

# End the Bloodshed: It's Time for Peace in Ukraine

By [William Hawes](#)

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

*Since the snap elections in Ukraine, observers have been uneasily watching and waiting to determine how events will play out. As rebel leaders have won regional voting in both Donetsk and Luhansk, the Kiev government is now crying foul. National troops are being mobilized to head to the southeast, as Poroshenko and the EU have both denounced the results in the Donbass as illegitimate. NATO has also called for more troops to be deployed to the Baltic nations as well, fueling instability on both sides of the conflict.*

As Poroshenko, Yatsenyuk, Turchynov and various Ukrainian elites confer on how to deal with the conflict, the economy continues to suffer. Oligarchs continue to fund private paramilitaries with fascist, neo-Nazi elements, and the Right Sector and Svoboda continue to attract voters throughout Ukraine. These bigoted people are eerily similar to Greece's Golden Dawn. Sadly, unlike Greece, there is no strong leftist party like Syriza to counter these racist reactionaries. In the vacuum, oligarchs like Igor Kolomoisky have managed to weasel their way to power. (1)

Predictably, relying on such unsavory allies may backfire on the Kiev government. The chocolate king Poroshenko may just be too moderate for the Right Sector, which already has made veiled threats against him. (2) In turn, Poroshenko may ramp up his war in the east, if only to appease the marauding degenerates who comprise his thuggish militias, as well as his western overlords.

If peace is what Kiev really wanted, it would already be so. For all their courage, the rebels in the Donbass are short on supplies and manpower, and seem willing to stick to a ceasefire and end the suffering. Kiev, however, wants to punish the rebels for their insubordination and tacit alliance with Russia. No doubt, the Kiev oligarchs are also in the pocket of the US, as Ambassador Nuland has made clear.

Similar to Kiev, Washington's aim is to punish Russia for its takeover of Crimea and support for the rebels. Using Kiev as a proxy, Washington knows that a crippled Ukraine will hurt the EU, but will drag down Russia for decades. It is a strategic risk that the US seems willing to take, although the consequences may be severe. Building on Cold War containment theory, a divided Ukraine would contribute to the "Grand Chessboard" plans of Zbigniew Brzezinski and turn containment into conflict. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO crept eastward, and Russia objected, but with a patient and friendly outlook, cognizant of its temporary weakness. Today, Russia has rebuilt itself into an energy-exporting giant and military superpower.

The main reasons Washington is worried about Moscow's intentions are as follows: the decoupling of the dollar from oil sales; the alliance between Russia, Syria, and Iran; the growing power of the BRICS and the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a quasi-

military partnership comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, which is considering adding Iran, Pakistan, and India in the future). So the proxies are brought out: in Syria and Iraq, the despicable Wahhabist ISIS, in Ukraine, the nationalist and fascist paramilitary.

With direct conflict flooding the headlines, the insidious manipulation, bribery, and coercion by the western powers (what US policy experts refer to as soft power or smart power) are mostly ignored. In Libya by 2011, the dream of the Arab Spring devolved into a nightmare, with NATO air power squashing the Qaddafi regime even as NATO supported tribal warlords of the radical Islamist variety. In Egypt, the US supported Mohammed Morsi even as it became clear of his undemocratic and Sharia-embracing tendencies. Today, the Euromaidan protests have only brought chaos and instability to Ukraine. Also, Hong Kong's "Umbrella Revolution" threatens to spread unrest and a lockdown of freedoms in China.

Yet these recent displays of controlled opposition and "spontaneous" protests are ultimately of little significance for the US. For the West, Ukraine is simply a bridge, a stepping-stone, albeit an important one. The real prize is Russia. By hook or by crook, the US will try to turn Russia into the pro-West camp. Its resources are too vast, its technological capabilities too high, and as an independent power with a Western culture it represents too great a threat to our delusional leaders in the Beltway. Their ideal goal is a Russia integrated into the EU. When Putin expressed desire for a free trade agreement "from Lisbon to Vladivostok" in 2010, the US may choose to take the idea a step further: they want an EU spanning Eurasia, all under Washington's control, of course.

Right now, the US plan seems to be to inoculate the Russian populace against Putin and his courtiers, with Western media implacably opposed to him. Consider the media loudmouths casting him as some sort of arch-villain, and the ludicrous comparison with Hitler. All of this was a psychological operation aimed not only to distract the American public, but to fracture support among Russian citizens. Yet it has not worked, and its citizens hugely support the Donbass rebels and reintegrating Crimea.

The US has chosen to slow-play the situation as sanctions continue to harm the Russian economy, and as there is no substantial liberal opposition in Moscow. The reason why? Conventional pro-western analysts insist it is because of the repression of Russian oligarchs and the state. The truth that cannot be uttered by them is that the Kremlin has developed soft power of its own: many state-owned media institutions critical of western hegemony, the non-violent referendum and takeover of Crimea, the asylum given to Ed Snowden, the recent multi-billion dollar gas deal with China.

Putin knows he has the upper hand in Ukraine for now, and will dig in for the long-term. He knows Poroshenko is hanging by a thread, and that ordinary Ukrainians will chafe under the EU's proposed austerity measures. He wants a strong eastern Ukrainian coalition like the Party of Regions to regain power, and a reliable (if weak) partner like Yanukovych to emerge, but that ship has sailed, and there is no turning back time. So for now, both Putin and the US want what they simply cannot have.

It is time for the superpowers to step back from the precipice and hammer out a lasting solution for peace. Enough blood has been spilt. Ukrainian leaders on both sides can and will choose peace if their backers forge a deal. The West must accept a Russian Crimea and acknowledge the Donbass rebels as legitimate holders of territory, not simply terrorists. Russia must learn to live with an EU-oriented western Ukraine.

A legitimate peace deal for Ukraine would achieve much more than any rhetorical US-Russian “reset” and could bring about a breakthrough in international relations. Together, the US and Russia could work in tandem to police human rights abuses, alleviate poverty in the Global South, modernize and enforce international law, invigorate the unwieldy UN, fight radical terrorism abroad, and uphold western notions of liberty. A united West could reengage the world more honestly, and force its nations to acknowledge the exploitation and inequality built into their neoliberal economic structures. Cultural bonds could be strengthened and social welfare programs in the US and Russia could be improved by learning from European models. Yet this will all be a pipe-dream if our leaders squander the opportunity for peace in Ukraine. The stakes are high, and the world is watching.

*William Hawes is an independent author specializing in environmental issues and geopolitics.*

Notes

- 1)[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/08/14/ukraines\\_oligarchs\\_are\\_still\\_calling\\_the\\_shots\\_0](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/08/14/ukraines_oligarchs_are_still_calling_the_shots_0)
- 2)<http://rt.com/news/188572-ukraine-riots-poroshenko-radicals/>

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