime change and sees it crucial for their national security. We’ll have to wait and see how this plays out in the future.

2– There will have to be a conference of donors.

The Ukraine is basically dead, it’s been reduced to rubble. It will take years to rebuild, and immense sums of money. The US, EU and Russia will all have to contribute. If the Anglo...s persist in their maximalist position and continue to support the Nazi junta in Kiev, the Russians will not pay a single kopeck. Russian aid will go exclusively to Novorussia.

Sooner or later the US and EU will realize that they need Russia’s help. And when they finally figure that out, they’ll work together to reach a comprehensive political agreement. Right now, they’re more preoccupied with punishing Putin (through economic sanctions and political isolation) to prove that no one can defy the Empire. But that kind of bullying behavior won’t change the reality on the ground. The West needs Russia’s cooperation, but Russia isn’t going to cooperate without strings attached. The US will have to meet certain conditions before Moscow agrees to a deal.

UKRAINE: “Gone forever”

Though it’s too early to tell, I think the Ukraine as we know it, is gone forever. Crimea will remain part of Russia, while Novorussia will become independent and probably end up in some kind of association status with Russia. As for the rest of the Ukraine, there’s bound to be a confrontation between the various oligarchs and Nazis, after which the pragmatists will appear and lead the way to a settlement. Eventually, there will be some kind of accommodation and a new state will emerge, but I can’t imagine how long it will take for that to happen.

If you want a more systematic analysis of the points above, please see my analysis (here: <http://vineyardsaker.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-russian-response-to-double.html>)

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