

CRIMEA

Where Russia's War Started
and
Where Ukraine Will Win



Taras Kuzio

THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

1310 L Street NW

Suite 810

Washington, DC 20005

<http://www.jamestown.org>

Copyright © 2024 The Jamestown Foundation

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written consent.

For copyright and permissions information, contact The Jamestown Foundation, 1310 L Street NW, Suite 810, Washington, DC 20005.

The views expressed in the book are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of The Jamestown Foundation or any other organization or government.

For more information on this book, email pubs@jamestown.org.

CRIMEA

WHERE RUSSIA'S WAR STARTED AND WHERE UKRAINE
WILL WIN



By Dr. Taras Kuzio
July 2024



Executive Summary

- Russian President Vladimir Putin’s annexation of the Crimea Peninsula in 2014 emboldened Moscow to launch the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, fanning the flames of “pan-Russian” nationalism and providing the ideological justification.
- The cultural, military, and geopolitical significance of Crimea is underpinned by its outsized importance in Putin’s understanding of his own role as the “gatherer and unifier of Russian lands.”
- Crimea offers a cautionary tale of what a decade of Russian occupation can bring as the peninsula has served as a testing ground for the Kremlin’s repressive Russification and de-Ukrainianizing policies. Most egregious of these acts are the atrocities committed against the Crimean Tatars and other minority groups.
- Understanding how Crimea was stolen from Ukraine, both operationally and diplomatically, provides a framework to conceptualize how Moscow’s *Anschluss* and the 2022 invasion could have been avoided. The 2014 annexation was made possible due to the Kremlin’s infiltration and cooption of Ukraine’s political, security, and military institutions.
- The West’s inadequate response to the invasion of Georgia in 2008 and the subsequent invasion of Crimea and southeastern Ukraine led Putin to believe that the West was too “weak and divided” and could be easily “bought.”
- For Ukraine to defeat Putin’s army, it requires munitions on a scale and timetable that the West has thus far been either unable or unwilling to provide. The future of Ukraine may come down to the results of the 2024 US presidential elections, as European arms will not be sufficient for Kyiv to retake its stolen territory.

Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones [Kherson], where Prince Vladimir was baptized. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilization, and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian Empire are also in Crimea. This is also Sevastopol—a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet.

In people’s hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, under any circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20th century.

Then, in 1954, a decision was made to transfer the Crimean Region to Ukraine, along with Sevastopol, even though it was a federal city. ... It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realized that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered.

—Russian President Vladimir Putin (2014)¹

¹Leveda Center polls on Crimea can be found at: <https://www.levada.ru/en/tag/crimea/>

Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win

Taras Kuzio

The first invasion of a neighbor and forcible change of international borders in Europe since World War II took place in Crimea a decade ago when Russia invaded and annexed the peninsula.² Moscow's current full-scale war against Ukraine has been an outgrowth of weak Western responses to Russia's invasions of Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 and 2014, respectively.³ The Kremlin blatantly violated international law in both invasions when it illegally annexed two regions of Georgia (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and three regions of Ukraine (Crimea and approximately half of the two Donbas oblasts, Donetsk and Luhansk).

The Western response to both invasions was weak, with no sanctions imposed for the invasion and annexation of Georgian territory and only mild sanctions for the annexation of Crimea and invasion of

Ukrainian territory. After 2008, much of the West continued business as usual with Russia. For example, former US President Barack Obama's administration, believing former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to be more flexible than his predecessor, launched a reset of US-Russian relations.⁴ During the 2012 US presidential elections, Obama ridiculed his Republican Party rival Mitt Romney, who said, "Russia, this is, without question, our number one geopolitical foe." Obama replied, "The 1980s are now calling to ask for their foreign policy back, because the Cold War's been over for 20 years."⁵ Obama believed, "Ukraine is a core Russian interest but not an American one, so Russia will always be able to maintain escalatory dominance there. ... The fact is that Ukraine, which is a non-NATO country, is going to be vulnerable to military

²This report builds on a previous one published by this author in 2010. Taras Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint*, The Jamestown Foundation, November 11, 2010.

³Pavel Felgenhauer, "Russian Forces Deploying for Possible Action in Georgia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, April 16, 2009; and Pavel Felgenhauer, "Putin Confirms the Invasion of Georgia Was Preplanned," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, August 9, 2012.

⁴US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul attended Medvedev's unveiling of his reform agenda. See Charles Clover, "Medvedev to Unveil Reform Agenda," *Financial Times*, September 9, 2010, <https://www.ft.com/content/f77f282a-bc39-11df-8c02-00144feab49a>.

⁵*The New York Times*, "Election 2012. Obama to Romney: Cold War Is Over—Third Presidential Debate," October 22, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1409sXBLEg>.

domination by Russia no matter what we do.”⁶ This miscalculation has been fatal for Ukraine.

Similarly, many Western governments continued business as usual with Russia after 2014, advising Ukrainian leaders that Crimea was lost and that restoring sovereignty over it would be a fruitless endeavor. In invading Ukraine and illegally annexing its territory, Russia infringed upon treaties signed with Ukraine recognizing their common border and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, according to which Kyiv received security assurances in return for nuclear disarmament. The United States and the United Kingdom, also signatories to the Budapest Memorandum, ignored their commitments to Ukraine in 2014 and opposed sending military assistance through to the eve of the 2022 full-scale invasion. A 2015 poll of 27 top Western experts asked whether the United States should arm Ukraine. Out of these, 18 were opposed, and nine were in favor.⁷ Among those opposed were some leading luminaries of US scholarship on Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The West’s lack of resolve was also evident when comparing the United Kingdom’s expulsion of only four Russian diplomats for poisoning Russian defector Alexander Litvinenko with radioactive material in 2006 in London. Later, in 2018, a combined 153 Russian diplomats in 28 countries were expelled after the attempted murder of Russian defector Sergei Skripal in 2018 in the United Kingdom.⁸ It took London a decade after Litvinenko’s murder to publish a detailed report accusing the Kremlin of the assassination. In the Skripal case, a report was published less than a year after the attempted assassination, detailing a chain of command that led back to Putin.⁹ Russia used biological and chemical agents in both assassinations.

In many ways, Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine was brought on by a failure to understand that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s Kremlin was as militant, imperialist, and able to weaponize corruption as it revealed itself to be. In the early 1990s, the West basked in the liberal democratic world’s victory over communism and celebrated what Francis Fukuyama described as “the end of history.” Almost all

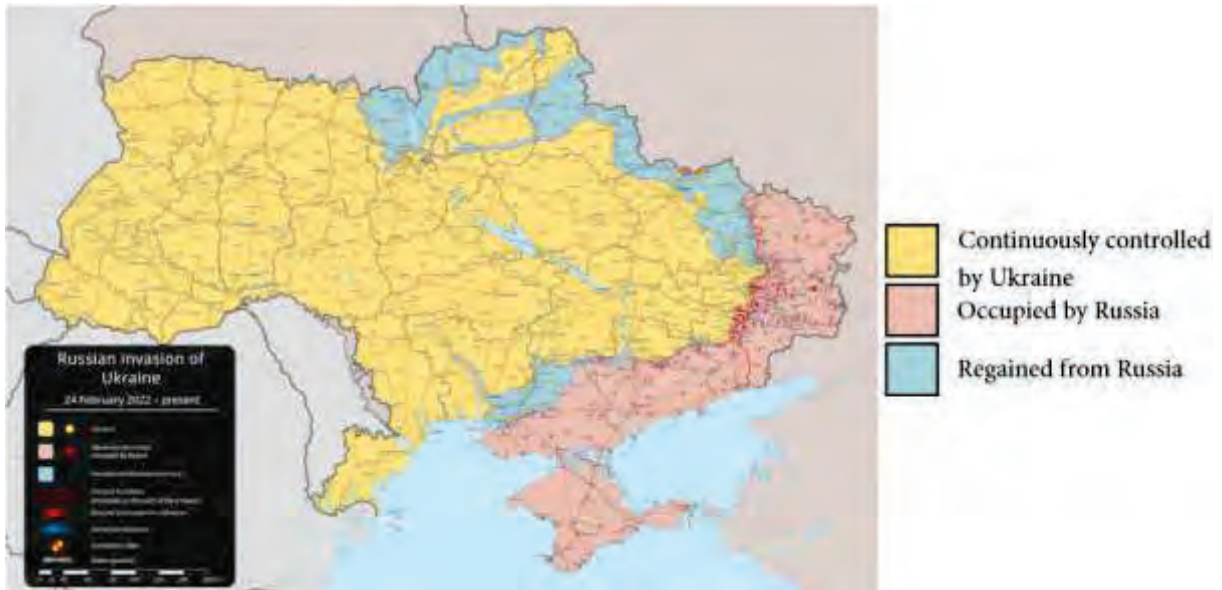
⁶Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine: The U.S. President Talks Through His Hardest Decisions About America’s Role in the World,” *The Atlantic*, April 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>.

⁷*Foreign Affairs*, “Should the United States Arm Ukraine? Foreign Affairs Asks the Experts,” February 24, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2015-02-24/should-united-states-arm-ukraine>

⁸Alia Chughtai and Mariya Petkova, “Skripal Case Diplomatic Expulsions in Numbers,” *Al Jazeera*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/4/3/skripal-case-diplomatic-expulsions-in-numbers>

⁹Chairman Sir Robert Owen, *The Litvinenko Inquiry Report Into the death of Alexander Litvinenko* (London: UK Parliament, January 2016), <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a8055c340f0b62302692e48/The-Litvinenko-Inquiry-H-C-695-web.pdf>.

Russian Invasion of Ukraine (as of July 2024)



Source: Wikipedia

Western governments slashed their defense budgets. In 2014, only five of the 30 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) spent more than 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on defense, a NATO guideline introduced in 2006. As of today, only 18 out of 32 members spend 2 or more percent on defense.¹⁰

Putin's virulently anti-US and anti-Western rhetoric in his February 2007 speech to the Munich Security Conference did not change the West's belief in the end of

history.¹¹ Neither did Russia's invasions of Georgia and Ukraine. The Kremlin miscalculated in launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, expecting a weak reaction based on the earlier experiences in Georgia and Ukraine, Washington's unwillingness to act on self-declared "red lines" in Syria, and the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan. In other words, the Kremlin perceived the West as weak and divided.¹²

Russia's imperialistic onslaught against Ukraine began in Crimea and will end when

¹⁰NATO, "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2023)," July 7, 2023. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_f2014/assets/pdf/2023/7/pdf/230707-def-exp-2023-en.pdf.

