

A Crimean lever for partition of Ukraine

by Konstantin George

The "Parliament" of the Ukrainian autonomous region of Crimea, controlled by pro-Russian separatists, stopped just short of declaring the region's secession from Ukraine on May 20. The "Parliament" voted to put into effect the so-called Crimean Constitution of 1992, authorizing Crimea to become either an independent state, or affiliate with the Russian Federation outright. Parliament resolved to create a dual citizenship for Crimea's population, either Ukrainian-"Crimean" or Ukrainian-Russian, and introduce the Russian ruble to replace the Ukrainian karbovanets as the region's currency. Emulating the 1992-93 *modus operandi* of the Russian-directed secessionist operation in the Georgian region of Abkhazia, it was resolved to create a "Crimean Defense Ministry" and "Crimean Armed Forces."

Hours after these actions, tensions were deliberately fueled by Moscow. Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued a provocative declaration, warning Ukraine not to "use force" to suppress secessionism in Crimea. Over the next days, the main Russian TV station, Ostankino, which broadcasts throughout the former U.S.S.R., dispatched disinformation about Ukrainian troop reinforcements "pouring into" Crimea, alleging that Ukraine was about to employ armed force there. On May 23, Ostankino reported: 1) that 1,600 additional Ukrainian troops had arrived in Crimea, plus "several battalions of special troops"; and 2) that Ukrainian "special units" were planning to seize the TV center and the telephone exchange in Simferopol, Crimea's capital, citing to this effect "Crimean Interior Minister" Gen. Valeri Kuznetsov.

Ukrainian Deputy Interior Minister Valentin Nedigraylo denounced these reports as "complete nonsense."

Russian TV commentaries alleged that Russia and Ukraine had been brought to "the eve of war."

Moscow's insidious agenda

Russian TV commentaries aside, war over Crimea is improbable in the near future. Moscow's immediate aim is not for Crimea to stage a complete formal break with Ukraine and thus force a conflict. The real agenda is far more insidious, and enjoys the complete support of Great Britain. It is to escalate the Crimean situation continuously, as a lever toward the east-west partition of the Ukrainian nation.

The non-stop deterioration of the Ukrainian economy and impoverishment of the population have created strong support in the heavily Russified eastern and southern regions of Ukraine for a close affiliation with Russia. In Ukraine as a whole, with the crucial exception of west Ukraine, the economic and social devastation are eroding the popular will to resist a Russian return. This should not be misinterpreted as representing a majority support for such an outcome, but more of a fatalistic sense that nothing can be done to stop it. A national government acting to enforce an economic program in the interest of the nation and population could reverse this situation in short order. However, the prospects for this are all but zero at the present time.

It is not coincidental that the latest Crimean crisis erupted two days after the confirmation that a new deterioration at the national level was inevitable. The political signal occurred May 18, when the new Kiev Parliament elected as its Speaker the Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz. The Socialist Party, which ran together with the Communist Party in an electoral bloc on a platform for Ukraine re-integrating with Russia, is nothing more than a front for the Communist Party. This shift of power in Parliament could augur a similar shift of power in the Ukrainian presidency. Presidential elections are set for June 26, and there is a high risk that the winner could be former Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, who has campaigned for Ukraine's reintegration with Russia. So, Moscow has no intention of sabotaging what it views as its excellent prospects for cheaply reconquering most of Ukraine, minus the western regions, by going too far, too fast in Crimea.

It is not surprising that the chairman of the Crimean "Parliament," Sergei Tsekov, admitted on May 23 that the May 20 actions had been designed to avoid "other variants" that "would have led to an immediate break with Ukraine." To make sure that these tactics remain in force throughout the crisis, every action taken by "Crimea" occurs only after consultation and coordination with Moscow. To ensure this, Crimean "Vice President" Yevgeni Saburov arrived in Moscow soon after the crisis began, to coordinate moves between the Yeltsin regime and the Crimean separatists. Saburov himself had been handpicked by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai, and arrived in Crimea from Moscow to fill his present post in early March.

London promotes partition

The problems of Ukraine are enormously compounded by the fact that the nation's partition is being promoted by Anglo-American financial forces, operating together with the Yeltsin regime in Moscow against Ukraine. These forces are centered around the Hollinger Corp., which has its headquarters in Canada. Its advisory board includes Britain's Lord Carrington and Henry Kissinger; its advisory board is chaired by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The criminal policy commitment of these forces to dis-

mantle the Ukrainian nation, can be documented in the lead editorial in the May 24 issue of the Hollinger-owned London *Daily Telegraph*:

"It may be that the Ukrainian state—which finds itself divided by one of the great cultural fault lines between western and eastern Orthodox Christianity—is not viable in the long term. If so, partition should be responsibly negotiated on the basis of mutual respect. Any attempt to carry out partition on another basis, such as Russia's present Serbia-style strategy of fanning inter-communal tensions and stimulating economic warfare, is fraught with the most incalculable consequences."

