

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نياشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/columns/2014/03/03/cold-war-over-russia-isn-zero-sum/Df9VSHeJFpKUz3tRKDjUXJ/story.html>

US a full partner in Ukraine debacle

By Stephen Kinzer

MARCH 03, 2014



Armed servicemen stood near their armored personnel carrier in the Crimean city of Feodosiya on Sunday.

FROM THE moment the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the United States has relentlessly pursued a strategy of encircling Russia, just as it has with other perceived enemies like China and Iran. It has brought 12 countries in central Europe, all of them formerly allied with Moscow, into the NATO alliance. US military power is now directly on Russia's borders.

“I think it is the beginning of a new cold war,” warned George Kennan, the renowned diplomat and Russia-watcher, as NATO began expanding eastward. “I think the Russians will gradually react quite adversely, and it will affect their policies.”

Russia’s dispatch of troops in recent days to Crimea — a verdant peninsula on the Black Sea that is part of Ukraine but, partly as a result of Stalin-era ethnic cleansing, has a mainly Russian population — was the latest fulfillment of Kennan’s prediction.

Some policy makers in Washington have been congratulating each other for a successful American-aided regime change operation in Ukraine. Three factors converged to produce the overthrow of President Viktor Yanukovich. First was his own autocratic instinct and utter lack of political skill, which led him to think he could ignore protesters. Second was the brave determination of the protesters themselves. Third was intervention by the United States and other Western countries — often spearheaded by diplomats and quasi-covert operatives who have been working for years on “democracy promotion” projects in Ukraine.

As protests mounted in Kiev last month, many in Washington found it difficult to break the old habit of shaping US policy to punish Russia. Several European leaders suggested resolving the Ukraine crisis through negotiation with Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin. This enraged the United States, which wants to isolate Putin, not accommodate him.

Eventually, Yanukovich fled Kiev, which is in the portion of Ukraine traditionally tied to Western Europe, and went to to Crimea. Now Putin has sent Russian forces to guard him. This has set off a new crisis, including stern warnings from President Obama.

Putin’s decision to deploy troops reflects his loss of control over Ukrainian politics. US officials recognize this, and are pressing their anti-Russia campaign. Last week President Obama received the prime minister of Georgia. The prime minister of Moldova is due this week. These meetings are aimed at honing a strategy for further isolating Russia; it is called “Western integration.”

Much has been made of the fact that Ukraine is deeply divided between its pro-Europe western provinces and the pro-Russian east, of which Crimea is a part. A “velvet divorce” dividing Ukraine into two countries might be the best solution, but border changes, even when they seem sensible from far away, are always difficult to engineer.

If Ukrainians cannot agree to divide their country, Russia may do it for them. It already occupies part of Moldova and part of Georgia. For it to keep an army in Ukraine would anger the United States — and many Ukrainians — but it would be nothing new. Military occupation is, in fact, one of the few weapons Russia has to oppose the “Western integration” of neighboring countries.

Although Russia is not powerful enough to emerge from the Ukraine/Crimea crisis with a full victory, neither is the United States. Diplomatic pressure and covert action supporting pro-Western factions in Ukraine will continue, but President Obama will not risk military confrontation with Russia. This crisis will not produce the grand westward realignment of which many in Washington dream.

Any solution short of partition will have to take Russia's interests into account. Thus far the United States has shown no interest in doing that. The likely geopolitical outcome, therefore, is a stalemate.

Inside Ukraine, the story is different. Protesters there, encouraged by the United States, have used the power of the street to depose a deeply corrupt — though legally elected — president. But soon they may find they have little to celebrate.

Egyptians, Libyans, Syrians and others have learned to their immense pain that upheavals like these rarely end well. Ukraine is not only deeply divided geographically and politically. It is dominated by a clutch of gangster “oligarchs” powerfully motivated to prevent the emergence of a pro-Western regime. Splits within the opposition are deep. The possibility that a stable Ukraine will emerge anytime soon are dim.

This crisis is in part the result of a zero-sum calculation that has shaped US policy toward Moscow since the Cold War: Any loss for Russia is an American victory, and anything positive that happens to, for, or in Russia is bad for the United States. This is an approach that intensifies confrontation, rather than soothing it.