¹¹Vladimir Putin, "Speech the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," President of Russia, February 10, 2007, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.

¹²Salahuddin Hawa, "From Syria to Ukraine: Mapping Parallels With Russian 'Ants' Crawl' and 'Scorched Earth Strategies,'" Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 13, 2022. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/syria-ukraine-mapping-parallels-russian-ants-crawl-and-scorched-earth-strategies>; Pavel Luzin, "The Kremlin's Narratives for Its War Against Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, February 2, 2023; and Ksenia Kirillova, "What Are the Kremlin's Hopes for Its War Against Ukraine?," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, February 6, 2023.

Ukraine liberates the peninsula. Russian opposition speaker and former Chess Grandmaster Gary Kasparov told the NATO Public Forum in July 2023:

The liberation of Russia from Putin's fascism will not start until the Ukrainian flag is raised in Sevastopol. Period. ... You have to kill the idea of empire in the minds of Russians. They have to understand the war is lost. ... Ukraine must win. Ukrainian victory includes three things: liberation, reparation, and justice.¹³

Russian leaders did not begin Russian state-building in 1992 with a clean slate. They inherited a Tsarist and Soviet legacy that shaped their attitudes to domestic and foreign policies. In the Soviet Union, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic was the only republic of 15 without its own institutions, such as a republican Communist Party. Russian and Soviet identities were essentially the same. In late

1991, Russia took control of Soviet institutions in Moscow, and Russian state-building began in a top-down fashion.

One of these Soviet institutions was the Committee for State Security (KGB), which took power nine years after the Soviet Union's disintegration. It transformed Russia into a stratocracy run by the *siloviki* (security forces) and, by the 2022 invasion, into a totalitarian dictatorship.¹⁴ Putin views himself as following earlier empire-builders in Russian history, including Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, and Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.¹⁵ Putin began his "gathering of Russian [eastern Slavic] lands" in Ukraine in 2014. After he failed to pressure Ukraine to accept a "little Russian" status within the Russian world (*Russkiy mir*) from 2014 to 2021 using the Minsk Accords, he launched his "special military operation" that the Kremlin leader believed would conquer Ukraine in a few days and open the door for the installation of a puppet leader, such as Viktor Yanukovich.¹⁶

¹³Gary Kasparov (speech, German Marshall Fund of the United States, NATO Public Forum), Facebook, May 9, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/gmfus/videos/836791284528939/>; and Legion of Liberty, Twitter, July 12, 2023. https://twitter.com/legion_svboda/status/1679030668859195392.

¹⁴For more on this evolution, see Adrian Karatnycky, "Russia is Back to the Stalinist Future," *Foreign Policy*, March 24, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/24/russia-putin-stalin-soviet-election-war-repression-political-prisoners/>.

¹⁵Vladimir Socor, "Russia Keeps 'Gathering' Non-Russian Lands in Ukraine and Beyond," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation; and Pavel Felgenhauer, "Putin's Russia Reverts Still Deeper Into Soviet Legacy," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 13, 2021. See also the series of books published by the Russian Military Historical Society at <https://rvio.histrf.ru/activities/news/knigu-o-vladimire-putine-predstavili-chitateliam-i-zhurnalistam>; and <https://www.ozon.ru/category/sobirатели-земли-русской/>. The organization is run by Putin's favorite historian and former Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky.

¹⁶Pavel K. Baev, "Russia Enters Third Year of War Diminished, Degraded, and Joyless," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, January 8, 2024.

The Brezhnev-era doctrine of intervening in neighboring countries when Russia feels its national interests are threatened continues to influence today's Kremlin.¹⁷ Soviet and Russian leaders have both held selective attitudes toward international law and played *with* the rules rather than *by them*. Russian leaders inherited an arrogant view of their neighbors, which originated in how Soviet leaders in Moscow viewed the non-Russian republics. Russian leaders do not view the post-Soviet republics as truly sovereign states because they allegedly lack the economic, military, and cultural attributes of sovereignty.¹⁸ In the eyes of Russian imperial nationalists such as Putin, Ukraine will always be dominated by a foreign power. The question is whether this power will be the West or Russia. Russian imperial nationalists view Ukraine and Belarus not only as devoid of sovereignty but also as "Russian" provinces of a pan-Russian nation composed of "great," "little," and "white" Russians (i.e., Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, respectively). Putin has repeatedly said Russians and Ukrainians are

"one people" because they allegedly share the same culture, civilization, and spiritual values. Russian leaders describe Ukraine as a US puppet state devoid of agency and explained to then-Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski that Ukraine was "sub-sovereign."¹⁹

The Soviet Union and Russian Federation prioritized "justice" over legality. In 2014, Putin described Crimea's integration into (i.e., annexation by) the Russian Federation as "restorative justice." He used similar arguments during the September 2022 referendum on "historical Russian lands," using the Tsarist term "New Russia" (*Novorossiya*) when referring to southeast Ukraine. Russia has justified its military aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 using the same disinformation, proclaiming the need to protect Russian speakers from repression and "genocide" by Ukrainian "Nazis."²⁰ As in the Soviet Union, the Kremlin defines "Nazis" as any Ukrainian, irrespective of their political views, who do not want to be part of a Russian Union and/or the Russian world.²¹ Supporters of

¹⁷Charles T. Baroch, *The Soviet Doctrine of Sovereignty: The So-Called Brezhnev Doctrine* (American Bar Association, 1970).

¹⁸EUvsDisInfo, "Key Narratives in Pro-Kremlin Disinformation Part 3: 'Lost Sovereignty,'" August 13, 2022. <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/key-narratives-in-pro-kremlin-disinformation-part-3-lost-sovereignty/>.

¹⁹Luke Harding, *A Very Expensive Poison: The Definitive Story of the Murder of Litvinenko and Russia's War With the West* (London: Guardian Books, 2016), 317.

²⁰Ksenia Kirillova, "Propaganda and 'Active Measures' in Russian Information Operations," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 13, 2024, <https://jamestown.org/program/propaganda-and-active-measures-in-russian-information-operations/>.

²¹Paul Goble, "Moscow's War Against Ukraine Results in Fateful Losses on the Home Front," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, December 21, 2023; and Vladimir Socor, "Putin Doubles-Down on Non-Negotiable Terms on Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, June 20, 2024.

the 2013–14 Euromaidan Revolution and European integration are, therefore, by default, “Nazis”—even when they are of Jewish heritage, such as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Practically all Russian political forces, even those who called themselves democratic and liberal, refused to accept Crimea and the Port of Sevastopol as Ukrainian. Russian territorial claims to Crimea and Sevastopol began in January 1992, the first month of the post-Soviet era.²² In 2014, Russian criticism of the annexation of Crimea was muted, and only one deputy in the State Duma, Ilya Ponomarev, voted against it.²³ Even the late opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, supported the annexation of Crimea, though he condemned Putin’s forcible seizure of the territory.²⁴ Since 2014, Russian public support for Crimea’s annexation has remained steady at approximately 85 percent.²⁵

Overall, Crimea has played a central role in Russia’s hybrid war against Ukraine.²⁶ The

following analysis builds on a 2010 report published on the cusp of Viktor Yanukovich’s election as Ukraine’s pro-Russian president.²⁷ Yanukovich and the Party of Regions laid the groundwork for Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Yanukovich has been charged twice for treason, primarily over the signing of the Kharkiv Accords in 2010. This agreement extended the Russian Federation’s lease of the Black Sea Fleet’s base for 25 years and essentially gave the Kremlin a permanent staging ground in Ukrainian territory. Yanukovich’s second count of treason was for requesting Russian military intervention into Crimea in March 2014.²⁸

The report is divided into eight sections. The first analyzes how a weak Western response in Georgia emboldened Russian revanchism in Crimea, Syria, and southeastern Ukraine. The second investigates how Yanukovich and the leader of the pro-Russian Party of Regions opened the door to the *Anschluss* of Crimea. The

²²Grazvydas Jasutis, “Crimea: Between Annexation and Reunification,” Geneva Rights Platform, The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, November 2018, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Crimea%20between%20annexation%20and%20reunification.pdf>.

²³Pippa Crawford, “Ilya Ponomarev: ‘We Have to Capture the Kremlin. There Is No Other Way,’” *The Moscow Times*, January 19, 2024.

²⁴Alexei Navalny, “How to Punish Putin,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/20/opinion/how-to-punish-putin.html>.

²⁵Levada Center, “Nastojashhij material (informacija) proizveden i rasprostranen inostrannym agentom ano «levada-centr» libo kasaetsja dejatel'nosti inostrannogo agenta ano «levada-centr»,” (press release, Moscow, May 19, 2021), <https://www.levada.ru/en/2021/05/19/crimea-3/>.

²⁶Vladimir Socor, “Crimea Platform: Ukraine’s Initiative to Raise the Costs of Russia’s Occupation,” February 15, 2021.

²⁷Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe’s Next Flashpoint?*

²⁸Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Yanukovich Defends Russian Naval Base Extension,” April 22, 2010, https://www.rferl.org/a/Yanukovich_Defends_Russian_Naval_Base_Extension/2021537.html; and *The Kyiv Post*, “High Treason Case Against Former President Yanukovich and His PM Advances to Court,” September 16, 2023. <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/21684>.

third analyzes the way in which Russia weaponized the Russkiy Mir Foundation (Russian World Foundation) to promote Russian soft power up to its initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014. The fourth investigates the Kremlin's capture of Ukraine's military and security forces during Yanukovich's presidency. The fifth details the way in which Russia pursued its *Anschluss* of Crimea in 2014. The sixth is a short section on how the Azov Sea region has long been an area of conflict, starting over the island of Tuzla in 2003 through to Russian naval piracy in 2018 and full-scale occupation four years later. The seventh and eighth sections analyze the Kremlin's template for de-Ukrainianizing and Russifying southeastern Ukraine, devised in Crimea, and the Russian Federation's atrocities against Crimean Tatars.

Weak Western Responses Embolden Russia (2008–22)

Russian “active measures” and other forms of hybrid warfare are not the inventions of

Putin or Chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov.²⁹ These strategies draw on a long history of Soviet experience and doctrine.³⁰ Frozen conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan took shape in the 1990s during Boris Yeltsin's presidency. Putin has built on this inheritance by invading Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 and 2022, illegally annexing South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the former and Crimea and four Ukrainian regions in the latter.

