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The Fallujah Option for East Ukraine

The Real Reason Washington Feels Threatened by Moscow

by MIKE WHITNEY

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“I want to appeal to the Ukrainian people, to the mothers, the fathers, the sisters and the grandparents. Stop sending your sons and brothers to this pointless, merciless slaughter. The interests of the Ukrainian government are not your interests. I beg of you: Come to your senses. You do not have to water Donbass fields with Ukrainian blood. It’s not worth it.”

— Alexander Zakharchenko, Prime Minister of the Donetsk People’s Republic

Washington needs a war in Ukraine to achieve its strategic objectives. This point cannot be overstated.

The US wants to push NATO to Russia’s western border. It wants a land-bridge to Asia to spread US military bases across the continent. It wants to control the pipeline corridors from Russia to Europe to monitor Moscow’s revenues and to ensure that gas continues to be denominated in dollars. And it wants a weaker, unstable Russia that is more prone to regime change, fragmentation and, ultimately, foreign control. These objectives cannot be achieved peacefully, indeed, if the fighting stopped tomorrow, the sanctions would be lifted shortly after, and the Russian economy would begin to recover. How would that benefit Washington?

It wouldn't. It would undermine Washington's broader plan to integrate China and Russia into the prevailing economic system, the dollar system. Powerbrokers in the US realize that the present system must either expand or collapse. Either China and Russia are brought to heel and persuaded to accept a subordinate role in the US-led global order or Washington's tenure as global hegemon will come to an end.

This is why hostilities in East Ukraine have escalated and will continue to escalate. This is why the U.S. Congress approved a bill for tougher sanctions on Russia's energy sector and lethal aid for Ukraine's military. This is why Washington has sent military trainers to Ukraine and is preparing to provide \$3 billion in "anti-armor missiles, reconnaissance drones, armored Humvees, and radars that can determine the location of enemy rocket and artillery fire." All of Washington's actions are designed with one purpose in mind, to intensify the fighting and escalate the conflict. The heavy losses sustained by Ukraine's inexperienced army and the terrible suffering of the civilians in Lugansk and Donetsk are of no interest to US war-planners. Their job is to make sure that peace is avoided at all cost because peace would derail US plans to pivot to Asia and remain the world's only superpower. Here's an excerpt from an article in the WSWS:

"The ultimate aim of the US and its allies is to reduce Russia to an impoverished and semi-colonial status. Such a strategy, historically associated with Carter administration National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, is again being openly promoted.

In a speech last year at the Wilson Center, Brzezinski called on Washington to provide Kiev with "weapons designed particularly to permit the Ukrainians to engage in effective urban warfare of resistance." In line with the policies now recommended in the report by the Brookings Institution and other think tanks calling for US arms to the Kiev regime, Brzezinski called for providing "anti-tank weapons... weapons capable for use in urban short-range fighting."

While the strategy outlined by Brzezinski is politically criminal—trapping Russia in an ethnic urban war in Ukraine that would threaten the deaths of millions, if not billions of people—it is fully aligned with the policies he has promoted against Russia for decades." ("The US arming of Ukraine and the danger of World War III", World Socialist Web Site)

Non-lethal military aid will inevitably lead to lethal military aid, sophisticated weaponry, no-fly zones, covert assistance, foreign contractors, Special ops, and boots on the ground. We've seen it all before. There is no popular opposition to the war in the US, no thriving antiwar movement that can shut down cities, order a general strike or disrupt the status quo. So there's no way to stop the persistent drive to war. The media and the political class have given Obama carte blanche, the authority to prosecute the conflict as he sees fit. That increases the probability of a broader war by this summer following the spring thaw.

While the possibility of a nuclear conflagration cannot be excluded, it won't effect US plans for the near future. No one thinks that Putin will launch a nuclear war to protect the Donbass, so the deterrent value of the weapons is lost.

And Washington isn't worried about the costs either. Despite botched military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and half a dozen other countries around the world; US stocks are still soaring, foreign investment in US Treasuries is at record levels, the US economy is growing at a faster pace than any of its global competitors, and the dollar has risen an eye-watering 13 percent against a basket of foreign currencies since last June. America has paid nothing for decimating vast swathes of the planet and killing more than a million people. Why would they stop now?

They won't, which is why the fighting in Ukraine is going to escalate. Check this out from the WSWS:

“On Monday, the New York Times announced that the Obama administration is moving to directly arm the Ukrainian army and the fascistic militias supporting the NATO-backed regime in Kiev, after its recent setbacks in the offensive against pro-Russian separatist forces in east Ukraine.

The article cites a joint report issued Monday by the Brookings Institution, the Atlantic Council, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and delivered to President Obama, advising the White House and NATO on the best way to escalate the war in Ukraine....

