

# The West and the Upcoming Referendum in Crimea: A Dangerous Game of Duplicity

By [Michael Werbowski](#)

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*Secessionist movements are nothing new to history and have been endorsed in the past, by some great statesmen such as US president Woodrow Wilson. Yet the upcoming Crimean referendum is given by the west much attention, almost as if it was setting some dangerous precedent and had to be interdicted. Or as if it were a unique case, which it isn't. Why now? Or why is the west so eager to nip in the bud the potential for the formation of a "break away state" in the Crimean peninsula? Possibly because Western powers who with vehemence and vituperation (unmatched in shrillness even during the worst days of the cold war) are denouncing the upcoming referendum on the possible formation of an independent or quasi-sovereign region in Ukraine, are themselves, dealing with secessionist movements at home.*

For instance, the United Kingdom has to grapple with the unpalatable possibility of Scotland splitting away from the rest of the unitary state later this year. For its part, Canada (with almost one millions people of Ukrainian decent) is one of the most vocal opponents to the Crimean referendum. Yet it is presently dealing with a revival of a home-grown, separatist threat in Quebec. The majority French-speaking province is presently immersed in an unexpected election campaign, which might return a nationalist party back to power with a potential majority. If this occurs, then some ardent nationalists might interpret the re-election of the Parti Québécois as a prelude to a third referendum on independence. Ottawa naturally is on high alert to this potential outcome.

The US also one of the loudest voices in the anti- referendum chorus has seen secessionist threats of its own in the past and also in the present. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was the civil war. And we all know how Washington dealt with that situation: it was crushed in a bloody prolonged conflict, which traumatised the nation and scarred its memory forever. Furthermore, the US today is not totally immune to separatist-nationalist scenarios in the making. Witness the revival of [the Puerto Rican nationalist-independence movement](#)  
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