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The Ukrainian Pendulum. Two Invasions and a Putsch. American Special Forces in Ukraine under Cover

By Israel Shamir

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1. Two Invasions

The stakes are high in the Ukraine: after the coup, as Crimea and Donbas asserted their right to self determination, American and Russian troops entered Ukrainian territory, both under cover.

The American soldiers are “military advisors”, ostensibly members of Blackwater private army (renamed Academi); a few hundred of them patrol Kiev while others try to suppress the revolt in Donetsk. Officially, they were invited by the new West-installed regime. They are the spearhead of the US invasion attempting to prop up the regime and break down all resistance. They have already bloodied their hands in Donetsk.

Besides, the Pentagon has doubled the number of US fighter jets on a NATO air patrol mission in the Baltics; the US air carrier entered the Black Sea, some US Marines reportedly landed in Lvov “as a part of pre-planned manoeuvres”.

The Russian soldiers ostensibly belong to the Russian Fleet, legally stationed in Crimea. They were in Crimea before the coup, in accordance with the Russian-Ukrainian treaty (like the US 5th

fleet in Kuwait), but their presence was probably beefed up. Additional Russian troops were invited in by deposed but legitimately elected President Yanukovych (compare this with the US landing on Haiti in support of the deposed President Aristide). They help the local pro-Russian militia maintain order, and no one gets killed in the process. In addition, Russia brought its troops on alert and returned a few warships to the Black Sea.

It is only the Russian presence which is described as an “invasion” by the Western media, while the American one is hardly mentioned. ”We have a moral duty to stick our nose in your business in your backyard a world away from our homeland. It’s for your own good”, wrote an ironic American blogger.

Moscow woke up to trouble in Ukraine after its preoccupation, nay obsession, with the Winter Olympic games had somewhat abated, — when people began to say that “Putin won the games and lost the Ukraine”. Indeed, while Putin watched sports in Sochi, the Brown Revolution succeeded in Ukraine. A great European country the size of France, the biggest republic of the former USSR (save Russia), was taken over by a coalition of Ukrainian ultra-nationalists and (mainly Jewish) oligarchs. The legitimate president was forced to flee for his very life. Members of Parliament were manhandled, and in some cases their children were taken hostage to ensure their vote, as their houses were visited by gunmen. The putsch was completed. The West recognised the new government; Russia refused to recognise it, but continued to deal with it on a day -to-day basis. However the real story is now developing in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, a story of resistance to the pro-Western takeover.

2. The Putsch

The economic situation of Ukraine is dreadful. They are where Russia was in the 1990s, before Putin – in Ukraine the Nineties never ended. For years the country was ripped off by the oligarchs who siphoned off profits to Western banks, bringing it to the very edge of the abyss. To avoid default and collapse, the Ukraine was to receive a Russian loan of 15 billion euros without preconditions, but then came the coup. Now the junta’s prime minister will be happy to receive a mere one billion dollars from the US via IMF. (Europeans have promised more, but in a few years’ time...) He already accepted the conditions of the IMF, which will mean austerity, unemployment and debt bondage. Probably this was the *raison d’être* for the coup. IMF and US loans are a major source of profit for the financial community, and they are used to enslave debtor countries, as Perkins explained at length.

The oligarchs who financed the Maidan operation divided the spoils: the most generous supporter, multi-billionaire Igor “Benya” Kolomoysky, received the great Russian-speaking city of Dnepropetrovsk in fief. He was not required to give up his Israeli passport. His brethren oligarchs took other Russian-speaking industrial cities, including Kharkov and Donetsk, the Ukrainian Chicago or Liverpool. Kolomoysky is not just an ‘oligarch of Jewish origin’: he is an active member of the Jewish community, a supporter of Israel and a donor of many synagogues, one of them the biggest in Europe. He had no problem supporting the neo-Nazis, even those whose entry to the US had been banned because of their declared antisemitism. That is why the appeals to Jewish consciousness against the Brown putsch demonstrably failed.