The West did not respond resolutely to Russian revanchism until its 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. No sanctions were imposed on Moscow after Russia's invasion of Georgia, and weak sanctions were implemented in response to the annexation of Crimea. The initial Western reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea and hybrid war in Donbas was similarly feeble.³¹ Tougher sanctions were only introduced after Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 was shot down in July 2014 by a Russian Buk missile and after Russia's overt invasion of eastern Ukraine a month later.³²

²⁹Kirillova, “Propaganda and ‘Active Measures’ in Russian Information Operations.”

³⁰For more on this, see Taras Kuzio and Paul D’Anieri, *The Sources of Russia’s Great Power Politics: Ukraine and the Challenge to the European Order* (Bristol: E-IR Publishing, 2018), 25–69. <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/the-sources-of-russias-great-power-politics-ukraine-and-the-challenge-to-the-european-order>.

³¹Vladimir Socor, “Russia Completes the Annexation of Crimea,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 19, 2014; and Thomas Kent, *How Russia Loses: Hubris and Miscalculation in Putin’s Kremlin* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, October 2023).

³²Gabriela Baczynska and Aleksandar Vasovic, “West Agrees to Wider Russia Sanctions as Kiev Says Forces Near Crash Site,” Reuters, July 29, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0FX11Z/>; Sergey Sukhankin “The Economic Aspect of Russia’s War in Ukraine: Sanctions, Implications, Complications,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown foundation; and Yuri Lapaiev, “Tightening Sanctions Will Further Compromise Russia’s War-Torn Economy,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, April 3, 2024.

EU negotiators in 2008 and 2014–15 effectively sided with Russia over Georgia and later Ukraine by ignoring the Russian occupation of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Crimea, failing to press Moscow to restore both countries' territorial integrity. Crimea was not included in the Minsk-1 and Minsk-2 Accords.³³ Western leaders advised former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to accept Russian control over Crimea, telling him that the peninsula was lost forever.³⁴ During the 2016 French presidential elections, Republican candidate Nicolas Sarkozy supported officially recognizing Russian sovereignty over Crimea.³⁵ For Zelenskyy, the lesson is clear: the West should have stopped Putin earlier. The Ukrainian president has said that “Obama was not strong against him” when Putin seized Crimea in 2014. “He captured Crimea, and there was no reaction at all. Nobody pushed him back.”³⁶

Some think tank experts and scholars pushed the notion that Crimea had “always been Russian.”³⁷ In the words of British academic Richard Sakwa, Crimea returned to its “natural home” in 2014.³⁸ British historian Neil Kent espoused a similar view.³⁹ Sakwa justified Russia's actions in Crimea by describing it as “the heartland of Russian nationhood”—a spurious claim based on Russian imperial nationalist historiography. Putin claims Kyivan Rus' to be the foundation for “one thousand years of Russian statehood.”⁴⁰ Meanwhile, experts Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who subscribe to the US realist school of international relations,⁴¹ described Crimea as “an indisputably Russian territory.”⁴² These historically inaccurate statements assume that Crimea had no history prior to its annexation by the Russian Empire in 1783. In fact, the Ottoman Empire ruled Crimea for

³³Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 166, 172–73, 179–181, 187, 193, 201–02, 206–07.

³⁴Interview with Petro Poroshenko, Kyiv, June 14, 2023.

³⁵Kim Willshur, “‘Shameful’ Nicolas Sarkozy Under Fire for Defending Putin,” *The Guardian*, August 19, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/19/shameful-nicolas-sarkozy-under-fire-for-defending-putin>.

³⁶David Ignatius, “Zelensky: ‘We Are Trying to Find Some Way Not to Retreat,’” *The Washington Post*, March 29, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/03/29/ignatius-zelensky-interview-ukraine-aid-russia/>.

³⁷See “Racism, Crimea, and Crimean Tatars” in Taras Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies? Nationalism (Imperialism), Racism, and War* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2020), 36–65.

³⁸Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine. Crisis in the Borderland* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 52.

³⁹See this author's review of Neil Kent's 2016 book *Crimea: A History* and other books published as: “Russia–Ukraine Crisis: The Blame Game, Geopolitics and National Identity,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 3 (May 2018): 462–73.

⁴⁰Tucker Carlson, interview with Putin, President of Russia, February 9, 2024, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411>.

⁴¹See my review of Samuel Charap and Timothy J. Colton, *Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia* (New York: Routledge, 2016) in Kuzio, “Russia–Ukraine Crisis: The Blame Game, Geopolitics and National Identity.”

⁴²Rajan Menon and Eugene Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine: The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 98.

twice the amount of time that Russia did. Crimea was also part of Soviet and then independent Ukraine for 60 years, from 1954 to 2014.⁴³

A decade after the invasion and occupation of Crimea, Shaun Walker and Pjotr Sauer, journalists at *The Guardian*, recalled, “At the time, although almost no other countries recognized the annexation as legitimate, most people believed Russian rule was likely to remain in Crimea for decades.”⁴⁴ This would have remained the case if not for the election of Zelenskyy as president of Ukraine in April 2019 and Putin’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. Zelenskyy took a tougher stance on Crimea than his predecessor, Poroshenko. In 2019, he proposed that the Minsk Accords should be revised to include Crimea, not just the occupied Donbas regions.⁴⁵ Moscow refused, stating that Crimea’s status was not open to discussion. The following year, Zelenskyy unveiled the Crimean Platform to lobby the international community over the illegal status of the Russian-occupied peninsula.⁴⁶

Russia’s full-scale invasion elevated Crimea’s status in the international arena, with Zelenskyy outlining liberation as one of Ukraine’s goals in its struggle against Russia. Since the February 2022 invasion, Crimea has been repeatedly attacked by Ukrainian forces, and the Ukrainian Navy claims a third of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet has been destroyed, forcing vessels to relocate to Novorossiysk in the North Caucasus.⁴⁷ The Kremlin’s invasion has “exposed Russian dominance of the peninsula as vulnerable for the first time since 2014.”⁴⁸

The West’s failure to respond to the invasion of Georgia led Putin to believe that his annexation of Crimea would be treated similarly. Western capitals had sent a signal to the Kremlin that the West was weak and divided, could be bought with corruption and energy, and would merely slap Putin on the wrist for his imperial revanchism. In 2022, Russia was proven wrong as the Western response was much tougher, and Kyiv’s reinvigorated NATO partners demonstrated their resolve.

⁴³Paul Robert Magocsi, *This Blessed Land: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

⁴⁴Shaun Walker and Pjotr Sauer, “‘The Fight Is Continuing’: A Decade of Russian Rule Has Not Silenced Ukrainian Voices in Crimea,” *The Guardian*, March 14, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/14/crimea-annexation-10-years-russia-ukraine>.

⁴⁵*Financial Times*, “Zelensky Stands Firm in First Encounter With Putin Over Crimea,” December 10, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/b9f1896c-1b4d-11ea-9186-7348c2f183af>.

⁴⁶Crimea Platform, May 9, 2024, <https://crimea-platform.org/en/>.

⁴⁷Thor Kabanenko, “Ukraine Restoring Security to the Black Sea,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 11, 2024; Andrii Ryzhenko, “Ukraine’s Drone and Missile Offensive in Black Sea Knocks Russian Navy Flat Aback,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 26, 2024; and *The Associated Press*, “Ukrainian Navy Says a Third of Russian Warships in the Black Sea Have Been Destroyed or Disabled,” March 26, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-black-sea-navy-warships-8f614d856370a564ffee1e49f5313343>.

⁴⁸Walker and Sauer, “‘The Fight Is Continuing.’”

Western willingness to ignore Russian revanchism was grounded in a reluctance to recognize who they were dealing with. Obama sought a reset with Moscow to distance his administration from that of his predecessors. In March 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov with a red button that read “Reset” and “*Peregruzka*” (a mistranslation that, in fact, reads “overload”).⁴⁹

The year before, Medvedev had issued decrees recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia as “independent” from Georgia.⁵⁰ He made a legally incorrect statement in defense of his decrees, claiming they reflected “the freely expressed will” of both peoples and that his action was in line with the UN Charter and other international agreements.⁵¹ Later, Medvedev revealed the real reasoning behind the move when he pointed to the West’s recognition of Kosovo’s “illegal declaration of independence.” He argued,

It would be impossible, after that, to tell the Abkhazians and Ossetians (and dozens of other groups around the world) that what was good for the Kosovo Albanians was not good for them. In international relations, you cannot have one rule for some and another rule for others.

The Kremlin would use the same argument when justifying the annexation of Crimea six years later. Six months after Obama’s “reset,” Medvedev sent a hawkish open letter with outrageous demands to Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, calling for a pro-Russian overhaul of Ukraine’s domestic and foreign policies.⁵²

Russia’s invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 and the annexation of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea, and parts of the Donbas region did little to change the West’s diplomatic, business, or even security cooperation with Moscow. This was especially true of Germany, which, after 2008, built a training center for Russia’s “little green men,”⁵³ or the special forces of the

⁴⁹Mikhail Zygar, “The Russian Reset That Never Was,” *Foreign Policy*, December 9, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/09/the-russian-reset-that-never-was-putin-obama-medvedev-libya-mikhail-zygar-all-the-kremlin-men/>.

⁵⁰Medvedev’s decree recognizing the “independence” of Abkhazia can be found at: “Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 26.08.2008 g. No. 1260,” President of Russia, May 9, 2024, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/27957>; and Medvedev’s decree recognizing the “independence” of South Ossetia: “Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 26.08.2008 g. No. 1261,” President of Russia, May 9, 2024, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/27958>.

⁵¹President of Russia, “Dmitrii Medvedev vystupil s zavjaveniem v svjazi s priznaniem nezavisimosti Iuzhnoi Osetii i Abhazii,” August 26, 2008, <http://www.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/XA/events/1223>.

⁵²A translation of Medvedev’s open letter can be found in Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine. Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), 438–39.

⁵³Konstantyn Mashovets, ‘Rossiyskyy spetsnaz na Donbasse: dyversanty, reyderi, ‘turysty,’” *News Resistance*, July 31, 2015, http://ru.espreso.tv/article/2015/07/31/rossiyskyy_specnaz_na_donbasse_dyversanty_reyderi_quotturystyquot.

