

Crimeans Choose Russia

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

March 16 was historic. It was important. Crimean authorities showed how real democracy works. They shamed America's sham process.

Monied interests control things. People have no say. Both major parties control a rigged process. They're two sides of the same coin.

Not a dime's worth of difference separates them. Independent candidates are virtually shut out. Americans get the best democracy money can buy.

Crimeans got the real thing. International observers praised the process. Voting went peacefully and smoothly.

It was scrupulously open, free, and fair. No irregularities occurred. None were seen. No pressure. No intimidation.

Not a single Russian soldier in sight. None invaded. None occupy Crimea. Claims otherwise are false. They're Western propaganda. They're malicious lies.

Turnout was impressive. It was unprecedented. It exceeded 83%. In Sevastopol, it was 89.5%.

Over 1.274 million Crimeans voted. Plus Sevastopol residents excluded from this total.

An astonishing 96.77% chose Russia – 95.6% of Sevastopol voters. A previous article said Russians comprise about 60% of Crimea's population. Ukrainians around 25%. Tatars 12%.

Results show Crimeans overwhelmingly reject Kiev putschists. Russians, Ukrainians and Tatars agree. Claims otherwise are false.

Referendum Commission chairman Mikhail Malyshev said:

"We were receiving protocols from the 27 district commissions all night long. The last one came at around 6:00AM."

"After that, our commission compiled the final protocol." Commission members signed the official document. It certified election results.

A scant .72% of ballots were declared invalid.

Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksionov addressed a Simferopol rally, saying:

"No one can take away our victory. We are going to Russia." He spoke accompanied by the Russian national anthem.

“We are going home,” he added. “Crimea within Russia. Hooray, comrades.”

Parliament Speaker Vladimir Konstantinov added: “We have done it! You have done it! This is our victory, and nobody can take it away from us.”

Crimeans celebrated their landslide victory. Ludmila Balatskays is a 72-year-old former Sevastapol city government deputy.

“Today is the greatest day of my life,” she said. “We are returning to mother Russia.”

“I was just a little girl when they just informed us that Crimea was now Ukraine. Everything fell down around me.”

“We are Russia. We have always been Russian people in our souls here in Crimea, but today that becomes a practical reality again.”

She spoke with tears in her eyes. Most other Crimeans share her joy.

Gennady Basov chairs the Sevastopol Russian Block party. He said choosing Russia gives Crimea “protection from the neo-Nazis and fascists in Kiev.”

On Sunday, Putin and Obama spoke. Russia’s president correctly called the referendum legal. It complies with international law and UN Charter provisions. They uphold self-determination rights. A Kremlin statement said:

“Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin drew attention to the inability and unwillingness of the present authorities in Kiev to curb rampant violence by ultra-nationalist and radical groups that destabilize the situation and terrorize civilians, including the Russian speaking population.”

He urged steps taken to change things. Regional stability depends on responsible policies. An official White House statement said Obama called the referendum illegal.

He accused Russia of “military intervention.” He lied saying so. Moscow didn’t intervene. Claims otherwise are false.

Obama said “the United States and the international community...would never” recognize referendum results.

“(W)e are prepared to impose additional costs on Russia for its actions,” he added.

Russian State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin highlighted Western hypocrisy. On the one hand, its officials reject Crimean self-determination rights.

On the other, they call Kiev putschists legitimate. They ignored their brazen coup d’etat.

On March 17, Crimea asked UN authorities and international community countries to recognize their self-determination.

A resolution was adopted doing so. “The Republic of Crimea seeks equality, peace, and good-neighborliness as well as political, economic and cultural cooperation,” with all other nations, it said.

On Monday, Russian State Duma Vice Speaker Sergei Neverov said parliamentarians will complete all necessary legislative procedures on accommodating Crimeans at the earliest possible time.

"The results of the Crimean referendum have clearly indicated that the residents of Crimea see their future only as part of Russia," he said.

"They voted for reunification of the people who always lived together." The number of people who came to polling stations and supported Crimea's re-unification with Russia speaks for itself."

"It's a reply to all those who attempted, throughout the past weeks, to prevent the residents of Crimea from determining their own destiny, their own future and the future of their children."