Now came the nationalists' crusade against Russian-speakers (ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians – the distinction is moot), chiefly industrial workers of East and South of the country. The Kiev regime banned the Communist Party and the Regions' Party (the biggest party of the country, mainly supported by the Russian-speaking workers). The regime's first decree banned the Russian language from schools, radio and TV, and forbade all official use of Russian. The Minister of Culture called Russian-speakers "imbeciles" and proposed to jail them for using the banned tongue in public places. Another decree threatened every holder of dual Russian/Ukrainian nationality with a ten-years jail sentence, unless he gives up the Russian one right away.

Not empty words, these threats: The storm-troopers of the Right Sector, the leading fighting force of the New Order, went around the country terrorising officials, taking over government buildings, beating up citizens, destroying Lenin's statues, smashing memorials of the Second World War and otherwise enforcing their rule. A video showed a Right Sector fighter mistreating the city attorney while police looked other way. They began to hunt down riot policemen who supported the ex-president, and they burned down a synagogue or two. They tortured a governor, and lynched some technicians they found in the former ruling party's headquarters. They started to take over the Orthodox churches of the Russian rite, intending to transfer them to their own Greek-Catholic Church.

The instructions of US State Dept.'s Victoria Nuland were followed through: the Ukraine had had the government she prescribed in the famous telephone conversation with the US Ambassador. Amazingly, while she notoriously gave "fuck" to the EU, she did not give a fuck about the Russian view of Ukraine's immediate future.

Russia was not involved in Ukrainian developments: Putin did not want to be accused of meddling in Ukrainian internal affairs, even when the US and EU envoys assisted and directed the rebels. The people of Russia would applaud him if he were to send his tanks to Kiev to regain the whole of Ukraine, as they consider it an integral part of Russia. But Putin is not a Russian nationalist, not a man of Imperial designs. Though he would like the Ukraine to be friendly to Russia, annexing it, in whole or in part, has never been his ambition. It would be too expensive even for wealthy Russia: the average income in the Ukraine is just half of the Russian one, and tits infrastructure is in a shambles. (Compare to the very costly West German takeover of the GDR.) It would not be easy, either, for every Ukrainian government in the past twenty years has drenched the people with anti-Russian sentiment. But involvement was forced upon Putin:

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians voted with their feet and fled to Russia, asking for asylum. Two hundred thousand refugees checked in during the weekend. The only free piece of land in the whole republic was the city of Sevastopol, the object of a French and British siege in 1852 and of a German siege in 1941, and the home base of the Russian Black Sea fleet. This heroic city did not surrender to the Kiev emissaries, though even here some local deputies were ready to submit. And at that last moment, the people began their resistance. The awful success of the putsch was the beginning of its undoing. The pendulum of Ukraine, forever swinging between East and West, began its return movement.

3. The Rising

The people of Crimea rose, dismissed their compromise-seeking officials and elected a new leader, Mr Sergey Aksyonov. The new leadership assumed power, took over Crimea and asked for Russian troops to save them from the impending attack by the Kiev storm troopers. It does not seem to have been necessary at this stage: there were plenty of Crimeans ready to defend their land from the Brown invaders, there were Cossack volunteers and there is the Russian Navy stationed in Crimea by treaty. Its Marines would probably be able to help the Crimeans in case of trouble. The Crimeans, with some Russian help, manned the road blocks on the narrow isthmus that connects Crimea to the mainland.

The parliament of Crimea voted to join Russia, but this vote should be confirmed by a poll on March 16 to determine Crimea's future — whether it will revert to Russia or remain an autonomous republic within the Ukraine. From my conversation with locals, it seems that they would prefer to join the Russian Federation they left on Khrushchev's orders only a half century ago. Given the Russian-language issue and the consanguinity, this makes sense: Ukraine is broke, Russia is solvent and ready to assume its protection. Ukraine can't pay salaries and pensions, Russia had promised to do so. Kiev was taking away the lion's share of income generated in Crimea by Russian tourists; now the profits will remain in the peninsula and presumably help repair the rundown infrastructure. Real estate would likely rise drastically in price, optimistic natives surmise, and this view is shared by Russian businessmen. They already say that Crimea will beat out Sochi in a few years' time, as drab old stuff will be replaced by Russian Imperial chic.

