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## ISIL is Using Ukraine as a Forward Base into Caucasia and as for Entry into Europe

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In the West, most look at the war in Ukraine as simply a battle between Russian-backed separatists and the Ukrainian government. But the truth on the ground is now far more complex, particularly when it comes to the volunteer battalions fighting on the side of Ukraine,” according to Marcin Mamon. [1] What the Polish filmmaker is talking about is the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) / Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Islamic State (IS)/ Al-Dawlah Al-Islamiyah fe Al-Iraq wa Al-Sham (DAISH/DAESH) fighters, which include Chechen

separatists, that have gone to fight in Ukraine.

It is no coincidence that one of the bases of the alliance between China, Russia, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is to fight what they call the “three evil forces” of “terrorism, extremism and separatism.” The intersectionality of these forces is clear through the deployment to Ukraine of the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH to fight as comrades alongside racists ultra-nationalists, and as allies of the US government.

### **Business and Conquest: Kolomoisky and the Jihadis-For-Hire**

“Ostensibly state-sanctioned, but not necessarily state-controlled, some have been supported by Ukrainian oligarchs, and others by private citizens,” Mamon notes about these foreign fighters. [2] Say what they may, the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH fighters, which include Chechen separatists, have not gone to Ukraine to help the Ukrainian people or to help any Ukrainian Muslims. Instead they have gone to Ukraine to be the foot soldiers of a band of corrupt Ukrainian oligarchs and a proxy government in Kiev that is a client of the United States and an agent for the neoliberal economic plundering and rape of Ukraine. These foreign fighters or, as they call themselves, “brothers” have even joined privately owned militias that serve the interest of oligarchs like the billionaire Ihor/Igor Kolomoisky.

Kolomoisky’s ties to ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH are also revealed by Mamon. Mamon explains that “Kolomoisky helped create the first volunteer battalions — the Dnipro and Dnipro-1 — each with about 500 people. For several months, he also financially supported several other battalions, including Azov, Aidar, Donbass, and Right Sector battalion.” [2] These were the first private armies in post-EuroMaidan Ukraine. This was only the start. Then the Ukrainian oligarch “invited the Chechens, hoping they would protect his businesses and factories, if needed.” [3]

Mamon reports that in Eastern Ukraine, flags signifying jihad can even be observed flying over the bases of some of these private battalions. [4] According to him there are three volunteer battalions with a significant number of Muslim fighters operating in Ukraine: (1) the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion which operates throughout the conflict zone in the Donbas; (2) the Sheikh Mansour battalion, which is based around Mariupol and splintered off from the Dudayev Battalion; and (3) the Crimea Battalion, which is based in Krematorsk. [5] There is also a company of Crimean Tatar fighters that operate as part of a company (sotnya/sotnia), according to Mamon. [6]

“For those looking for an easy narrative in today’s wars, whether in the Middle East or in eastern Ukraine, the Dzhokhar Dudayev battalion is not the place to find it, Mamon explains. [7] He then describes how the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion “is not strictly Muslim, though it includes a number of Muslims from former Soviet republics, including Chechens who have fought on the side of the Islamic State [IS/ISIS/ISIL/DAISH/DAESH] in Syria.” [8] Mamon recounts that out of the fighters in the Dudayev Battalion that he had observed about half were Ukrainians, mostly from the city of Cherkasy, while the rest “came from Chechnya, and the republic of Kabardino-Balkaria in the North Caucasus. There were also Crimean Tatars, Azeris and one Georgian from Batumi.” [9] They were all united to fight “against what they perceive to be a common enemy,”

he adds, meaning that they were all united in a fight against Russia. [10]

### **Ukraine is a Playground for Organized Crime for Organizing Funds for ISIL**

When the anti-Kiev forces in East Ukraine or Novorossiia stopped short of entering Kolomoisky's business base and personal fiefdom in Dnipropetrovsk, the Ukrainian oligarch "suddenly lost interest and stopped paying the volunteer battalions. The Right Sector battalion responded by seizing his property, but Munayev couldn't do that. He was a foreigner, and feared the Ukrainian authorities would regard his battalion as an illegal armed group, then disband it. Munayev was bitter, but would not openly speak ill of the authorities in Kiev." [11]

It is at this point that the links between these "agents of chaos" and organized crime become apparent. While they loot homes and sell sex slaves in Iraq and Syria or Libya, in Ukraine they are also extorting money and getting involved with local criminals.

Like Syria or Kosovo, Ukraine is a playground for these agents of chaos. "You can also do business in Ukraine that's not quite legal. You can earn easy money for the brothers fighting in the Caucasus, Syria and Afghanistan. You can 'legally' acquire unregistered weapons to fight the Russian-backed separatists, and then export them by bribing corrupt Ukrainian customs officers," Mamon explains. [12]

When Mamon when to meet the Chechen separatist commander Isa Munayev in 2014, he writes that Munayev was not fighting in the frontlines in Donbas. The militia leader "was busy training forces and organizing money and weapons, from Kiev." [13] Although it does not exclusively mean criminal enterprise, "organizing money" includes amoral forbidden by Islam and criminal activities.

