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Ukraine prime minister resigns as NATO, Australia prepare intervention in east

By Alex Lantier

25 July 2014

The far-right parliamentary coalition in Kiev collapsed yesterday, as the Western-backed regime met with visiting Dutch and Australian officials to prepare a foreign military intervention in war-torn east Ukraine, under cover of investigating the crash of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk (Fatherland Party) announced his resignation after the withdrawal from the coalition of the fascist Svoboda Party and the UDAR (“Punch”) party of boxer Vitaly Klitschko. Yatsenyuk will remain as prime minister until either a new coalition is formed or after elections sometime later this year.

Billionaire oligarch and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko supported the dissolution of the government, claiming it would permit a “full-scale reset” of the Ukrainian state that Ukrainian society desires. Poroshenko, who assumed office last month, is hoping that new elections, which Poroshenko can call if a new coalition is not formed in 30 days, will be an opportunity to strengthen his own grip on power.

The collapse of the parliamentary coalition points to the weakness of the regime that emerged from the February 22 putsch. As it prepares to support a Western military intervention in the civil war it is waging in east Ukraine, posing the risk of an escalation into a clash between NATO and Russia, the Kiev regime is preparing austerity measures demanded by the EU that will have a devastating impact on broad sections of the population throughout the country.

Under these conditions, the government cannot tolerate any political opposition, even from such establishment forces as the Stalinist Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU). Explaining his party's decision to leave the government, Svoboda Party leader Oleh Tyahnybok denounced the presence of pro-Russian forces (the KPU) in the Ukrainian legislature: "We believe that in the current situation, such a parliament which protects state criminals, Moscow agents, which refuses to strip immunity from those people who are working for the Kremlin, should not exist."

These comments were apparently designed to increase pressure for a ban on the KPU. A party that supported the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, the KPU became an ally of the Party of the Regions of former pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich, who was ousted in February's Western-backed, fascist-led putsch that brought the current regime to power.

For his part, Parliamentary Speaker Oleksandr Turchynov pledged to destroy the KPU. "We only have to tolerate this party for another day," he said.

These statements came a day after KPU leader Peter Symonenko accused Svoboda members fighting in east Ukraine of killing Ukrainians and harvesting their organs for the illegal organ trade. Significantly, Svoboda did not even attempt to answer Symonenko's charges. Instead, it responded by beating KPU legislators and trying to throw Symonenko out of the parliament.

KPU officials from the Donetsk region reported yesterday that a KPU official in the nearby village of Glinky, Vyacheslav Kovshun, had been tortured to death at a Ukrainian National Guard checkpoint in the night of July 22-23. He was stopped at the checkpoint, beaten, and repeatedly shot in the legs and chest. He was found dead.

These events point to the utterly reactionary character of the regime installed by the February putsch, which was carried out in close collaboration with Washington, Berlin, and their European allies. After the putsch, Svoboda officials filmed themselves beating Ukrainian television executives. Forces like Svoboda and the Right Sector militia—both of which glorify Stepan Bandera, who collaborated with Nazi SS units that carried out the Holocaust in Ukraine during World War II—now lead the Kiev regime's intervention in east Ukraine.

In his resignation speech yesterday, Yatsenyuk warned that the dissolution of his government might slow the pace of Kiev's unpopular social cuts against the Ukrainian people to fund the civil war. These include billions of dollars in cuts to energy subsidies, social programs, and

government workers' wages, while not touching the hundreds of billions of dollars of ill-gotten wealth held by the oligarchs.

“Who wants to go to elections and simultaneously vote for unpopular laws?” Yatsenyuk asked. “History will not forgive us. Our government now has no answer to the questions: how are we to pay wages, how are we tomorrow morning going to send fuel for armored vehicles, how will we pay those families who have lost soldiers, to look after the army?”

As the crisis of the Kiev regime mounts, the Western powers and their allies continue to push further to the right in their campaign against Moscow. While this campaign is led by the United States and Germany, all of Washington's imperialist allies are moving aggressively against Russia—now spearheaded by the Australian and Dutch governments, which are cynically exploiting the large numbers of citizens they lost on the MH17 flight.

While Washington has been unable to substantiate its charge that Russia is responsible for the crash, and evidence increasingly points to involvement by the Kiev regime itself, Australia and the Netherlands are seizing on the crash to justify a provocative intervention in east Ukraine.

Yesterday, Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans and Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop visited Kiev to discuss a military deployment to east Ukraine, ostensibly to secure the MH17 crash site, which is in territory held by anti-Kiev regime forces.

The Netherlands announced it would send 40 unarmed military police to east Ukraine, while Australia is reportedly sending 50 police to London as a first stop on the way to Ukraine.

The Dutch government is reportedly waging an international diplomatic campaign to post hundreds of Dutch soldiers on the crash site—ostensibly to protect investigators from pro-Russian forces—with the support of the Dutch media.

In the Netherlands, Elsevier's commentator Eric Vrijnsen demanded that Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte “threaten to send in these troops in order to up the pressure on the rebels and Russian President Vladimir Putin. And if he does this, he will probably have made up his mind to act on his threat The Dutch Special Forces (army commandos and the Marine Corps Marsofs) are internationally respected. Rutte doesn't have these elite troops at his disposal for nothing.”

Such a deployment would be a reckless maneuver risking an escalation into a direct clash between NATO and pro-Russian forces in east Ukraine—that is, a NATO intervention in the Ukrainian civil war and the possible outbreak of war between NATO and Russia itself.

The threat of such a conflict erupting was underscored by rising border tensions between Ukraine and Russia. After Ukrainian forces shelled Russian border areas two weeks ago, killing one

Russian civilian, Washington alleged yesterday that Russian forces are firing artillery from within Russia at Ukrainian military positions in east Ukraine.

Pressed again at a US State Department press briefing yesterday to provide some evidence for her claims, however, spokeswoman Marie Harf was unable to provide any. “This is just some pieces of info I've been able to get from our intelligence friends for you. I can't tell you what it's based on,” Harf said.