Main Directorate of the Russian General Staff (GRU). These troops notoriously invaded Crimea in 2014.⁵⁴ Nord Stream, a company headed by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, built the Nord Stream I gas pipeline from Russia to Germany in 2010–11. Despite numerous warnings from Central and Eastern Europe over the geopolitical nature of Russian energy and the Kremlin’s weaponization of corruption, Berlin pressed ahead with constructing the Nord Stream II pipeline from 2018 to 2021.⁵⁵ As a result, the Kremlin was under the assumption that its full-scale invasion in 2022 would not lead the German government to cancel the project, which was ready to begin operations later that same year.

Yanukovych Opens the Door to the *Anschluss* of Crimea

Eight years before 2014, the pro-Russian Party of Regions, led by Yanukovych, took

three steps that enabled Russia’s annexation of Crimea. First, a cooperation agreement was signed in 2005 between the Party of Regions and Putin’s party of power, United Russia.⁵⁶ Second, Yanukovych’s Party of Regions inked a political alliance with Crimean Russian nationalists in 2006, bringing them back from a decade of marginalization.⁵⁷ The Party of Regions opened Pandora’s box by providing legitimacy and parliamentary seats to political forces that supported Crimea’s incorporation into Russia. Without the party’s help, these extremist political forces likely would never have won elections on their own.⁵⁸ Third, Yanukovych and his party either ignored or, more likely, facilitated the Russification⁵⁹ of the Ukrainian military. They also overlooked the activities of Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB), which operated throughout the post-Soviet space and effectively took control of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU).⁶⁰

⁵⁴Josh Rogin, “Germany Helped Prep Russia for War, U.S. Sources Say,” *The Daily Beast*, April 22, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/04/22/germany-helped-prep-russia-for-war-u-s-sources-say.html>

⁵⁵German Marshall Fund, “Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder Becomes Chairman of Russian State-Controlled Nord Stream Pipeline Company Directly After Leaving Office,” November 5, 2005, <https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/incident/former-german-chancellor-gerhard-schra%C2%B6der-becomes-chairman-of-russian-state-controlled-nord-stream-pipeline-company-directly-after-leaving-office/>.

⁵⁶US Embassy Kyiv, “Ukraine: Regions Party Congress: A Handshake, a Communist, and the Russians,” August 8, 2007, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07KYIV1940_a.html.

⁵⁷Taras Kuzio, “Rise and Fall of the Party of Regions Political Machine,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62, no. 3, (2015): 174–186.

⁵⁸US Embassy Kyiv, “Ukraine: The Russia Factor in Crimea—Ukraine’s ‘Soft Underbelly?’,” December 17, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/12/06KYIV4489.html>; and US Embassy Kyiv, “Ukraine: Crimea Update—Less Tense Than in 2006: Interethnic, Russia, Land Factors Remain Central,” June 8, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/06/07KYIV1418.html>.

⁵⁹The promotion of Russian culture, language, and identity in non-Russian regions and countries is a key part of the Kremlin’s imperial toolkit.

⁶⁰Taras Kuzio, “Russianization of Ukrainian National Security Policy Under Viktor Yanukovych,” *Journal of Slavic Military*

The Russian Black Sea Fleet and Yanukovich's 2010 decision to grant Russia an extension on its lease in Crimea played a pivotal role in the peninsula's annexation. The fleet's intelligence officers had long supported separatists and pro-Russian extremists, who provided backup as fake "self-defense forces" for the "little green men" invading the peninsula. Black Sea Fleet-sponsored media, including the *Flag Rodiny* (Flag of the Motherland) newspaper and television programs, which spewed hate speech against Ukraine and pro-Russian discourse, were re-broadcast by Crimean television and radio. From the late 2000s onward, these messages were also passed around on social media.⁶¹ Additionally, the fleet's personnel participated in Russian nationalist activities in Crimea, including anti-NATO rallies. Crimean Russian nationalists and Russian nationalist youth groups also disrupted the annual NATO-Ukraine joint military maneuvers.

In 2008, several Ukrainian presidential decrees issued after Russia's invasion of Georgia were designed to restrict the movement of Black Sea Fleet personnel outside their bases.⁶² The measures

demanding that the fleet provide advance notice of its itineraries upon leaving their bases. Russia refused to abide by these decrees in what can only be understood as a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Yanukovich Groomed to Become Ukraine's Lukashenka

Putin returned to the presidency in 2012 as the "gatherer of Russian [understood as three eastern Slavic] lands."⁶³ He viewed himself entering Russian history alongside other Russian "emperors." The unification of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians would rebuild a Russian Union, which, as in the Soviet Union, could form the core of a new Eurasian empire and rejuvenate Russia as a great power. Belarus had long been a Russian satellite, especially after the fraudulent 2020 presidential elections.⁶⁴ With Yanukovich implementing Medvedev's demands, Ukraine looked set to turn its back on Europe and become part of both the Russian world and the Kremlin's empire.

Since 1991, most Ukrainians have upheld a Ukrainian identity distinct from Russia,

Studies, 25, no. 4 (December 2012): 558–81.

⁶¹Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint?*, 23.

⁶²Taras Kuzio, "SBU Challenges the FSB in Crimea," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, July 14, 2009; and John C. K. Daly, "After Crimea: The Future of the Black Sea Fleet," *Hot Issues*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 22, 2014.

⁶³Russian Military Historical Society, "Knigu o Vladimire Putine predstavili chitateljam i zhurnalistam," February 15, 2024, <https://rvio.histrf.ru/activities/news/knigu-o-vladimire-putine-predstavili-chitateljam-i-zhurnalistam>.

⁶⁴Grigory Ioffe, "Year 2020 in Review: The Saga of a Bitterly Divided Belarusian Society," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, January 5, 2021.

Table 1. Yanukovych, Party of Regions, Russia, and Crimea

Year	Event
2004	Russia backs Yanukovych's presidential election.
2005	The Party of Regions and United Russia sign a cooperation agreement.
2006	The Party of Regions and Crimean Russian nationalists create the "For Yanukovych!" election bloc for the Crimean Supreme Soviet elections.
2008	The Party of Regions, Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU), and Crimean Russian nationalists support Russia's recognition of the "independence" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.
2009	Medvedev outlines Russian demands to Yushchenko and future Ukrainian presidents.
2010–13	Yanukovych implements Moscow's demands.
2012	New language law makes the Russian language official in Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine.
July 2013	Putin visits Ukraine to celebrate the 1025th anniversary of the Christianization of Kyivan Rus'.
October 2013	Yanukovych and Putin meet in Sochi.
November 2013	Ukrainian government refuses to sign EU Association Agreement, provoking the Euromaidan Revolution.
December 2013	Putin offers loans and discounted gas to Yanukovych.
January 2014	Yanukovych and Putin meet in Valdai.
February 2014	Yanukovych fails to organize a pro-Russian rally of southeastern governors in Kharkiv and flees to Russia. Russia invades Crimea.
March 2014	From Russian exile, Yanukovych calls for Russia to intervene in Crimea. The Kremlin holds a sham referendum and annexes Crimea.

Source: Author

which had been supported by five out of six of the country's post-Soviet presidents. Only Yanukovich had supported a pan-Russian identity similar to that espoused by Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka wherein Ukrainians and Russians would be forever united. The declared goal of the Kremlin's 2022 invasion, "denazification," aimed to destroy a Ukrainian identity and replace it with a "Little Russian" branch of the pan-Russian nation. This would require setting up a pro-Russian regime resembling that found in Belarus.⁶⁵

On July 27, 2013, Putin and Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church visited Ukraine to celebrate the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Kyivan Rus'.⁶⁶ Putin used the visit to promote his "gathering of Russian [eastern Slavic] lands" agenda, with Ukraine as the primary target. The Kremlin leader espoused Russian imperial nationalist discourse of "Holy Rus" as the cradle and eternal union of the three eastern Slavic peoples as "one Russian people" (*odin Russkiy narod*). Ukrainians and Russians had "common historical roots and a common

destiny," Putin said, with "a common religion and a common faith [and] a very similar culture, language, traditions, and mentality."⁶⁷

The underlying message was Ukrainians should accept that they are the "Little Russian" branch of the pan-Russian nation. Their destiny is to always live with Russians in a Russian Union and as part of the Russian world. Putin praised Ukraine's association with Russia in the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union as having "changed the lives of the Ukrainian population and its elite for the better." The Russian leader would make the same spurious arguments in his "invasion treatise," which was published in July 2021.⁶⁸ In reality, those who identify as Ukrainian, distinct from Russians, held a far more negative view of Tsarist and Soviet colonial rule over their country as well as toward Russification, de-nationalization, and the murder of four million Ukrainians in the 1933 *Holodomor* famine.⁶⁹

In 2013, Russia pressured Yanukovich not to sign the EU Association Agreement as part of the Eastern Partnership process launched

⁶⁵Taras Kuzio, "Ukrainian Versus Pan-Russian Identities: The Roots of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *Studies in Ethnicities and Nationalism*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12422>.

⁶⁶TASS, "Vladimir Putin pribyl v Kiev na prazdnovanie 1025-letija Kreshhenija Rusi," July 27, 2013. <https://tass.ru/blizhnee-zarubezhe/548632>.

⁶⁷Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 148.

⁶⁸Pavel K. Baev, "Putin's Penchant for Drawing and Crossing 'Red Lines,'" *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, July 6, 2021; and Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," President of Russia, July 12, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.