Perhaps Putin would prefer the Crimea gain independence, like Kosovo, or even remain under a token Ukrainian sovereignty, as Taiwan is still nominally part of China. It could become a showcase pro-Russian Ukraine to allow other Ukrainians to see what they're missing, as West Berlin was for the East Germans during the Cold War. Regaining Crimea would be nice, but not at the price of having a consolidated and hostile Ukraine for a neighbour. Still Putin will probably have no choice but to accept the people's decision.

There was an attempt to play the Crimean Tatars against the Russians; apparently it failed. Though the majlis, their self-appointed organisation, supports Kiev, the elders spoke up for neutrality. There are persistent rumours that the colourful Chechen leader Mr Kadyrov, a staunch supporter of Mr Putin, had sent his squads to the Tatars to strong-arm them into dropping their objections to Crimea's switch to Russia. At the beginning, the Tatars supported Kiev, and even tried to prevent the pro-Russian takeover. But these wise people are born survivors, they know when to adjust their attitudes, and there is no doubt they will manage just fine.

Russian Nazis, as anti-Putin as Ukrainian Nazis, are divided: some support a "Russian Crimea" whilst others prefer pro-European Kiev. They are bad as enemies, but even worse as friends: the supportive Nazis try to wedge between Russians and Ukrainians and Tatars, and they hate to see that Kadyrov's Chechnya actually helps Russian plans, for they are anti-Chechen and try to convince people that Russia is better off without Chechens, a warlike Muslim tribe.

As Crimea defied orders from Kiev, it became a beacon for other regions of the Ukraine. Donbas, the coal and steel region, raised Russian banners and declared its desire for self-determination, "like Crimea". They do want to join a Russian-led Customs Union; it is not clear

whether they would prefer independence, autonomy or something else, but they, too, scheduled a poll – for March 30. There were big demonstrations against the Kiev regime in Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov and other Russian-speaking cities. Practically everywhere, the deputies seek accommodation with Kiev and look for a way to make some profit, but the people do not agree. They are furious and do not accept the junta.

The Kiev regime does not accept their quest for freedom. A popularly-elected Mayor of Donetsk was kidnapped by the Ukrainian security forces and taken to Kiev. There are now violent demonstrations in the city.

The Ukrainian navy in the Black Sea switched its allegiance from Kiev to Crimea, and they were followed by some units of the air force with dozens of fighter jets and ground troops. Troops loyal to Kiev were blocked off by the Crimeans, but there was no violence in this peaceful transfer of power.

The junta appointed an oligarch to rule Donbas, Mr Sergey Taruta, but he had difficulty assuming power as the local people did not want him, and with good reason: Taruta had bought the major Polish port of Gdansk and brought it to bankruptcy. It seems he is better at siphoning capital away than in running serious business. Ominously, Mr Taruta brought with him some unidentified, heavily armed security personnel, reportedly guns-for-hire from Blackwater (a.k.a. Academi) fresh from Iraq and Afghanistan. He will need a lot more of them if he wants to take Donbas by force.

In Kharkov, the biggest Eastern city, erstwhile capital of Soviet Ukraine, local people ejected the raiding force of the Right Sector from government offices, but police joined with the oligarchs. While the fake revolution took place in Kiev under the tutelage of US and EC envoys, the real revolution is taking place now, and its future is far from certain.

The Ukraine hasn't got much of an army, as the oligarchs stole everything ever assigned to the military. The Kiev regime does not rely on its army anyway. Their attempt to draft able-bodied men failed immediately as hardly anybody answered the call. They still intend to squash the revolution. Another three hundred Blackwater mercenaries landed Wednesday in Kiev airport. The Kiev regime applied for NATO help and expressed its readiness to allow US missiles to be stationed in the Ukraine. Missiles in the Ukraine (as now stationed in Poland, also too close for Russian comfort) would probably cross Russia's red line, just as Russian missiles in Cuba crossed America's red line in 1962. Retired Israeli intelligence chief Yaakov Kedmi, an expert on Russia, said that in his view the Russians just can't allow that, at any price, even if this means all-out war.

