

Crisis in the Sea of Azov, Confronting Russia, “Dangerous Madness... The Risk of War is Real

L'Antidiplomatico Interview with Andre Vltchek

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Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#),
[Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Alessandro Bianchi: Let's start from today's crisis in the Sea of Azov. The European Union and NATO have given full support to Ukraine after the violation of Russian sovereignty by two Ukrainian vessels. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gave his full support to Poroshenko, who declared martial law. What does a country like Italy risk in continuing its accession to NATO?

Andre Vltchek: Russia intercepted three Ukrainian ships in the Kerch Strait. The ships had, even according to Ukrainian authorities, several intelligence officers on board, as well as a number of light arms and machine guns. It was clear provocation, as the ships refused to inform Russian authorities about their intentions, and behaved in an aggressive manner. They were passing through Russian territorial waters. Ukrainian intelligence officers were obviously in charge of the entire operation. So, what is really so 'alarming' for the West? The ships were stopped, some crew members detained, and there is a serious investigation underway.

The 'incident' took place just days before the G20 meeting in Argentina, where Presidents Trump and Putin were supposed to meet. Also, it is only 4 months before the Ukrainian Presidential elections (March 2019), and Poroshenko is trailing behind the two leading candidates with only 8% of support. Ukraine under his leadership is so messed up that many flats in the capital city of Kiev will not be heated during this winter. Logically, Poroshenko provoked the crises, so he could pose as a strongman, hoping to at least gain some popularity. He has imposed martial law, for 30 days, although originally, he wanted it to last for 2 months. What does it mean? The press will be censored and criticism of the government, limited. Good for the grotesquely unpopular president? Definitely.

Also, it is obvious that the West, particularly the EU and NATO, are behind this new wave of dangerous madness.

Italy is part of both EU and NATO. As I am writing in my new essay, it is a nonsense to believe that "Europeans are brainwashed; that they do not know what the West is doing all over the world". They know, or they at least suspect - most of them. But they pretend that they don't know. In Europe, there is a shadowy deal between the government, corporations and the people. People want more benefits, and they do not care that the benefits come from plundering the world. If they get their benefits, they shut up. If they think they are getting too little, they protest, like recently in Paris. But do they care if tens of millions of 'un-people' die for those benefits? Of course not!

The same when it comes to Russia, China or Iran. Europeans in general and Italians in particular, know that there is some sort of vicious propaganda against those countries that refuse to yield to the Western diktat. But they will do nothing to stop it. It is sweet, isn't it, to feel superior, 'democratic', and 'free'. And it is horrible to admit that one lives in a place that is spreading terror to all corners of the world, robbing even the poor of all they have. These six weeks vacations could turn sour, if Italians were to decide to see who is really paying for them. So, they shut up, and will shut up, until it is 'too late'.

Remember, countries like Russia and China have their own 'democracies' (rule of the people). It is not the Western system. Rulers and the masses communicate and interact in a direct way, in a very distinctive manner. And in both Russia and China, the people have 'had enough' of being bullied and brutalized by the West, for decades and centuries. Just a little bit more, and things will explode. If pushed further, Russia and China will respond. If provoked militarily, they will defend themselves. The same goes for Iran. Being part of the grouping that is terrorizing the world, Italy will have to pay the price, too.

AB: Russian Minister Sergei Lavrov asked the Western allies in Kiev to "intervene" and "calm down" the Ukrainian authorities, warning about the potential crossing of a "point of no return" between Russia and the West. Is the risk of war real even in light of the great gathering of NATO troops at the border?

AV: Yes of course it is real. Just turn the tables around: if Iran or China or Russia or Venezuela or Syria or Cuba did to the West what West is doing to them, would there be real risk of war?

This impunity and racist belief in total superiority, which is so prevalent in the West, has to stop. And soon it will stop. As they say in Chile: 'By reason or by force'.

AB: You were recently in Syria, a country that thanks to the Russian intervention and the resistance of the Syrian people supported by the regional allies – Iran and Hezbollah above all – is slowly trying to return to normal. What country did you find?

AV: I found a beautiful, confident and proud country. I am also writing a long report about my visit there.

I met many victims, common people, but also a General, and a Minister of Education, who is also an accomplished novelist. His motto is: "Ministry of Education is like Ministry of Defense". Correct: education without ideology and passion is just a waste of time.

Syria won. And there, the entire Arab world won together with it. Arabs were, for decades, thoroughly humiliated – by the West, by Israel, by their own leaders who were put on the throne by London, Paris and Washington.