⁶⁹University of Minnesota Holocaust and Genocide Studies, *Holodomor*, May 8, 2024, <https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/holodomor#:~:text=Around%203.9%20million%20Ukrainians%20died,North%20Carolina%2DChapel%20Hill>.

by Brussels in 2010, which also included a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and a visa-free regime.⁷⁰ To pressure Yanukovich to back away from signing the Association Agreement, Russia launched a trade war against Ukraine and nationalized Ukrainian businesses in Russia. Putin also applied pressure during one-on-one meetings with Yanukovich. In September 2013, Russian presidential adviser Sergei Glazyev warned Yanukovich that if Ukraine signed the EU agreement, Russia would no longer guarantee the Ukrainian state's existence and could intervene "if pro-Russian regions of the country appealed directly to Moscow."⁷¹ On November 9, 2013, Putin threatened Yanukovich during their meeting on a Russian military base that Russia would retaliate to the signing of the Association Agreement by annexing Crimea and southeastern Ukraine.⁷² The Kremlin leader's threat resembled a document leaked to the Russian independent newspaper *Novaya*

Gazeta that outlined the Kremlin's plans to annex Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and Odesa.⁷³

Yanukovich buckled and withdrew from signing the EU Association Agreement. Moscow had also applied pressure on Armenia, which pulled out of signing its own agreement with the European Union and took steps to join the Kremlin-led Eurasian Economic Union.⁷⁴

Ukraine proved to be different. Mass protests broke out as the Euromaidan Revolution took place in late November 2013 against Yanukovich turning his back on Europe. The Kremlin, however, refused to give up. On December 17, 2013, Putin and Yanukovich signed an action plan according to which Russia would buy \$15 billion of Ukrainian Eurobonds and the price of Russian gas supplies to Ukraine would be lowered to \$268 per 1,000 cubic meters.⁷⁵ With Ukraine's energy sector rife with corruption, the plan "was essentially a bribe to Yanukovich."⁷⁶ In the end, \$3 billion was

⁷⁰European Commission, "Enlargement—Association Agreement," May 8, 2024. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/association-agreement_en.

⁷¹Shaun Walker, "Ukraine's EU Trade Deal Will Be Catastrophic, Says Russia," *The Guardian*, September 22, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/22/ukraine-european-union-trade-russia>; and Maksym Bugriy, "Kyiv Testing 'Pause' in EU Integration," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, November 15, 2013.

⁷²Andrew Gardner, "Russia Behind Ukraine U-Turn to EU," *Politico*, November 23, 2013. <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-behind-ukraine-u-turn-on-eu/>.

⁷³*Novaya Gazeta*, February 24, 2015, cited in Taras Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine: Revolution, Nationalism, and Crime* (Toronto: Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Toronto, 2017), 228.

⁷⁴Tom Caizer, "Why Did Russia and the EU Clash Over Ukraine in 2014, But Not Over Armenia?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 74, no. 9 (2022): 1676–99.

⁷⁵Ukrainska Pravda, "Putin dal Yanukovichu 15 milliardov dollarov," December 17, 2013, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2013/12/17/7007401/>.

⁷⁶*The Economist*, "A Short History of the World's Wackiest Bond," September 8, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/freexchange/2015/09/what-ukraine-owes-russia>.

dispersed “before Yanukovich fled from office,” which he took with him into exile in Russia.⁷⁷ The funds had been in Ukraine for less than three months before returning to Russia.

Russian World Foundation Projects Moscow’s Soft Power

Following the Georgian Rose and Ukrainian Orange revolutions in 2003 and 2004, respectively, the Kremlin expanded its support to pro-Russian and separatist groups in Ukraine. The Russian World Foundation fronted many financial grants. Funds were sent to pro-Russian nationalist and separatist forces in Crimea, Donbas, Odesa, and Transcarpathia.⁷⁸ In August 2009, Ukraine took the unprecedented step of expelling two Russian diplomats for conducting activities “incompatible with their status” (i.e., espionage) because they had supported extremist groups in Crimea and Odesa.⁷⁹

Russian intelligence and pro-Russian nongovernmental organizations and movements were given the keys to Crimea during Yanukovich’s presidency when Ukraine’s intelligence services were ordered in early 2010 to end their operations against Russia. Former Chair of the Ukrainian Foreign Intelligence Service Mykola Malomuzh said, “The SBU, which was supposed to catch separatists and terrorists, almost completely stopped its monitoring in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea too.”⁸⁰ Russian intelligence services were permitted to operate overtly in Crimea, Donbas, and elsewhere in Ukraine without hindrance.⁸¹ The Kremlin was essentially given four years to lay the groundwork for annexing Crimea and cultivating pro-Russian and separatist groups in southeastern Ukraine.⁸²

During Yanukovich’s presidency, Russia’s GRU “created very covert but well-structured networks with agents within pro-Russian organizations undertaking illegal activities in many parts of Ukraine.” The Kremlin

⁷⁷Vitaliy Melnychuk and Lyubomyr Shavalyuk, “Putin on the Squeeze: The Yanukovich Debt,” *The Ukrainian Week*, 1, no. 7 (July 2016), <http://ukrainianweek.com/Politics/170081>.

⁷⁸Taras Kuzio, “SBU Stops Separatism in its Tracks,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, December 12, 2008, <https://jamestown.org/program/sbu-stops-separatism-in-its-tracks/>; and Taras Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War: Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality* (London: Routledge, 2022), 239.

⁷⁹Taras Kuzio, “Russia-Ukraine Diplomatic War,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, July 31, 2009, <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-ukraine-diplomatic-war/>; and Taras Kuzio, “Ukrainian-Russian Diplomatic War Intensifies,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, August 17, 2009, <https://jamestown.org/program/ukrainian-russian-diplomatic-war-intensifies/>.

⁸⁰Veronika Melkozerova, “Ukraine Tries to Catch Up to Russia in Intelligence War,” *The Kyiv Post*, August 19, 2015, <https://archive.kyivpost.com/article/content/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-tries-to-catch-up-to-russia-in-intelligence-war-396107.html>. See also Harding, *A Very Expensive Poison*, 381.

⁸¹Taras Kuzio, “The FSB Returns to Ukraine,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 24, 2010, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36411&no_cache=1#.Vr0l-5MrKCO.

⁸²Kuzio, *The Crimea*.

nurtured these groups to take power in the future, representing a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity. Russia's GRU "was tasked with preparing [extremist and paramilitary] gangs, and the job of the GRU special forces (*spetsnaz*) was to train for an insurgency."⁸³ Russian intelligence officers were "recruiting and paying local organized crime" to join separatist protests, former SBU Chair Valentyn Nalyvaychenko said. "They are very dangerous, well-armed, and, for years, have been preparing to do what they are doing now."⁸⁴

Russian intelligence officers' funding, training, and directing of pro-Russian extremists, paramilitaries, and separatists was confirmed by Kharkiv-based pro-Russian *Oplot* (Bulwark tank) member "Igor." He told PBS Frontline that they would regularly meet with Russian intelligence officers before rallies and protests to receive instructions. "Igor" admitted *Oplot* was a Russian proxy force controlled by the Kremlin's intelligence agencies.⁸⁵ In the spring of 2014, *Oplot*, together with pro-Russian protestors based in from the Russian city of Belgorod, were the driving force behind the creation of the so-called "Kharkiv People's Republic" (KNR), analogous to other Russian proxy entities, the

so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" (DPR) and "Luhansk People's Republic" (LPR).

The Kremlin's plans failed in Kharkiv because radical nationalist soccer fans ("ultras") rallied in support of Ukraine. These elements went on to form the Azov battalion (later regiment) within the Ministry of Interior's national guard. The battalion liberated Mariupol from pro-Russian separatists in the spring of 2014 and defended Mariupol for four months in 2022 against Moscow's expanded invasion.⁸⁶

A series of paramilitary training camps were arranged in Russia throughout the period between the 2004 Orange and 2014 Euromaidan revolutions. Attendees included: The Donetsk Republic, an extremist pro-Russian organization in Donbas; People's Front "Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia"; Crimean-based Russian Unity (*Russkoe Yedynstvo*); Odesa-based Motherland (*Rodina*) Party; and Kharkiv-based *Oplot*. These camps were organized by Vladislav Surkov, the "gray cardinal" of the Russian Presidential Administration, and Kremlin ideologues, including Aleksandr Dugin.

During the 2014 "Russian Spring," the Kremlin supported these extremist forces

⁸³BBC News, "Russian GRU Military Spy Chief Igor Sergun Dies," January 5, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35226131#:~:text=The%20head%20of%20Russia's%20secretive,his%20death%20are%20not%20clear.>

⁸⁴Atlantic Council, "Intelligence Chief: 100 Russian Officers Are Leading Ukraine's Uprisings," April 22, 2014, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/intelligence-chief-100-russian-officers-are-in-ukraine-directing-uprisings.>

⁸⁵PBS, "The Battle for Ukraine," May 27, 2014, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/battle-for-ukraine/transcript/> and <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/battle-for-ukraine/>.

⁸⁶Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 135.

Russian Occupation of Ukraine, 2014



Source: Wikipedia

coming to power in southeast Ukraine. The only success, however, was in Donetsk and Luhansk.⁸⁷ In 2014, Russian Unity party leader Sergei Aksyonov was installed as the puppet prime minister of Crimea, and the Donetsk Republic extremist group won sham elections in the DPR.⁸⁸ The Russian Unity Party had won only 4 percent in the 2010 Crimean elections, while the Donetsk Republic organization had been banned prior to 2014.

Paramilitary training took place at the annual “Healthy Ukraine” summer camp in

Russia and the Eurasian youth camp in Sudak and Donuzlav in Crimea (the latter two locations ignored by the SBU under Yanukovich). The Eurasian youth organization had been holding its camp next door to a Ukrainian naval base since 2006. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian World Foundation, and innocuous-sounding Institute of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) organized these events.⁸⁹ Participants came from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and separatist regions caught in “frozen conflicts.” Speeches

⁸⁷Daniil Belovod'ev, ‘Russkaia vesna» — odno iz glavnyh propagandistskih media jetoj vojny. S kem ono mozhet byt' svjazano? Meduza, July 25, 2022. <https://meduza.io/feature/2022/07/25/russkaya-vesna-odno-iz-glavnyh-propagandistskih-media-etoy-voyny-s-24-fevralya-anonimnye-avtory-vykladyvayut-video-s-plennymi-ukrainskimi-soldatami-i-pishut-o-boevyh-narkomanah-v-vsu>

⁸⁸Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 167–68, 229, 240.

⁸⁹Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 229.

were given by Russian imperial nationalists, such as CIS Institute head Konstantin Zatulin, who promoted pan-Russian unity and derided European integration. Pro-Russian parties in Ukraine provided political support, including the Party of Regions and its satellite the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU); the Progressive Socialist Party; and Viktor Medvedchuk's (Putin's closest ally in Ukraine) Ukrainian Way. In 2021, Medvedchuk would be criminally charged with treason and exchanged in September 2022 along with Russian prisoners of war (POWs) for Ukrainian POWs.⁹⁰

Moscow gave its greatest support to extremist groups in Crimea, where a network of Russian nationalist and separatist organizations "began working covertly and openly ... to agitate for re-joining Russia."⁹¹ These included the Republican Movement of Crimea (*Respublikanskaya dzvizheniia Kryma*; ROK), which became the Republican Party of Crimea (*Respublikanskaya partiya Kryma*; RPK); *Proryv*, paramilitary Cossacks, the Eurasian Youth Movement, and the People's Front Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia.