Mamon explains that how Ruslan, one of Isa Munayev's men, had gone to Western Ukraine and disappeared for several weeks in Rivne. "When he returned, he was disappointed; he'd failed to convince the local mafia to cooperate," he explains about Ruslan's mission. [14] "But now, he has other arguments to persuade them. His men are holding up the mines, by not allowing anyone into the forest. Either the local gangsters share their profits, or no one will get paid," he adds. [15]

Moreover, Ruslan setup a "direct response group" in Kiev to "collect debts or scare off competition. There's no doubt the new branch will work behind the lines, where there isn't war, but there is money — as long as you know where to get it. If need be, the direct response group volunteers will watch over the mines in Rivne, or 'will acquire' money from illegal casinos, which operate by the hundreds in Kiev. [16]

Aside from collecting money, the "direct response group" that has Isa Munayev setup in Kiev will act as a means of retaliation against the authorities in Kiev or anyone that tried to antagonize the so-called "brothers." "The group will be a sort of rear echelon unit that take care of problems, like if someone tries to discredit the Dudayev battalion," according to Mamon. [17]

The use of Ukraine by these agents of chaos as a base of operations and for fundraising is a

threat to the security of Europe, the post-Soviet space, and the entire world. Although he does not directly say this, Marcin Mamon paints a clear picture of what is happening: “Ukraine is now becoming an important stop-off point for the brothers, like Ruslan. In Ukraine, you can buy a passport and a new identity. For \$15,000, a fighter receives a new name and a legal document attesting to Ukrainian citizenship. Ukraine doesn’t belong to the European Union, but it’s an easy pathway for immigration to the West. Ukrainians have few difficulties obtaining visas to neighboring Poland, where they can work on construction sites and in restaurants, filling the gap left by the millions of Poles who have left in search of work in the United Kingdom and Germany.” [18]

### **Using Ukraine as a Bridgehead to Reignite Fighting in the North Caucasus**

While Syria and Iraq are being used as stepping stones by the US against Iran, these two fronts are also being used as stepping stones to infiltrate the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasian Federal District in the Russian Federation too. Like Syria and Iraq, Ukraine is also being used as a stepping stone for modern conquest and to besiege Russia.

One of the goals of the foreign fighters helping the ultra-nationalists in Ukraine is to use Ukraine as a base to reignite a new front in the Caucasus. “Our goal here is to get weapons, which will be sent to the Caucasus,” Ruslan, the brother who meets me first in Kiev, admits without hesitation” to Mamon [19] Munayev also admits this to Marcin Mamon by saying that “he hoped the weapons he got in Ukraine would end up in the hands of militants in the Caucasus.” [20] “If we succeed in Ukraine, then we can succeed in Chechnya,” he tells Mamon. [21]

For the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion, the Sheikh Mansour Battalion, and the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH the “the war in Ukraine’s Donbass region is just the next stage in the fight against” the Russians. [22] It doesn’t matter to them whether their ultimate goal is a Caliphate in the Middle East, or simply to have the Caucasus free of Russian influence — the brothers are united not by nation, but by a sense of community and solidarity, Mamon explains. [23]

Russia and its allies alone will not be threatened. If the European Union thinks that it will be immune, it is wrong. Like Libya, a genie has been let out of the bottle with the spreading of weapons in Ukraine. In the long-term this will have an impact on the security of Europe and Eurasia. Just like how the weapons being poured into Libya by NATO and the weapons taken from the Libyan military depots found their way into Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, the weapons in Ukraine will find their way to other places, particularly in Europe and the post-Soviet space.

Marcin Mamon gives an account about this through a conversation he had with a commander that recently arrived from Syria. “It doesn’t matter whether the Ukrainian authorities help us or not,” a commander from the Tatar battalion told me,” Mamon recalls. [24] Now that the militias have weapons they will never give them up to the Ukrainian government the commander who arrived from Syria told Mamon while explaining that his goal was to launch an insurgency in Crimea against Russia. [25]

It should not come as a surprise that as recently as April 2015 that the Kremlin has revealed that it caught the US trying to tear Russia apart by directly supporting terrorism against Russia and the separatist insurgency in the North Caucasus. “Our security services recorded direct contact between North Caucasus fighters and representatives of US intelligence in Azerbaijan,” Russian President Vladimir Putin reveals in the documentary “Crimea: The Road to the Motherland” that was released by the Rossiya-1 channel.

Putin lets it be known that when he frankly told US President George W. Bush about the US support for the destabilization of his country that the Bush promised to halt it, but that Russia got an exceptionalist and utterly hypocritical letter from the US later that proclaimed that Washington could do as it pleases by sponsoring separatists and terrorists against Russia.

These US actions are clearly part of a pattern and a continuum. In Kosovo Washington has done the same against the Serbs. In Sistan-Baluchistan it has acted in the same way against the Iranians. In Tibet and Xinjiang it has done the same against China. Now Ukraine is added to the fold.

Through Washington’s drive to control Eurasia it has created an unholy alliance where Ukrainian ultra-nationalist like Oleksandr Muzychko are considered “brothers” by the affiliates of the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH in Ukraine and where Israel works with Jabhat Al-Nusra in against Syria. Make no mistake about it: the neo-Nazis, Washington, Wall Street, NATO, Al-Qaeda, Israel, and the Arab dictatorships, and the ISIS/ISIL/IS/DAISH/DAESH.

## NOTES

[1] Marcin Mamon, “In Midst of War, Ukraine Becomes Gateway for Jihad,” Intercept, February 26, 2015.

[2-3] Marcin Mamon, “Isa Munayev’s War: The Final Days of a Chechen Commander Fighting in Ukraine,” Intercept, February 27, 2015.

[4] Marcin Mamon, “In Midst of War,” op. cit.

[5-11] Marcin Mamon, “Isa Munayev’s War,” op. cit.

[12] Marcin Mamon, “In Midst of War,” op. cit.

[13] Marcin Mamon, “Isa Munayev’s War,” op. cit.

[14-19] Marcin Mamon, “In Midst of War,” op. cit.

[20-21] Marcin Mamon, “Isa Munayev’s War,” op. cit.

[22-23] Marcin Mamon, “In Midst of War,” op. cit.

[24-25] Marcin Mamon, “Isa Munayev’s War,” op. cit.