As I have written many times, Aleppo is the Stalingrad of the Middle East. The losses were terrible, all over Syria. But the victory is tremendous, too. Pan-Arabism will blossom again. People in all countries of the region are watching and now they know: it is possible to defeat Western imperialism and its spooks, its terrorist implants.

Russia stood by its Arab sister with determination, but also very wisely. It used diplomacy whenever it could, and it used force only when there was no other way. In Syria, the Russians won people's hearts. 'Thank you, Russia!', is everywhere, even engraved on traditional wooden boxes. The Russian language being my native tongue, opened so many

doors, as it opened thousands of doors to me in Afghanistan (I never expected it there).

Syria has to finalize its victory, soon. And I will be back, to cover events there. At the front if needed.

It is tremendously optimistic and beautiful to be in a country which did not prostitute itself; a country that stood tall, fought hard, for its own people and for the entire region. There is great confidence and kindness on the faces of people. Celebration is not loud, because, after all, so many people died. But people are out, till the morning, men and women, boys and girls. Cafes are packed; the streets of Damascus are bustling. But even in Homs and the destroyed suburbs of Damascus, life is defiantly returning to normal.

What a nation! Yes, they say 'Thank you Russia!'. As an internationalist, I say: "Thank you Syria!"



AB: The chemical attack by the “rebels” in Aleppo yesterday unmask the lies in the mainstream of these years. What role did the media play in allowing the terrorist gangs supported and funded by the West and Gulf allies to destroy Syria?

AV: A tremendous role. In Syria, the Western mass media finally ceased to exist. It became a prostitution force for the Empire, nothing else. But we all know that both the media and education are basically used for indoctrinating people, at least in the West and in its ‘client’ states.

There was so much provocation. The Gulf and the Western broadcasting companies were literally igniting the conflict, spreading lies, pushing people into rebellion against the government. They have blood on their hands, the same as Pashtun Service of the BBC has blood on their hands, as the VOA, Radio Free Europe and ‘free whatever’ have blood up to their armpits.

AB: Before Syria you did two important reports in Argentina and Mexico telling about the mutations under way in Latin America. Bolsonaro has won in Brazil, while in the next few days Lopez Obrador is preparing to settle in a Mexico that has turned left. At what stage is the dispute in Latin America, and what are the prospects for the left in the continent?

AV: Well, I worked for three weeks all over Mexico, before going to Syria. My big work in both Argentina and Brazil, had been done earlier.

Look, Ale, you and I know; are very well familiar with Latin America. I used to live in Mexico, Chile, Peru (during the so-called Dirty War) and Costa Rica. I have worked all over the

continent.

What happened in Mexico is great, although one could say 'overdue'. Now let us hope that President-Elect Obrador will be able to turn his magnificent country around, towards socialism. It will not be easy. There is plenty of terrible inertia. There are horrible 'elites' of European stock. And there is the United States, right next door, always ready to 'intervene'. But I think he can do it. I trust him. I travelled all over this huge country, I spoke to people. It was all summarized by a gangster in Tijuana, a man who became a criminal out of desperation. He said, and I paraphrase: "I think it is close to impossible for Obrador to change things, but if he will do what he is promising, I will drop everything, and support him. This is the last chance for Mexico to change things peacefully. If he fails, we will take up the arms."

Brazil, this is so difficult to explain. But essentially, there, in Latin America, more than anywhere else, the mass media which is in the hands of the right-wing, played an extremely significant and thoroughly destructive role. When I visited Amazonia, around Manaus and Belem, or Salvador Bahia, people would tell me: "Our life improved significantly. Now we have this and this and that. But Dilma has to go!" My God, I thought, am I dreaming? No, I was not. Basically, somehow, the elites hammered into people's brains that if they are better off now, then it is because of their own personal success. But if some things are not going too well, it is the fault of the government.

"Corruption" is always used in the combat against left-wing governments in Latin America. Microscopes are used, to encounter any wrongdoing. It was used against Kristina Kirschner, against Lula, even against poor Dilma who was not corrupt at all, but suffered from the right-wing and West-backed 'constitutional' coup. But just imagine that stupidity, that absurdity: right-wing dictatorships in the Southern Cone but also in Brazil used dogs to rape women; they tortured prisoners, killed, 'disappeared' people, robbing everything they could put their hands on. And that is not 'corruption', right? Then some company offers to renovate an apartment of Lula's, and he is in prison! Suddenly those fascists are playing the moral card. Do you know what Bolsonaro will do now? He will screw the entire Amazonia; do it almost 'Indonesia-style'. He will allow that horrid deal with the Western corporations, the privatization of the aquifer shared with Paraguay, to go through. The third biggest passenger airplane manufacturer on earth - Embraer - will be sold to Boeing, for petty cash. Brazil will lose its rainforest, its industry, and its poor will lose their lifeline - government support. And this is not called corruption! Argentina under Macri is allowing the US to operate in Tierra de Fuego. The entire country is screaming from pain: electricity prices have gone up, the famous film industry is losing support, and the middle class is again going down the drain.