Russian Unity was led by Aksyonov, who had moved from the Transnistria breakaway region of Moldova to Crimea in 1989. In the

1990s, he was one of the leaders of the *Bashmaki* organized crime gang with the *nom de guerre* "Goblin."⁹² The *Bashmaki's krysha* (political roof—understood as a criminal gang receiving protection from politicians) had been the RDK. With support from Russian intelligence, Aksyonov's Russian Unity party created its own paramilitary force in 2013, just ahead of the Russian invasion and just in time to assist the *Anschluss*.⁹³

Russification of the Ukrainian Military and Security Forces

The Kremlin groomed Yanukovich to play the role of a Russian puppet leader of "Little Russia" (Ukraine) who would resemble Lukashenka in "White Russia" (Belarus). The Kremlin had cause to be optimistic as the Party of Regions was Ukraine's only political machine after the Orange Revolution. The party won pluralities in the 2006, 2007, and 2012 parliamentary elections and elected Yanukovich as president in 2010. The Party of Regions' alliance with Russian nationalists and separatists in Crimea, Donbas, and Odesa led Putin to believe he could accomplish his goal of "gathering of Russian

⁹⁰Svyatoslav Khomenko and Elizabeta Fokht, "Ukraina obmenjala Medvedchuka i 55 rossijan na 215 svoih plennyh, v tom chisle pjat' komandirov s 'Azovstali,'" BBC Russian Service, September 22, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-62990303>.

⁹¹Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 229.

⁹²Taras Kuzio, "Crime and Politics in Crimea," *Open Democracy*, March 14, 2014. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/crime-and-politics-in-crimea-aksyonov-goblin-wikileaks-cables/>.

⁹³Simon Shuster, "Moscow's Man in Crimea Is Ukraine's Worst Nightmare," *Time*, March 24, 2014. <http://time.com/19097/putin-crimea-russia-ukraine-aksyonov/>.

[eastern Slavic] lands” by bringing “Little Russia” (Ukraine) into the Russian world alongside Lukashenka’s Belarus.

In 1997, the Black Sea Fleet agreement between Russia and Ukraine included a “temporary” 20-year basing agreement that would have expired in 2017.⁹⁴ The Kremlin strongly opposed the withdrawal of the Black Sea Fleet as it was fused with Russian imperial mythology and was a significant source of influence and control over Crimea and Sevastopol.⁹⁵ In April 2010, Yanukovich and Medvedev negotiated the Kharkiv Accords, which extended the Black Sea Fleet base for 25 years until 2042 with an option for another five-year extension. The agreement was adopted with major infringements in the Ukrainian parliament and voted through by a slim majority of 236 votes, only made possible by bribing 16 opposition deputies.⁹⁶ Parliamentary committees had voted down the Kharkiv Accords, which were not subjected to parliamentary discussion. The Party of Regions, KPU, and Volodymyr Lytvyn bloc voted unanimously for the Kharkiv Accords.⁹⁷

In January 2021, the Ukrainian General Prosecutor’s Office charged Yanukovich with “high treason” for signing the Kharkiv Accords. Some politicians behind the accords’ passage were re-elected by the Opposition Bloc (one of two successors to the Party of Regions) in the 2014 parliamentary elections.⁹⁸ Yanukovich’s signing of the Kharkiv Accords made it unlikely that the Black Sea Fleet would ever withdraw from Crimea. Russia’s greater entrenchment in Crimea and Sevastopol reinforced the deeply held belief that both would remain Russian territory.

Unsurprisingly, Russian irredentism toward Crimea and Sevastopol did not end with the signing of the Kharkiv Accords. Russian imperial nationalists continued to lay territorial claims on Sevastopol and Crimea. During a speech on Russia’s Navy Day—only a few months after the Kharkiv Accords were inked—Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov declared that Russia should never withdraw from Crimea or Sevastopol.⁹⁹

Ukraine’s military and security forces were Russified and infiltrated by Russian

⁹⁴Luke Harding, “Ukraine Extends Lease for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet,” *The Guardian*, April 21, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/21/ukraine-black-sea-fleet-russia>.

⁹⁵Serhii Plokhyy, “The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35, no. 3 (July 2000): 369–83.

⁹⁶Paul D’Anieri, *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 183–85.

⁹⁷Texty, “Vony zdaly Krym: Poimennyi spysok. Khto byvsya za “Kharkivski uhody,” yaki dozvolily Rosii pochaty okupatsiyu,” March 1, 2016, <http://texty.org.ua/pg/article/editorial/read/65730/>.

⁹⁸Texty, “Vony zdaly Krym. Poimennyi spysok.”

⁹⁹*Hazeta po-Ukrayinski*, July 22, 2010, cited in: Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War: Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality*, 241; Taras Kuzio, “Ukraine’s Foreign and Security Policy Controlled by Russia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*,

agents during Yanukovych's presidency (see below).¹⁰⁰ This had dire consequences in 2014 when Russian agents thwarted Ukraine's Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) against Russian proxies in the Donbas region.¹⁰¹ Russification and infiltration, coupled with the practice of staffing security forces in Crimea with local personnel, facilitated Moscow's invasion and eventual annexation of the peninsula.¹⁰² Ukrainian military and security operations as part of the ATO were compromised by intelligence leaks that provided the Kremlin with sufficient time to capture a large part of Donbas during the crucial first months of the conflict in 2014.¹⁰³

Ukraine's ministers of defense aided Russia in its designs by downsizing the Ukrainian military prior to the Russian invasion. From March 2010 to February 2014, Dmitri Salamatin, Pavel Lebedev, and Mykhaylo Yezhel slashed an already low defense budget, sold or transferred military equipment to Russia, and destroyed the database of Ukrainian conscripts. Salamatin

stated that Kyiv was "destroying the defense capabilities of the armed forces in the interests of a neighbor-aggressor."¹⁰⁴ Salamatin, a Russian citizen, planned to reduce the Ukrainian Armed Forces to only 75,000 by 2017—a figure that comes suspiciously close to current Russian demands for Ukraine's "de-militarization."¹⁰⁵

Salamatin was not the only senior Ukrainian military and security official who was a Russian citizen or had close ties to Russia. Yezhel's daughter was married to an admiral of the Russian Pacific Fleet. In Ukraine, the president's bodyguards are usually staffed by a department in the SBU, but Yanukovych did not use SBU personnel as he harbored fears of assassination and distrusted the SBU ever since the Orange Revolution. Yanukovych's bodyguard, Viacheslav Zanevskij, was also a Russian citizen.¹⁰⁶

During Yanukovych's presidency, the FSB effectively took control of the SBU, allowing Russia to commandeer data on 22,000

The Jamestown Foundation, October 18, 2010; and Taras Kuzio, "Russia Takes Control of Ukraine's Security Forces," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 19, 2012.

¹⁰⁰Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 142.

¹⁰¹Taras Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies?*, 106–32.

¹⁰²Vladimir Socor, "Armistice Opens Way to Russian Partition of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk Provinces," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, September 24, 2014.

¹⁰³The separatists captured three SBU *Alpha* officers because of leaked intelligence and publicly placed them on display. They showed signs of torture. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "Opolchency vzjali v plen treh oficerov «Al'fy»," April 26, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqaSakthib0&feature=em-subts_digest-vrecc

¹⁰⁴Serhiy Leshchenko, *Mezhyhirskyy Syndrom, Vladi Viktora Yanukovycha* (Kyiv: Bright Star Publishing, 2014), 146.

¹⁰⁵On the Russian invasion goal of the "de-militarization" of Ukraine, see Yaroslav Trofimov, *Our Enemies Will Vanish: The Russian Invasion and Ukraine's War of Independence* (London: Penguin Michael Joseph, 2023), 153–54.

¹⁰⁶Taras Kuzio, "Yanukovych's Assassination-Phobia Deepens," Jamestown Foundation Blog, October 28, 2010, <http://jamestownfoundation.blogspot.com/2010/10/yanukovychs-assassination-phobia.html>.

Ukrainian intelligence personnel and informants.¹⁰⁷ Hard drives and flash drives that were not taken to Russia were destroyed. The FSB took “everything that forms a basis for a professional intelligence service”¹⁰⁸ and introduced surveillance technology on Ukraine’s mobile telephone network. In early 2014, SBU Chairman Oleksandr Yakymenko, Igor Kalinin (a Russian citizen), and four senior intelligence chiefs fled to Russia after collaborating with Moscow.¹⁰⁹

The extent of Russian intelligence’s penetration of the SBU came to light in 2014 with large-scale defections in Crimea and Russian agents thwarting Ukrainian military and intelligence operations against pro-Russian proxies in Donbas.¹¹⁰ The minutes of the emergency Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council (RNBO) meeting on February 28, 2014, revealed details of the scale of treason undertaken during Yanukovich’s presidency.¹¹¹ Of the 18,800 personnel in the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Crimea, only 4,300 remained loyal to

Ukraine.¹¹² In addition, a large proportion of the officers and personnel of the Ministry of Interior, SBU, and Prosecutor’s Office defected to Russia. In the Bakhchisarai region of Crimea, for example, 80 percent of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, 90 percent of prosecutors, and 100 percent of SBU and Ministry of Interior officers defected to Russia.¹¹³ In the spring of 2016, the SBU published a list of 1,391 names of the officers who had defected to Russia in Crimea—many of whom have continued to work as FSB officers.¹¹⁴ Some of the Russian forces who invaded southern Ukraine from Crimea in 2022 consisted of Ukrainians who had defected to Russia in 2014.¹¹⁵

Russia’s *Anschluss* of Crimea

Russia’s plans to invade and annex Crimea were not a reaction to Yanukovich fleeing Kyiv in February 2014. Military plans of this nature require longer periods of preparation. Russian intelligence planned “long and

¹⁰⁷Kuzio, “Russia Takes Control of Ukraine’s Security Forces”; and Kuzio, “Ukraine’s Foreign and Security Policy Controlled by Russia.”

¹⁰⁸Christopher Miller, “Ukraine’s Top Intelligence Agency Deeply Infiltrated by Russian Spies,” Mashable, December 30, 2014.

¹⁰⁹Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 235.