A further commentary embedded in a *Daily Telegraph* article on the Russia-Ukraine crisis made a similar point:

"Moscow appears to be trying not to provoke Kiev, believing that the economic and political crisis afflicting Ukraine will sooner or later force the country to rejoin the Russian orbit."

The late-May visit by British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd to both Moscow and Kiev, should be seen in the light of this British policy, which Moscow agrees with, of no war, just a "peaceful" partition of the Ukrainian nation. Hurd met with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on May 23. Both have the talent of being able to speak out of both sides of their mouths at once. Said Hurd: "We believe, as the Russian government believes, that Crimea is part of Ukraine. Sovereignty is not in question, so any dispute is up to the government of Ukraine to settle with the people of Crimea." This statement was made with the full knowledge that given the situation in the Ukrainian Parliament, and what could happen after the elections on June 26, the next Ukrainian government could make the Crimea issue superfluous by moving to have Ukraine rejoin the Russian orbit. Kozyrev supported Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, but stressed that the "wishes of the Crimean people must be respected."

The Crimean crisis will thus be kept alive to maintain the lever for future Ukrainian partition. Thus, predictably, the two days of talks in Moscow over May 24-25 between Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Ukrainian Acting Prime Minister Yefim Zviagilsky (who is in any case powerless) got nowhere, as did Kiev talks between Ukraine and a Crimean delegation.

On May 24, Hurd arrived in Kiev, to continue his informal mediation mission, or, more precisely, to pursue his hidden agenda of destroying Ukraine as a viable nation. Taking at face value Hurd's statement that Crimea is part of Ukraine, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk hailed Britain's role: "I want to thank Britain for its support in the Crimean problem. I hope to have the same support in Britain and other parts of the world." The words of a man in complete desperation, or the words of a fool? History will provide that answer. For now, one can say, the words of a blind man.

British gameplan could fail, says LaRouche

Lyndon LaRouche, interviewed by the weekly "EIR Talks" radio show on May 25, was asked by interviewer Mel Klenetsky about the NATO Partnership for Peace, and Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachov's request for a special status for Russia. "I don't think it's worth a hill of beans, this so-called Partnership for Peace," he answered. "The Russians will play it for every bit of lemon juice they can get out of that particular lemon; but even if they like the lemon juice, they're not going to marry the lemon. I'm not sure the Russians will even accept the Partnership for Peace at this point; though, being Russians, and being in their present circumstances, they're likely to play the situation to the full. It was a very bad idea, probably a British idea that somebody pushed around through the U.S. and elsewhere.

"It's the British game. The British have always tried to play the game with Russia, particularly in the 20th century, by setting up a kind of condominium with Russia."

He elaborated: "For example, the British orchestrated the Russian [Revolution], playing a German side and a British side, to bring to power either the Mensheviks or the Bolsheviks. So their little German game—a British intelligence operation run through German military intelligence, which really didn't quite fully realize what was going on—brought the Bolsheviks to power. Then Captain Hill of British intelligence went over there to work with Dzerzhinsky and Lenin and Trotsky, all of whom were quite witting of what was going on. So British intelligence set up the famous Russian secret police with Dzerzhinsky, the Cheka.

"Since that time, we've seen the British operation with the Communists, as with the Trust operation of the early to middle 1920s; with the postwar efforts to get a condominium at Yalta with Stalin; then getting a nuclear condominium with Khrushchov, beginning about 1955, and then going through various ebbs; then the attempt to get the perestroika agreements with Gorbachov.

"All the way through, the British side and people who are tied to the British way of thinking in the United States, have always tried to push this kind of a condominium, with the idea that if the major superpowers, both manipulated by Britain, could come to some kind of a working agreement, this kind of condominium could be a way of running the world."

But, LaRouche cautioned, "the Russians so far have not indicated that they're going to do what the British want, to have a civil war with Ukraine or with Transcaucasus. China is very well aware that the British are planning a civil war in China, to occur shortly after the breakup of the Deng dynasty. But the Chinese say, 'We're not going to do that.'"