Russian upper house Federation Council Foreign Policy Committee deputy chairman Andrei Klimov praised Crimea's democratic process, saying:

"(W)hat we saw in Crimea was a direct expression of citizens' will - a system that the Americans might stand to benefit from."

"(T)he people of any territory on the globe should have the right to determine its destiny independently."

"Whatever the situation, the people of Crimea didn't give the right to choose destiny-making options for themselves either to Washington or to Brussels."

"A statement by White House press secretary that the referendum in Crimea stands at variance with the Ukrainian Constitution and hence the US rejects it is all too obvious."

"The thing is the White House is playing on the side of the new coalition in Kiev, and the US always supports only the 'democracy' that serves its national interests."

On March 21, Federation Council and State Duma members will vote up or down on letting Crimea join the Russian Federation. Sentiment in both houses suggests overwhelming approval.

Days earlier, Federation Council chairwoman Valentina Matviyenko said so. Russian State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin echoed her sentiment.

Russia has been losing people for years, he said. "(A)t last, we're getting our compatriots back. So that's a historic moment for Russia." Putin has final say.

Crimean Parliament Speaker Konstantinov said Crimea can join Russia in weeks. Perhaps by end of March, he added.

Crimea will draft a new constitution. "We will send it for approval to the Russian parliament," he explained.

Steps are underway to shift from Ukraine's hryvnia to Russia's ruble. Next week, the ruble will be introduced as a second official currency.

Dual currencies will continue for about six months. Thereafter, Ukraine's hryvnia will be

discontinued.

According to Crimea's Prime Minister Aksyonov, integrating Crimea fully into Russia may take up to a year. Perhaps sooner, he added.

At the same time, Crimea wants good relations with all nations, he stressed. On Monday, EU foreign ministers met in Brussels.

Sanctions were discussed. Asset freezes and visa bans on 21 Russian officials were imposed. Lithuania's Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said "more EU measures (will be forthcoming) in a few days."

According to an unnamed diplomatic source, Brussels "reached agreement on a list of names which is quite limited both in terms of their rank and the number of people."

A second unnamed source said Brussels "might reopen discussion" in further talks.

"At this late stage, I think they will focus instead on sending out a unified EU message," the source added.

Reuters said an initial list of up to 130 senior Russian officials would be reduced to perhaps "tens or scores" for final consideration.

Washington readied its own list. White House senior adviser Dan Pfeiffer said "(y)ou can expect sanctions designations in the coming days." Perhaps sooner.

Similar asset freezes and travel bans on Russian officials were announced. Putin was excluded.

Washington imposed sanctions on 11 Russian and former Viktor Yanukovych government officials. Moscow's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin was named.

A White House statement said sanctions target officials who "undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine." None exist except in Crimea.

On March 6, Obama's [Executive Order](#) authorized "Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Situation in Ukraine."

It applies to foreign nationals and Americans. Property belonging to Russian nationals can be seized.

The same applies to "any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States (including foreign branches), or any person in the United States."

Ahead of Crimea's referendum, Obama declared a national emergency. He considers Crimean self-determination a "threat to US national security."

For sure it's a threat of a good example. It runs counter to Washington's imperial ambitions.

Obama usurped the right to seize (read steal) assets belonging to anyone (including US citizens) "determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

(i) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following:

(A) actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Ukraine;

(B) actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine; or

(C) misappropriation of state assets of Ukraine or of an economically significant entity in Ukraine.”

Wiggle room language permits circumventing fundamental rule of law principles.

So-called “direct or indirect...actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine” aren’t defined.

Nor is how Crimean self-determination threatens US national security. The claim is absurd on its face.

It’s outrageous. It’s offensive. It turns logic on its head. It reveals lawless US governance.

Obama can act any way he wishes. He can do so by diktat. He can act lawlessly. He can enforce Washington rules.

He’s playing with fire. British MP George Galloway is right saying Western leaders created a Frankenstein monster in Ukraine.

It’s “a very serious threat,” he said. The damn fools in Washington and Brussels perhaps didn’t “read the novel Frankenstein to the end,” said Galloway.

“If they had, they’d have known that the monster Dr. Frankenstein created quickly got out of control. That’s why it’s called a monster.”

“And this monstrous” Kiev neo-Nazi threat poses potential grave problems for Europe. Perhaps for humanity if war erupts.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled “Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity.”

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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