

Out of Control Oligarchs. Ukraine War Spreads Across Russian Border

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While public attention has been distracted by the ISIS uprising in Iraq with the return of American "troops on the ground," the horrific devastation occurring in Ukraine continues with no real recognition by the US media of the role of self-motivated oligarch-funded militias in the use of heavy artillery, white phosphorous and cluster bombs against a civilian population.

Given Russian President Vladimir Putin's impressive patience and test of his maturity during the weeks of US-instigated provocations by the Kiev government, its increased violent escalation of deadly military assaults on ethnic Russian civilians in east Ukraine, all aimed at luring the Russian army to "invade" Ukraine, it was only a matter of time before the Kiev government and its allies with its reliance on US backing, created a sweet spot of escalation which even the strategically-minded Putin would find difficult to ignore.

The goal, of course, has been to entice Putin into an aggressive military response so that the US could wrap itself in the righteous flag as defenders of the peace and small children; then allege that Russia had committed assorted international, criminal and human rights violations. But early on Putin recognized the game for what it was.

While not the first cross border incident but perhaps the most flagrant violation of Russia's sovereign border, a Ukrainian Air force plane crossed into Russian air space on Sunday along with an attack of up to six mortar shells in Doentsk (same name as the Ukraine city) in Russia's Rostov province which killed its first civilian:

"I heard a scream, it was my younger brother, I grabbed him and ran towards the exit. Then I heard my father's scream," the girl said. "When my brother and I ran up to the door, glass from the windows shattered again. We stopped. When we went out to the porch, we saw my father lying there. He was without an arm. I was in shock, I thought it was a dream, I came back into the house, then went out again to see him lying there without an arm. He was screaming. My brother was screaming. We were bombed."

The Russian Foreign Ministry in citing that Russia reserves the right to protect its citizens and territory promised that this "action will not be left without a corresponding reaction" called the shelling an "obviously aggressive act" and warned of 'irreversible consequences' and of a potential 'dangerous escalation ..that puts our citizens in higher danger.'

However, for Putin to initiate even a measured retaliatory response, regardless of its merit, is to invite a direct, perhaps a 'shock and awe' assault from the United States on the civilian

Russian population which is exactly what Obama has been hoping for.

After several weeks of persistent checkpoint attacks aimed, in part, at hindering what has now become a large-scale exodus of refugees from Ukraine, on July 12th a vehicle of Russian border guards came under fire from the Ukrainian side at Kuibyshev border crossing while the Novoshakhtinsk and Dolzhansky checkpoints, all in Rostov province in Russia, were shelled by mortars on June 20th. The Gukuvo checkpoint was under fire on June 28th and the villages of Vasetsky Khutor and Shakhta experienced shell explosions as assorted incidents of sniper fire were reported on civilian vehicles at the Izvarivo border checkpoint.

As the rebels were driven out of their base in Slyvansk, the Ukraine army predicts a 'nasty surprise,' a plan, its security force says will crush the heavily urbanized city of Donetsk (Ukraine) rebels, a city of one million with a suburban population of two million. Cited by Forbes in 2012 as Ukraine's best city for business, Donetsk is of major economic importance to the country. Home to a heavy industry base of steel plants, coal mines, a metallurgy, chemical and engineering industry and a skilled workforce explains why the financially struggling Kiev government is in a desperate brutal fight to control Donetsk and its economy.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has suggested that "Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko would like to ease tension and go on with the truce, there are other forces" including the "battalions of Igor Kolomoysky who do not obey Ukraine's Central Command and the Commander-in-Chief."

Lavrov's mention of Kolomoysky, a Ukrainian oligarch with Israeli citizenship who is worth an estimated \$6.3 billion according to Forbes, reveals the existence of a bank tycoon who continues to play an extraordinary role in turning the tide of war on behalf of the Kiev government. Of Jewish descent, Kolomoysky, who lives in Switzerland returned to Ukraine to accept appointment as Governor of the Dnipropetrovsk in March, 2014 in no small part to protect his investments and to benefit from bank 'reform' under the recently signed European Trade Association Agreement (ETAA). In Dnipropetrovsk, an area of heavy industry second only to the Donetsk province, Kolomoysky is known for his aggressive take-over of businesses using armed guards when necessary. The ETAA is essentially the same document that exiled President Yankovych refused to sign in February in opposition to acquiescing political control of Ukraine to the EU in return for complying with strict trade and austerity requirements.

Since April, Kolomoysky has reportedly spent more than \$10 million to create the 2,000 battle-ready Dnipro Battalion (with 20,000 reserve troops) which is not limited to military engagement within the Dnipropetrovsk province. Considered a terrorist group by the Putin government for its role in the deadly arson attack in Odessa and the massacre of Mariupol civilians, Dnipro has also been cited as responsible for the shelling of Slovyansk, Kramatorsk and Donetsk which has driven 50,000 from their homes. Dnipro was also implicated in storming the Krasnoarmeick city hall in May to stop the balloting.

Ukraine authorities reportedly support other oligarch-funded militias like the Donbass and Azov Battalions, none of which are limited to their local regions, and a very interesting clandestine group referred to as the black men, all considered more reliable than the Ukrainian military.

Offering a \$10,000 bounty for the capture of any pro-Russian separatist, former Presidential

candidate and local member of Parliament Oleg Tsarev became a prime target after receiving a threatening phone call from Kolomoysky. Informed that a Jewish soldier from the Dnipro Battalion had been killed in fighting and that members of the Jewish community had put a reward of one million dollars on his head, Tsarev withdrew from the Presidential race after being beaten by a mob in Kiev and after his home was burnt to the ground. Tsarev then moved his family to Moscow but has been sighted recently in Kramatorsk.

While the merging of Ukraine's anti-semitic fascists and Israeli Zionists may appear to be a clash of contradictory interests but in reality represents a comfortably militant philosophic union on the benefits of war, Kolomoysky has said he will not be governed by Poroshenko, has challenged the Kiev government's legitimacy, declared himself to be a 'separatist' and has promised to continue military operations until all the Moskal (Russians) are killed.

The shark aquarium in Kolomoysky's office may reveal more about the man than he would like especially with the recent controversy surrounding his effort to establish the European Jewish Union in 2011 after being denied a leadership position in other European Jewish organizations. The EJU then went on to establish a European Jewish Parliament modeled on the Knesset which met for the first time in February, 2012. Created to represent the concerns of Europe's Jewish community to the European Union, the Jewish Parliament got off to a shaky start when soccer star David Beckham, filmmaker Roman Polanski, comic actor Sacha Baron Cohen, Pee Wee Herman and fashion designer Diane von Furstenburg among other surprised nominees were announced as candidates for election to the Jewish Parliament.

While Poroshenko talks tough promising that the "militants will pay tens and even hundreds of their own lives for the life of each of our soldiers" as if he and his government are in charge, the fact is that the irrational Kolomoysky and his Battalion, in what otherwise would be considered insubordination and treason, are encouraged to behave like international outlaws, reminiscent of how Israel deals with the Palestinians. They owe no loyalty to the Kiev government and are totally unaccountable to any one including the Ukraine Army's military authority - and given the US delusional foreign policy of attempting to box Putin in, the possibility of a demented out-of-control oligarch triggering a nuclear crisis is too horrendous to consider.

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