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## Obama Backs Down on Crimea *Chicken Kiev*

by MIKE WHITNEY

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“I never thought I’d live to see the day when the US State Department whitewashed the neo-Nazi views and heritage of a gang of thugs who had seized power in a violent coup d’état. In Iraq, Libya, and Syria, US policymakers empowered radical Islamists of one sort or another. That was bad enough. Today, however, in Ukraine they are empowering the heirs of Adolf Hitler. How is this not a scandal?” Justin Raimondo, From Iraq to Ukraine: A Pattern of Disaster

The Obama administration suffered its worst foreign policy defeat in 5 years on Sunday when the people of Crimea voted overwhelmingly to reject Washington’s Nazi-backed junta government in Kiev and join the Russian Federation. The balloting, in which more than 93 percent of voters “approved splitting off and joining Russia” reflects the strong ethnic, cultural and historic ties its people share with Moscow as well as the understandable fear that being “liberated” by the US could lead to grinding third world poverty and widespread mayhem the likes of which are manifest in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.

The Obama administration rejected the nearly-unanimous referendum opining that they would not accept the results and would push for economic sanctions on Russia as early as Monday. In response, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that the referendum “complied with international law” and that he would honor the will of the people. Putin, who was attending the

Paralympic games in Sochi, has wisely stayed above the fray throughout the crisis brushing off the hysterical accusations and threats issued almost daily by President Obama or his vaudevillian sidekick John Kerry, the most incompetent buffoon to ever serve as US Secretary of State. Between Obama, Kerry and the irascible John McCain, who traipses from one media venue to the next spouting his cold war fulminations like an old man shooing kids off the front lawn, the US has made a spectacular hash of things leaving US foreign policy in a shambles. The Crimea fiasco shows that while Team Obama may be chock-full of fantasists, spin-doctors and crystal-gazing globalists it is sadly lacking in geopolitical pragmatists with a solid grasp of the way the world works. Obama has been no match for Putin who has tromped him at every turn. Here's a clip from an article by the Associated Press:

“Moscow... called on Ukraine to become a federal state as a way of resolving the polarization between Ukraine's western regions — which favor closer ties with the 28-nation EU — and its eastern areas, which have long ties to Russia.

In a statement Monday, Russia's Foreign Ministry urged Ukraine's parliament to call a constitutional assembly that could draft a new constitution to make the country federal, handing more power to its regions. It also said country should adopt a “neutral political and military status,” a demand reflecting Moscow's concern about the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO.” (Crimea declares independence, seizes property, AP)

So, this is how Putin intends to play the game, eh; by using basic democratic institutions to block Washington from implementing its plan to deploy NATO and US missile bases in Ukraine? It sounds like a smart move to me.

Once again, Putin has made every effort to downplay his role in deciding policy so as not to embarrass the bungling Obama clique who seem determined to make themselves look foolish and impotent at every opportunity. Here's how analyst Michael Scheuer summed up Putin's behavior in an article at the Ron Paul website:

“The difference in the Ukraine intervention from others the West has conducted is that the terminally adolescent political leaders who run the West have run smack dab into a decisive, realistic, and nationalistic adult, in the person of Vladimir Putin, and they do not know what to do. They are learning that the Ukraine is not Libya or Egypt in that Putin will not to let the West make of Ukraine — or at least of Crimea — the same unholy mess its earlier unwarranted interventions made of Egypt and Libya. Putin has a very clear view of Russia's genuine national interests, and reliable access to the Crimean base of the Black Sea fleet is one of them, it has been for centuries, and it will remain so in the future...

U.S. and Western leaders should be lining up to thank Vladimir Putin for a painful but thorough lesson in how the adult leader of a nation protects his country's genuine national interests.” (Russia Annexing Crimea is the Cost of US/EU intervention in Ukraine, Michael Scheuer, Ron Paul Institute)

Putin realizes that derailing Washington's strategy to control the Crimea will have serious consequences. He must now prepare for the typical litany of asymmetrical attacks including

covert operations, special ops, arming Tatar jihadis to incite violence in Crimea, US-backed NGOs fomenting unrest in Moscow, etc etc, as well as stepped up US military and logistical support for Kiev's thriving fascist element which has already morphed into the imposter-government's security apparatus, a scary remake of Hitler's Gestapo. Here's the rundown from the World Socialist Web Site:

“On Thursday, the Ukrainian parliament voted to establish a 60,000-strong National Guard recruited from “activists” in the anti-Russian protests and from military academies. The force will be overseen by the new security chief, Andriy Parubiy, a founder in the early 1990s of the neo-Nazi Social-National Party of Ukraine. His deputy, Dmytro Yarosh, is the leader of the paramilitary Right Sector. It is the Ukrainian equivalent of Hitler's storm troopers.

In addition to aiding the West in its provocations against Moscow, the main responsibility of these elements will be to carry through a social onslaught against the Ukrainian working class at the behest of international capital...” (What the Western-backed regime is planning for Ukrainian workers, World Socialist Web Site)

And here's a bit more from the same article on the radical austerity program the IMF is planning to impose on Ukraine in order to shrink the government, reduce pensions, cut social services, and leave the country in a permanent state of Depression:

“Behind incessant rhetorical invocations of a “democratic revolution,” Ukraine's newly-installed government of former bankers, fascists and oligarchs is preparing draconian austerity measures.

The plans being drawn up are openly described as the “Greek model,” i.e., the programme of savage cuts imposed on Greece by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Union (EU) that has caused Greece's economy to collapse by nearly 25 percent in five years and produced a massive growth in unemployment and poverty...” (“What the Western-backed regime is planning for Ukrainian workers, World Socialist Web Site)

So, Putin definitely has his work cut out for himself. Fortunately, he appears to be getting sound advice from his political and military advisors who have avoided pointless grandstanding, gamesmanship or incendiary rhetoric the likes of which erupt from the White House and State Department on a daily basis.

Despite the fact that the Kremlin does not want to see Washington “lose face”, sometimes events make that impossible, as the astute political analysts at Moon of Alabama pointed out on Sunday. Here's a blurb from a post at MoA that shows how Washington has essentially capitulated to Moscow and accepted its basic framework for resolving the crisis while trying to dupe the public into thinking the policy was their idea. Here's the excerpt:

“There was another phone call today between Secretary of State Kerry and the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. The call came after a strategy meeting on Ukraine in the White House. During the call Kerry agreed to Russian demands for a federalization of the Ukraine in which the federal states will have a strong autonomy against a central government in a Finlandized Ukraine. Putin

had offered this “off-ramp” from the escalation and Obama has taken it. The Russian announcement:

(Reuters) – “Lavrov, Kerry agree to work on constitutional reform in Ukraine: Russian ministry...

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry agreed on Sunday to seek a solution to crisis in Ukraine by pushing for constitutional reforms there, the Russian foreign ministry said.

It did not go into details on the kind of reforms needed except to say they should come “in a generally acceptable form and while taking into the account the interests of all regions of Ukraine”.

“Sergei Viktorovich Lavrov and John Kerry agreed to continue work to find a resolution on Ukraine through a speedy launch of constitutional reform with the support of international community,” the ministry said in a statement.” (Ukraine: U.S. Takes Off-Ramp, Agrees To Russian Demands, Moon of Alabama)

Can you believe it? The goofy Obama team wants the public to believe that the whole “constitutional reform”-thing was their idea so people don’t notice that the clunker administration and President Featherweight have run up the white flag and headed for the hills. This is classic Barack “lead from behind” Obama trying to make a full-blown retreat look like a victory.

It’s pathetic!