

Russia Pursues Diplomacy But Prepares for War

by Nancy Spannaus

Aug. 11—For weeks now, but with increasing intensity over recent days, the Russian government has been engaged in non-stop diplomacy with everyone who will talk—the Red Cross, the Kiev government, Secretary of State John Kerry, among them—to try to avert further genocide by Ukrainian forces who are besieging the southeastern Ukrainian cities of Lugansk and Donetsk. The response from Ukraine, the United States, and Britain has been unequivocal: We will consider the delivery of humanitarian aid by Russia to be an invasion. We will continue to level the cities until the anti-Kiev militias surrender.

President Vladimir Putin, who, according to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, is personally on top of the situation, has drawn the lessons of the NATO stance. As early as 2011, in the wake of the assassination of Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, the Russian government made public that it knew that it, and China, were the targets of NATO's "regime-change" offensive, through means, up to and potentially including, thermonuclear war. Since then, Russia has made systematic efforts to avoid direct confrontation through diplomacy—while laying the groundwork domestically and internationally to defend itself against the threatened war.

While beginning a process of both military modernization, and establishing a war economy, the Russians, as well as the Chinese, have consistently offered an alternative to the West, including offers of joint work on

the Strategic Defense of Earth against comets and asteroids, and of economic cooperation in major infrastructure projects, such as the Bering Strait tunnel. Those who take these offers as a sign of weakness and fear do so at their peril. As Lyndon LaRouche has stressed, Russia *will not* capitulate to blackmail—and an ensuing war would be a war of extinction.

Attempting To Stop Genocide

The genocide ongoing in southeastern Ukraine, by both Ukrainian government forces and the freelance Nazi battalions made up of the forces that which helped bring that government to power, should be no surprise. As *EIR* has documented, along with Russian and other sources, the overthrow of the Yanukovych government last November came at the impetus of British- and American-nurtured Nazi networks, who carried out such genocide in the 1940s, and could be expected to do it again, especially against those identified in any way with Russia. *EIR*'s May 16 dossier on the Ukrainian coup was definitive,¹ and the current Kiev government's embrace of Nazi-style "ethnic cleansing" became obvious with its continued stonewalling on the investigation of the immolation of anti-Kiev civilians in the Odessa Trade Union building massacre of May 2.

1. "British Imperial Project in Ukraine: Violent Coup, Fascist Axioms, Neo-Nazis," *EIR*, May 16, 2014.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has repeatedly documented the genocidal results of the Ukrainian assault in southeastern Ukraine, especially the cities of Lugansk (originally 400,000 people) and Donetsk (originally one million people), and called for an international humanitarian mission. In addition to its own reports, it has cited the United Nations, which has said that over 1,360 people have been killed, and more than 4,080 wounded in the assault, while hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have fled the region, mostly into Russia.

In a statement issued Aug. 4, the Russian Foreign Ministry offered lurid details: In Lugansk, no water supply, no cellphone communications, damage to natural gas lines, and destruction of several hospitals and clinics. In Donetsk, approximately a third of the population has fled, and the power station for south side of the city has been destroyed. The Israeli destruction of hospitals and schools in Gaza is paralleled in Ukraine.

At a special session of the UN Security Council Aug. 5, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed the Russian charges.

In response to Russian pleas for an immediate cessation of force and an urgent humanitarian relief effort, the Ukrainian government has responded by urging the entire population of Donetsk, Lugansk, and Gorlovka to evacuate—and the militias to surrender.

The Western capitals are equally craven. Washington, London, and Berlin have all declared that any effort by Moscow to send humanitarian aid would be “unjustified and illegal,” and lead to “additional consequences,” in the form of sanctions. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond declared that Russian action would result in an “increased cost” to Russia, and that if Russia is so concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Donbass region, “it should immediately cease arming separatists so that the Ukrainian authorities can restore law and order.”

The Russian Embassy in London responded caustically, that Hammond’s statement is “unjust, misleading and unacceptable,” that Russia is not supplying weapons to pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, and that “in-



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The usurper government in Kiev has so far refused to respond to Russian pleas for an immediate cessation of force against the civilian population in eastern Ukraine, and an urgent humanitarian relief effort in Donbass region. Shown, a destroyed house in an unidentified Donbass city, July 22, 2014.

stead the UK should do something to make the Kiev regime stop killing innocent civilians, prevent an appalling humanitarian catastrophe and start inclusive real political dialogue with all Ukrainian parties.”

As of the present writing, neither the U.K., the U.S., nor other major Western powers have acted so constructively. Rather, they have upped their rhetoric claiming that a Russian invasion is imminent.