¹¹⁰Kuzio, *Crisis in Russian Studies?*, 106–32.

¹¹¹Gordon.ua, “Stenogramma sekretного zasedaniya SNBO vo vremya anneksii Kryma v 2014 godu. Polnyj tekst na russkom jazyke,” February 22, 2016, <http://gordonua.com/publications/stenogramma-sekretnogo-zasedaniya-snbo-vo-vremya-anneksii-kryma-v-2014-godu-polnyj-tekst-na-russkom-yazyke-121122.html>.

¹¹²Ben Hoyle, “Divisions Leave Ukraine Troops in Despair,” *The Times*, March 26, 2014.

¹¹³Shaun Walker, “Crimea Still Erasing Its Ukrainian Past a Year After Russia’s Takeover,” *The Guardian*, March 13, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/13/crimea-still-erasing-its-ukrainian-past-a-year-after-russias-takeover>

¹¹⁴See the video showing the faces of Crimean SBU officers who betrayed Ukraine and, among them, those who are today working in the Crimean branch of the FSB: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaMZWyDW3q0>.

¹¹⁵Andrew Harding, *A Small Town. Life, Death, and Defiance in Ukraine* (London: Ithaka Press, 2023), 79 and 131.

meticulous preparations” for the invasion of Crimea on the assumption that it would not meet widespread Ukrainian resistance.¹¹⁶ Putin and Glazyev had threatened Yanukovich with Crimea’s annexation and Ukraine’s dismemberment since the summer of 2013. Military and intelligence plans were likely pre-prepared for this eventuality. Bellingcat, the British investigative research group based in the Netherlands, provided a thorough analysis of medals awarded to Russian soldiers who had fought in Ukraine.¹¹⁷ The Russian state medal “For the Return of the Crimea” is notably dated February 20–March 18, 2014, with a start date *before* Yanukovich fled.

Russia’s invasion of Crimea began four to five days after Yanukovich fled from Kyiv, and Euromaidan revolutionaries came to power on February 21, 2014. The Russian and proxy forces who participated in the invasion and occupation of Crimea included:

- “*Little Green Men*”: GRU *spetsnaz* with no military insignia, providing Putin with the ability to deny they were members of the Russian Armed Forces. They led the assault on state and government buildings and then passed control over to

local proxies.

- *Former Riot Police of the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior, Berkut*: These units had been stationed in Kyiv to suppress the Euromaidan Revolution, where protestors killed some of their colleagues.¹¹⁸
- *Black Sea Fleet Marines and Naval Intelligence Forces*: Russian marines and intelligence forces had been stationed in the Port of Sevastopol and Crimea since the Soviet era and wanted to preserve the Kharkiv Accords, which essentially gave them a permanent base.
- *Russian Military Intelligence Agents*: These elements were ensconced inside the SBU and Ukrainian military intelligence and had been training, financing, and equipping anti-Euromaidan extremists, pro-Russian groups, and separatists in southeastern Ukraine and Crimea.
- *Organized Crime*: Vigilantes, including those from Aksyonov’s Russian Unity, acted as Crimean self-defense forces.¹¹⁹
- *Russian Cossacks*: The state-

¹¹⁶Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, p.240.

¹¹⁷Bellingcat, “Russia’s War in Ukraine: The Medals and Treacherous Numbers,” August 31, 2016, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2016/08/31/russias-war-ukraine-medals-treacherous-numbers/>.

¹¹⁸*Berkut* officers returning from the Euromaidan Revolution to Crimea on February 22, 2014, were greeted with cries of “Well done lads!,” “There should have been more (dead)!,” “Heroes!,” and “Glory to the *Berkut!*”

¹¹⁹Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 168.

registered Cossack movement sent units from the Transnistria breakaway region of Moldova and the Don region of the North Caucasus.¹²⁰

- *Russian Imperial Nationalists:* Mercenaries from Russia, including former FSB officer Igor Girkin (Strelkov), joined the invasion. Many had received training in the Russian security forces and intelligence services and had fought in other conflicts. Girkin fought in the former Yugoslav and two Chechen wars. Russian mercenaries came from the “White” (pro-Tsarist and Russian Orthodox fundamentalist) and “Brown” (neo-fascist) wings of Russian politics, with some having supported the Russian parliamentary coup against Yeltsin in 1993.¹²¹

The Kremlin’s integration of hybrid warfare and military assets, similar to Russia’s invasion of Georgia six years earlier, was assisted by the Russification of Ukraine’s military and security forces during Yanukovich’s presidency. The defection of

Ukrainian military and security forces was complemented by the treasonous acts of pro-Russian Ukrainian politicians. The Party of Regions, KPU, and Crimean Russian nationalists defected to Russia and formed the Crimean regional branch of Putin’s United Russia.¹²² Other Party of Regions members joined A Just Russia and the Liberal Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (LDPRF), two Russian faux opposition parties. In the 2014 pseudo-elections to the Crimean Supreme Soviet, United Russia won 70 of the 75 seats, with the LDPRF winning the remaining five.¹²³

On February 28, 2014, during a press conference in Rostov-on-Don, Yanukovich called upon Putin to “restore order” in Ukraine. He stated, “I think Russia should, and is obliged, to act.” Yanukovich defended Putin’s invasion of Crimea as the “natural reaction to the bandit coup in Kyiv.”¹²⁴

Over the past decade, the Kremlin has repeatedly criticized the “illegal putsch” that took place in Kyiv in February 2014, which allegedly ousted Yanukovich. In reality, the former Ukrainian president fled Kyiv and was impeached by a constitutional majority of 328 out of 450 deputies, including most of the deputies from the Party of Regions.¹²⁵ The

¹²⁰Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 274–76.

¹²¹Kuzio, *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War*.

¹²²Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 168.

¹²³Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 241.

¹²⁴Kuzio, *Putin’s War Against Ukraine*, 236.

¹²⁵BBC News, “Ukrainian MPs Vote to Oust President Yanukovich,” February 22, 2014, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26304842>.

murder of 100 protestors, honored as “The Heavenly Hundred,” brought Euromaidan revolutionaries unexpectedly to power and was the primary reason for Yanukovych’s impeachment.

On March 1, 2014, from Russian exile, Yanukovych appealed to Putin:

The lives and security of people, particularly in Crimea and the southeast, are being threatened. Under the influence of Western countries there have been open acts of terror and violence. People are being persecuted for their language and political reasons. In this regard, I would call on the President of Russia, Mr. Putin, asking him to use the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to establish legitimacy, peace, law and order, stability, and defend the people of Ukraine.¹²⁶

Since then, Yanukovych and other Party of Regions leaders have supported Moscow’s annexation of Crimea from exile in Russia. For the Kremlin, they represented a government-in-exile that was to be installed by Russia’s invading forces in February 2022.

On March 16, a hastily organized referendum was held under the gun of the Russian military that produced a fabricated 97-percent vote for the “reunification” of Crimea and the Port of Sevastopol with Russia. Reported turnout rates were 83 and 89 percent, respectively. The actual figures, leaked from the Russian president’s Human Rights Council, were very different—only a 30-percent turnout and 15 percent voting for the “reunification” of Crimea with Russia.¹²⁷ On March 21, 2014, Putin signed the law officially creating the Russian Republic of Crimea and the City of Federal Importance Sevastopol.

Putin justified Crimea’s “reunification” as a response to the “anti-constitutional takeover and armed seizure of power” by “reactionary, nationalist, and anti-Semitic forces.” Putin used similar discourse during the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Council of Europe concluded it “did not observe an escalation of violence against the Russian-speaking population in the east and south of Ukraine.”¹²⁸ The majority of Ukrainians have consistently denied that Russian speakers are discriminated against in Ukraine. In 2016, over 80 percent of Ukrainians did not believe there was

¹²⁶Vitaly Churkin, “Ukraine’s Yanukovych Asked for Troops, Russia Tells UN,” BBC News, March 4, 2014.

¹²⁷Paul R. Gregory, “Putin’s ‘Human Rights Council’ Accidentally Posts Real Crimean Election Results,” *Forbes*, May 5, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulroderickgregory/2014/05/05/putins-human-rights-council-accidentally-posts-real-crimean-election-results-only-15-voted-for-annexation/amp/>.

¹²⁸Council of Europe, *Situation in Ukraine, Report on the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Ad Hoc Visit to Ukraine*, March 21–26, 2014, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c6161.

discrimination against Russian-language speakers in Ukraine, with only 12 percent disagreeing.¹²⁹ Two years after Russia's expanded invasion, 81 percent of Russian-speaking and 84 percent of Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians denied there was pressure on Russian speakers in Ukraine.¹³⁰

The threat to Crimea's Russian speakers from what Putin had described as reactionary, nationalist, and anti-Semitic forces was a "Kremlin fiction."¹³¹ As Russian military action showed in southeastern Ukraine after 2022, it is Russian-speaking Ukrainians who are suffering the greatest from Russia's invasion and war crimes.¹³² Harvard University researcher Serhii Plokhly writes that the Russian invasion destroyed the "last vestiges of the belief that Ukrainians and Russians were fraternal peoples" or "one and the same people." Russia's bombardment of Ukrainian towns and cities is "killing Russian speakers and destroying landmarks and locations claimed by Russian imperial and then Soviet culture."¹³³

Imperial Russia in Tuzla (2003), Crimea (2014), and the Azov Sea (2018 and 2022)

Throughout Putin's reign, Russia has maintained imperial and militaristic practices. For example, in 1999, both houses of the Russian parliament had ratified the 1997 Russian-Ukrainian treaty,¹³⁴ and, in 2003, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement regarding the Azov Sea.¹³⁵ These legal documents evidently did little to constrain Russian irredentism toward Crimea, given its later annexation.¹³⁶

Later, in September 2003, Russia began building a dam from the North Caucasus to the island of Tuzla, which occupies a strategic location east of Crimea. Then-Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma returned from a state visit to Brazil to oversee the deployment of border troops and the national guard to Tuzla, as this was viewed as a breach of territorial integrity. Ukraine's show of strength halted Russia's construction of the dam. Kuchma mobilized support for the country's territorial integrity from all

¹²⁹Rating Group, "Ukraine Poll: Continued Dissatisfaction with Government and Economic Situation," October 31, 2016. http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/obschestvenno-politicheskie_nastroeniya_naseleniya_oktyabr_2016.html.