Putin asked the upper house of the Russian parliament for permission to deploy Russian troops if needed, and the parliament unanimously approved his request. They will probably be deployed in order to defend the workers in case of attack by a Right Sector beefed up by Blackwater mercenaries. Humanitarian catastrophe, large-scale disturbances, the flow of refugees or the arrival of NATO troops could also force Putin's hand, even against his will.

4. The President in exile

President Yanukovich will be historically viewed as a weak, tragic figure, and he deserves a better pen with a more leisured pace than mine. He tried his best to avoid casualties, though he faced a full-scale revolt led by very violent Brown storm-troopers. And still he was blamed for killing some eighty people, protesters and policemen.

Some of the victims were killed by the Right Sector as they stormed the ruling party offices. The politicians left the building well in advance, but the secretarial staff remained behind — many women, janitors and suchlike. An engineer named Vladimir Zakharov went to the besieging rebels and asked them to let the women out. They killed him on the spot with their bats. Another man was burned alive.

But the majority of casualties were victims of sniper fire, also blamed on Yanukovich. The Kiev regime even asked the Hague tribunal to indict the President as they had President Milosevic. But now, a telephone conversation between EC representative Catherine Ashton and Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet reveals that the EC emissaries were aware that dozens of victims of sniper fire at the Maidan were killed by Maidan rebel supporters, and not by police or by President Yanukovich, as they claimed. Urmas Paet acknowledged the veracity of this conversation at a press conference, and called for an independent enquiry. It turned out that the rebel snipers shot and killed policemen and Maidan protesters alike, in order to shed blood and blame it on the President.

This appears to be a staple feature of the US-arranged revolutions. Snipers killing both protesters and police were reported in Moscow's 1991 and 1993 revolutions, as well as in many other cases. Some sources claim that famed Israeli snipers were employed on such occasions, which is plausible in view of Mr Kolomoysky's Israeli connection. A personal friend of Mr Kolomoysky, prominent member of the then-opposition, Parliamentarian and present head of administration Sergey Pashinsky was stopped by police as he removed a sniper's rifle with a silencer from the scene of murder. This discovery was briefly reported in the *New York Times*, but later removed. This revelation eliminates (or at least seriously undermines) the case against the President. Probably it will be disappear down the memory hole and be totally forgotten, as were the Seymour Hersh revelations about Syria's sarin attack.

Another revelation was made by President Putin at his press-conference of March 4, 2014. He said that he convinced (read: forced) President Yanukovich to sign his agreement of February 21, 2014 with the opposition, as Western ministers had demanded. By this agreement, or actually capitulation act, the Ukrainian President agreed to all the demands of the Brown rebels, including speedy elections for the Parliament and President. However, the agreement did not help: the rebels tried to kill Yanukovich that same night as he travelled to Kharkov.

Putin expressed amazement that they were not satisfied with the agreement and proceeded with the coup anyway. The reason was provided by Right Sector goons: they said that their gunmen will be stationed by every election booth and that they would count the vote. Naturally, the agreement did not allow for that, and the junta had every reason to doubt their ability to win honest elections.

It appears Yanukovich hoped to establish a new power base in Kharkov, where a large assembly of deputies from East and South of Ukraine was called in advance. The assembly, says Mr Kolomoysky, was asked to assume powers and support the President, but the deputies refused. That is why President Yanukovich, with great difficulty, escaped to Russia. His landing in Rostov made quite an impression on people as his plane was accompanied by fighter jets.

Yanukovich tried to contact President Putin, but the Russian president did not want to leave the impression that he wants to force Yanukovich on the people of Ukraine, and refused to meet or to speak with him directly. Perhaps Putin had no time to waste on such a weak figure, but he publicly recognised him anyway as the legitimate President of the Ukraine. This made sense, as President Yanukovich requested Russian troops to bring peace to his country. He still may make a comeback – as the president of a Free Ukraine, if such should ever be formed in some part of the country, – or as the protagonist of an opera.