Girding for a War Economy

While pressing for international action, Russia has begun an economic policy process which leading Russians themselves describe as necessitated by “war” against Russia. While the West chortles that its sanctions will shut off sources of credit and monetary support, what the Russians are looking at is their nation’s ability to physically survive. Like a competent military commander, they are asking: “Where are we going to get our supplies, our food, our energy, the electronics for our operations?” And they are systematically putting such a system in place.

This approach was clearly evident in Russia’s opening negotiations with the Chinese for replacing electronics imports now being blocked by EU sanctions, and in its announcements of new arrangements with various South American nations to replace meat, dairy,

fruit, and vegetables which Russia itself declared, on Aug. 6, it will no longer import from nations which have declared sanctions against it.

The most definitive voice on how the Russian government sees its policy has been that of Russian Academician Sergei Glazyev, an economist and official advisor to President Putin. Speaking with Bloomberg news on Aug. 8, Glazyev defined Russia's approach:

"Task no. 1 is to block those threats to economic security that are now coming from the U.S., neutralize them by reducing the dependence of our external economic activity on the mercy of American politicians, whose aggressiveness threatens the entire world.

"What could serve as our chief response is the implementation of a plan for fast-track development of the Russian economy.... This plan includes a transition to a sovereign monetary system underpinned by internal sources of credit, an active policy of innovation and support for progress in science and technology."

Bloomberg adds: "To further insulate its economy, Russia should abandon the use of the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency, according to Glazyev. Russia, whose international reserves are the world's fifth-biggest, needs to diversify its holdings to include China's yuan, India's rupee and Brazil's real." Glazyev emphasizes the importance of Russian economic cooperation with China, noting, Bloomberg wrote, that "the U.S. is trying to grow stronger at the expense of others, thwarting integration across Eurasia and checking China's clout."

Glazyev, the wire states, "perceives the world shifting to a war footing. There's a war waged against Russia with economic sanctions and military conflicts roiling Ukraine to Iraq, according to Glazyev." There is also an "economic war" under way, including the current sanctions against Russia, but these will backfire, according to Glazyev. Bloomberg writes: "The trading bloc stands to lose about EU1 trillion (\$1.3 trillion), an estimate he [Glazyev] says includes the possible bankruptcy of several European banks and companies toppled after the cutoff in financial and economic ties. An energy crisis in Europe will bring a sharp spike in prices and a loss of competitiveness for European producers. Meanwhile, Turkish, Chinese and East Asian nations will fill the void left by the departure of their European rivals from the Russian market. The fallout will cost EU250 billion for Germany alone while pushing the three Baltic states to the brink of an 'economic catastrophe,' he said. Lithuania and Latvia will lose the equivalent of half of their

entire economic output, and the cost for Estonia will reach 50% more than its gross domestic product, Glazyev said."

Glazyev's strategy, the Bloomberg interviewer concluded, is to build bridges with the international community to rein in America's "aggressive, paranoid political leadership."

Military Measures as Well

In recent years, Russia has devoted considerable resources and attention to modernizing and upgrading its military defenses and arsenal, in order to deal with the NATO threat. Russia conducted an unusually high number of military exercises in 2013, including of its strategic nuclear forces, and the process of military preparedness—much of it undertaken under the watchful eye of President Putin himself—has continued apace.

Exemplary is an announcement Aug. 7 that the Russian Defense Ministry intends to double the size of its Airborne Forces to 72,000 troops over the next five years, and develop its own rapid reaction force—in a direct symmetrical response to NATO's announced plans for expanding its rapid reaction force.

"A considerable airborne troops build-up was discussed at the Defense Ministry back in 2012-2013, but at first nobody was in a hurry to translate it into reality," retired Gen.-Col. Victor Yesin, a former chief of the Strategic Missile Forces, told Itar-TASS Aug. 10. "The latest decision was prompted by the current political situation in Ukraine and the need for reacting to actions by our counter-partners, such as NATO member-countries."

On Aug. 11, a Russian Airborne Forces spokeswoman announced command and staff exercises of about 3,000 paratroopers in two districts of Russia's Pskov region in northwestern Russia, as part of command and staff exercises of the 76th Air Assault Division, starting Aug. 11. Over 3,000 personnel will be airlifted by 15 IL-76 planes, the spokeswoman said, to a region right on the border with Estonia, which NATO is turning into a forward base against Russia.

These measures are only a small slice of what Russia has done over the past years to be prepared for the worst.

It remains to the Western nations to decide whether they will shift gears to join with Russia and China's economic thrust, by dumping the British Empire—or whether we will head into a conflict with a Russia prepared for World War III.