But I am optimistic. Latin American people have a great desire for socialist, in some places, communist societies. Whenever they are left alone, they fight for it, or vote for it. Then they get smashed. The West has overthrown, basically, all the truly left-wing governments of the continent, from the Dominican Republic, to Chile. But the process never stops. It begins all over again.

I only hope that one thing changes: you know, the West was very successful in implanting the idea in the heads of Latin Americans, that after all that has happened, Europe and even the US are somehow superior nations. And so, people look down on the truly great nations like China and Russia, in places like Brazil. It appalls me. I speak the language, and I clearly see what is happening. In Argentina, there is not much of a real left: the intellectuals there

are connected to those defunct theories in Europe and North America, like 'anarcho-syndicalism'. And there is nothing really revolutionary about those ideas. There are too many Westerners influencing Latin American revolutionary movements. They lost at home, became irrelevant, but still they insist on judging the world from a Western perspective. Still, somehow, many of them are admired in Latin America. And it always backfires: Westerners dilute revolutionary spirit. They also kidnap the South-South narrative. I would love to see Russian, Chinese, Venezuelan, Cuban, Syrian, Iranian or South African comrades running the state media in countries where the true left is winning. It would make a great difference!

AB: Argentina continues to sink under the weight of Mauricio Macri's neoliberal austerity but the mainstream media are silent. Meanwhile, Evo Morales' Bolivia continues, to the contrary, to record the highest growth rates in the region in a climate of stability. So, socialism works contrary to what they try to make us believe?

AV: Yes of course socialism works, Ale. If left alone, if it is not bathed in pus and blood, it prospers. Unfortunately, so far, whenever any country decides to go socialist, the West unleashes its campaign of terror, lies and economic banditry. Socialism is not some extreme utopia, but the most logical goal. The majority of people want to live in an egalitarian society, where they feel secure and safe, and where when sick they get treated, when they are thirsty for knowledge, they get educated for free. They want the state to work for them, not against them. They want their government to control companies, instead of companies controlling their governments.

AB: Meanwhile, in Venezuela, the economic, psychological and media war goes on. Will the Bolivarian government succeed in resisting this unprecedented attack?

AV: Yes, it will. But again, look how fragmented Latin America has become. People in Chile or Argentina watch CNN and FOX and they know much more about Miami or Paris, than about Caracas. The Brazilian President-Elect said that he would murder Maduro – still, people voted for him.

Latin America is mostly run by European elites. They robbed the continent, turned it into the part of the world with the greatest disparities. For any revolution to succeed here, it has to be radical and decisive. Democracy should be direct, not that multi-party idiotism implanted from the West – that is so easy to pervert and divert from outside, or with the use of social and mass media. Latin America cannot try to ape Europe and hope that it will prosper. Europe is based on the plunder of other parts of the world. Latin American countries do not have colonies, and the plunder is internal – the rich of European stock are plundering both the land and the native people.

AB: In one of his last articles Fidel wrote how "The alliance between Russia and China is a powerful peace shield able to guarantee the survival of the human race". What is the legacy of Fidel Castro today two years after his death?

AV: Just tremendous! Even when the entire Latin America betrayed Cuba, Fidel and his people never surrendered. This is the spirit I admire. Cuba has a big heart – it fought for the independence of several African nations, it helps so many places on earth with their doctors, teachers, and rescue teams during natural disasters. Cuban art is some of the greatest on the planet. That is why, Cuba has had a tremendous impact on me personally, and on my work as well. I proudly call myself a 'Cuban-style internationalist'. I am endlessly grateful to

Fidel, to the Cuban revolution and to Cuban people. In many ways, it is perhaps the greatest country in the world. A country I would never hesitate to fight for, or even to die for.

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Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He has covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. Three of his latest books are [Revolutionary Optimism](#), [Western Nihilism](#), a revolutionary novel "[Aurora](#)" and a bestselling work of political non-fiction: "[Exposing Lies Of The Empire](#)". View his other books [here](#). Watch [Rwanda Gambit](#), his groundbreaking documentary about Rwanda and DR Congo and his film/dialogue with Noam Chomsky "[On Western Terrorism](#)". Vltchek presently resides in East Asia and the Middle East, and continues to work around the world. He can be reached through his [website](#) and his [Twitter](#).

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