According to the Times, US officials are rapidly shifting to support the report's proposals. NATO military commander in Europe General Philip M. Breedlove, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, US Secretary of State John Kerry, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey all supported discussions on directly arming Kiev. National Security Advisor Susan Rice is reconsidering her opposition to arming Kiev, paving the way for Obama's approval.” (“Washington moves toward arming Ukrainian regime“, World Socialist Web Site)

See what's going on? The die is already cast. There will be a war with Russia because that's what the political establishment wants. It's that simple. And while previous provocations failed to lure Putin into the Ukrainian cauldron, this new surge of violence—a spring offensive— is bound to do the trick. Putin is not going to sit on his hands while proxies armed with US weapons and US logistical support pound the Donbass to Fallujah-type rubble. He'll do what any responsible leader would do. He'll protect his people. That means war. (See the vast damage that Obama's proxy war has done to E. Ukraine here: “An overview of the socio – humanitarian situation on the territory of Donetsk People's Republic as a consequence of military action from 17 to 23 January 2015“)

Asymmetrical Warfare: Falling Oil Prices

Keep in mind, that the Russian economy has already been battered by economic sanctions, oil price manipulation, and a vicious attack of the ruble. Until this week, the mainstream media dismissed the idea that the Saudis were deliberately pushing down oil prices to hurt Russia. They said the Saudis were merely trying to retain “market share” by maintaining current production levels and letting prices fall naturally. But it was all bunkum as the New York Times finally admitted on Tuesday in an article titled: “Saudi Oil Is Seen as Lever to Pry Russian Support From Syria's Assad”. Here's a clip from the article:

“Saudi Arabia has been trying to pressure President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to abandon his support for President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, using its dominance of the global oil markets at a time when the Russian government is reeling from the effects of plummeting oil prices...

Saudi officials say — and they have told the United States — that they think they have some leverage over Mr. Putin because of their ability to reduce the supply of oil and possibly drive up prices....Any weakening of Russian support for Mr. Assad could be one of the first signs that the recent tumult in the oil market is having an impact on global statecraft.....

Saudi Arabia’s leverage depends on how seriously Moscow views its declining oil revenue. “If they are hurting so bad that they need the oil deal right away, the Saudis are in a good position to make them pay a geopolitical price as well,” said F. Gregory Gause III, a Middle East specialist at Texas A&M’s Bush School of Government and Public Service (“Saudi Oil Is Seen as Lever to Pry Russian Support From Syria’s Assad“, New York Times)

The Saudis “think they have some leverage over Mr. Putin because of their ability” to manipulate prices?

That says it all, doesn’t it?

What’s interesting about this article is the way it conflicts with previous pieces in the Times. For example, just two weeks ago, in an article titled “Who Will Rule the Oil Market?” the author failed to see any political motive behind the Saudi’s action. According to the narrative, the Saudis were just afraid that “they would lose market share permanently” if they cut production and kept prices high. Now the Times has done a 180 and joined the so called conspiracy nuts who said that prices were manipulated for political reasons. In fact, the sudden price plunge had nothing to do with deflationary pressures, supply-demand dynamics, or any other mumbo-jumbo market forces. It was 100 percent politics.

The attack on the ruble was also politically motivated, although the details are much more sketchy. There’s an interesting interview with Alistair Crooke that’s worth a read for those who are curious about how the Pentagon’s “full spectrum dominance” applies to financial warfare. According to Crooke:

“...with Ukraine, we have entered a new era: We have a substantial, geostrategic conflict taking place, but it’s effectively a geo-financial war between the US and Russia. We have the collapse in the oil prices; we have the currency wars; we have the contrived “shorting” — selling short — of the ruble. We have a geo-financial war, and what we are seeing as a consequence of this geo-financial war is that first of all, it has brought about a close alliance between Russia and China.

China understands that Russia constitutes the first domino; if Russia is to fall, China will be next. These two states are together moving to create a parallel financial system, disentangled from the Western financial system.

For some time, the international order was structured around the United Nations and the corpus of international law, but more and more the West has tended to bypass the UN as an institution

designed to maintain the international order, and instead relies on economic sanctions to pressure some countries. We have a dollar-based financial system, and through instrumentalizing America's position as controller of all dollar transactions, the US has been able to bypass the old tools of diplomacy and the UN — in order to further its aims.

But increasingly, this monopoly over the reserve currency has become the unilateral tool of the United States — displacing multilateral action at the UN. The US claims jurisdiction over any dollar-denominated transaction that takes place anywhere in the world. And most business and trading transactions in the world are denominated in dollars. This essentially constitutes the financialization of the global order: The International Order depends more on control by the US Treasury and Federal Reserve than on the UN as before.” (“Turkey might become hostage to ISIL just like Pakistan did“, Today's Zaman)

Financial warfare, asymmetrical warfare, Forth Generation warfare, space warfare, information warfare, nuclear warfare, laser, chemical, and biological warfare. The US has expanded its arsenal well beyond the traditional range of conventional weaponry. The goal, of course, is to preserve the post-1991 world order (The dissolution up of the Soviet Union) and maintain full spectrum dominance. The emergence of a multi-polar world order spearheaded by Moscow poses the greatest single threat to Washington's plans for continued domination. The first significant clash between these two competing world views will likely take place sometime this summer in East Ukraine. God help us.

NOTE: The Novorussia Armed Forces (NAF) currently have 8,000 Ukrainian regulars surrounded in Debaltsevo, East Ukraine. This is a very big deal although the media has been (predictably) keeping the story out of the headlines.

Evacuation corridors have been opened to allow civilians to leave the area. Fighting could break out at anytime. At present, it looks like a good part of the Kiev's Nazi army could be destroyed in one fell swoop. This is why Merkel and Hollande have taken an emergency flight to Moscow to talk with Putin. They are not interested in peace. They merely want to save their proxy army from annihilation.

I expect Putin may intervene on behalf of the Ukrainian soldiers, but I think commander Zakharchenko will resist. If he lets these troops go now, what assurance does he have that they won't be back in a month or so with high-powered weaponry provided by our war-mongering congress and White House?

Tell me; what choice does Zakharchenko really have? If his comrades are killed in future combat because he let Kiev's army escape, who can he blame but himself?

There are no good choices.