¹³⁰Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, "Dynamika Stavlennya Do Statusu Rosiyskoi Movy v Ukrayini," March 12, 2024, <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1385&page=1>.

¹³¹Harding, *A Very Expensive Poison*, 310.

¹³²Idil P. Izmirlı, "Overnight Crimean Crisis Hits Stalemate," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 1, 2014.

¹³³Serhii Plokhly, *The Russo-Ukrainian War* (London: Penguin Books, 2023), 193.

¹³⁴United Nations, "Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Between Ukraine and the Russian Federation," May 8, 2024, <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002803e6fae>.

¹³⁵President of Russia, "President Vladimir Putin Signed a Law Ratifying the Treaty Between Russia and Ukraine on the Russian-Ukrainian State Border," April 23, 2004, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/30820>.

¹³⁶Jeffery Mankoff, "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict," Center for Strategic International Studies, April 22, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>.

political forces in parliament, except the KPU. In 2003, the Party of Regions could not dissent as it was a member of the pro-Kuchma ruling coalition and Yanukovich was prime minister. The Party of Regions would only be able to show its true pro-Kremlin colors after Kuchma left the political scene in 2005.

Kuchma believed the Kremlin's provocation over Tuzla was Putin's personal insult against him in response to the publication of his book *Ukraine is Not Russia*¹³⁷ earlier that year in Moscow, where it was received poorly by Russian politicians and journalists.¹³⁸ Two decades later, Kuchma published *Ukraine—Is Not Russia. Twenty Years Later*.¹³⁹ He wrote in the foreword:

It was then [in 2003] that I first clearly and defiantly understood that they [Russia] will never leave us alone. They fiercely hate our statehood and will do everything to destroy it (or at the very least, weaken it).

...

Ukraine—is not Russia. And will never become Russia. [Russians] do not bother waiting for this. We are

already winning. And this cannot be halted.

Ukraine wanted the agreement to divide the Azov Sea's shelf and waters into Ukrainian and Russian sectors. Russia wanted the agreement to define the Azov Sea as a joint internal sea and maintained as a "single economic and natural complex jointly used in the interests of Russia and Ukraine."¹⁴⁰ Putin strongly opposed the Azov Sea being divided and opened to other countries.¹⁴¹ In 2003, a treaty was signed based on Russian demands, a mistake that laid the seeds for future conflicts in 2018 and 2022.

A bridge across the Kerch Strait from the Russian North Caucasus to occupied Crimea, built in 2018, uses Tuzla as one of its pillars. After it was built, Russia demanded Ukrainian vessels receive permission before entering "Russian" waters. Ukraine and the international community do not recognize Crimea's annexation nor the Azov Sea and Kerch Straits as "Russian territorial waters."¹⁴²

After 2014, Western governments told Poroshenko that Ukraine should forget about Crimea being returned to Ukraine and failed to assist Kyiv in disputes with Russia over the

¹³⁷Leonid Kuchma, *Ukrayina – Ne Rosiya* (Moscow: Vremiia, 2003).

¹³⁸Interview with Kuchma's Press Secretary Darka Olifer, Kyiv, February 26, 2024.

¹³⁹Leonid Kuchma, *Ukrayina – Ne Rosiya. Dvadtsyat Rokiv Potomu* (Kyiv: ADEF-Ukrayina, 2023).

¹⁴⁰Deputy head of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs Sergei Shishkarev, *Itar-Tass*, November 16, 2000.

¹⁴¹*Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, November 23, 2000.

¹⁴²Mathieu Boulegue, 'In Sea of Azov, Russia Again Tests Its Strength,' Royal Institute for International Affairs, Chatham House, November 27, 2018, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2018/11/sea-azov-russia-again-tests-its-strength>.

Azov Sea.¹⁴³ Russia was able to use the Kerch Bridge to blockade Ukrainian shipping from Mariupol and Berdyansk in southeastern Donetsk oblast for four years prior to the full-scale invasion. In November 2018, in a brazen act of sea piracy, Russia attacked and captured three Ukrainian vessels as they were sailing through the Azov Sea, illegally detaining 24 crew members.¹⁴⁴

In May 2019, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ruled in Ukraine's favor and demanded the imprisoned Ukrainians be released.¹⁴⁵ Russia refused to recognize the judicial body's jurisdiction but eventually released them. In response, the West imposed no sanctions, Nord Stream II continued to be built, and relations with Russia proceeded as usual, sending signals of Western weakness to the Kremlin.

In the spring of 2022, Mariupol and Berdyansk were occupied by Russia, closing off Ukrainian trade from those two ports and transforming the Azov Sea into a "Russian lake." Russia's experience of destroying entire cities—Grozny in the early 2000s and Aleppo

in Syria—was applied to Mariupol. Estimates of upwards of 100,000 people of the pre-2022 port city's population of 450,000 died or were deported to Russia.¹⁴⁶ *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Yaroslav Trofimov wrote, "Moscow now practices the Genghis Khan school of war."¹⁴⁷

Moscow's Crimean Template for Southeastern Ukraine

The Kremlin's model for the annexation and Russification of southeast Ukraine was developed in Crimea and the Donbas after 2014. Putin was not charting new territory. He was circling around familiar tactics "because the Crimean operation relied on the Georgian template." Russia's contingency operations were "prepared in advance, ready to be used if needed—but only if needed."¹⁴⁸ Russia's invasion of Georgia integrated non-kinetic hybrid warfare with kinetic military forces, something that would be replayed in Crimea and Donbas in 2014 and Ukraine in 2022.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Poroshenko: Ukraine Will 'Do Everything' To Retake Crimea," June 5, 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/poroshenko-ukraine-will-do-everything-retake-crimea/27055170.html>.

¹⁴⁴Christoph Steitz, "Russia Must Release Detained Ukrainian Sailors—Maritime Tribunal," Reuters, May 25, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-azov-idUSKCN1SV0CD>.

¹⁴⁵"Decision of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea," May 10, 2019, https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/26/ITLOS_PV19_C26_1_Rev.pdf.

¹⁴⁶Human Rights Watch, "'Our City Was Gone': Russia's Devastation of Mariupol, Ukraine," February 2024, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/02/ukraine0224web_0.pdf.

¹⁴⁷Trofimov, *Our Enemies Will Vanish*, 124.

¹⁴⁸Clifford Gaddy and Fiona Hill, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 263 and 390.

¹⁴⁹Pavel K. Baev, "Hard Georgian Lessons for Ending the War in Ukraine," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, August 14, 2023.

Russian passports were illegally distributed in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, providing Putin with his alleged justification for the invasion of Georgia to defend and, after the occupation had commenced, protect “Russian” citizens.¹⁵⁰ Moscow began illegally distributing passports in Crimea in 2014 and in the DPR and LPR in 2019. This gave Putin his alleged justification to intervene in defense of “Russian” citizens in Ukraine.¹⁵¹

Russia has used Soviet-like “nationality” policies in occupied Crimea and other Ukrainian territories to fundamentally change their ethnic composition. This was accomplished by resettling tens of thousands of Russians and using educational and media policies to eradicate the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national identities. The Kremlin’s destruction of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar identities and repression of civil rights and media freedom is aimed at ensuring that the annexation of Ukrainian territory is irreversible.

Amnesty International’s report on the tenth anniversary of Crimea’s occupation accused Russia of introducing a concerted policy of destroying Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar identities, cultures, and languages,

banning Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar religious confessions, and imposing Moscow’s dictatorial regime.¹⁵² The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) reported that Russia is using its Crimean occupation playbook:

to establish permanent control over newly occupied territories in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts with the goals of “demilitarizing,” “de-nazifying,” and rendering Ukraine “neutral.” ... The conditions of occupied Ukraine suggest, however, that prolonged Russian occupation of already occupied territories or the rest of Ukraine will be accompanied by oppression and ethnic cleansing to consolidate permanent Russian control.¹⁵³

Moscow has encouraged or forced Ukrainians to flee Crimea and southeastern Ukraine and has threatened others with deportation to Russia after going through filtration camps—camps used to register, interrogate, and detain Ukrainian citizens

¹⁵⁰Zaal Anjaparidze, “Russia Lures Georgia’s Secessionist Regions by Dual Citizenship,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, October 21, 2021.

¹⁵¹Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Russia Says Half a Million Passports Issued In Eastern Ukraine in Last Two Years,” May 2, 2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-russia-issues-half-million-passports-2-years/31234248.html>.

¹⁵²Amnesty International, “Russia/Ukraine: 10 Years of Occupation of Crimea,” March 18, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/EUR5078052024ENGLISH.pdf>.

¹⁵³Angelica Evans et al., “Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment,” Institute of the Study of War, March 18, 2024, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-18-2024>.

before transferring them to Russia. Hundreds of thousands of Russian citizens have been brought in as illegal settlers into Crimea, Donbas, and southeastern Ukraine.¹⁵⁴ Over 150,000 Russian military, police, civilian administrators, and teachers have been brought into the occupied part of Zaporizhzhia.¹⁵⁵ Ukrainians have been forcibly and illegally drafted into the Russian army and Russia's DPR/LPR proxy forces. They are used as cannon fodder in the Russian army's "meat assaults."¹⁵⁶

Since 2014, the Russian officials and proxies ruling occupied Crimea and the DPR/LPR have implemented Sovietization, de-Ukrainianization, and Russification. These three policies have been introduced using the Crimean and DPR/LPR playbook in southeastern Ukraine since 2022. In all four areas, the Russian occupation authorities are indoctrinating Ukrainian citizens with Russian imperial nationalism, Soviet nostalgia, and Russian Orthodox fundamentalism. In addition, Russian

occupation authorities have committed widescale human rights abuses, torture, and kidnappings to Crimea¹⁵⁷ and the Donbas after 2014 and then again exported these heinous acts to occupied southeast Ukraine from 2022.¹⁵⁸

Russian propaganda in these occupied territories teaches Ukrainian children and youth that Nazis and Russophobes run Ukraine and that the artificial entity called Ukraine is in fact a US puppet.¹⁵⁹ Ukrainians who hold an identity distinct from Russians and refuse to accept they are Little Russians are castigated as misguided "Russians" who have been duped by the West. Crimea, the DPR/LPR, and southeastern Ukraine are described as "historically Russian lands" that were wrongly and unjustly incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and have voluntarily returned to the Motherland. In December 2023, Putin claimed:

The whole southeast of Ukraine has always been pro-Russian because

¹⁵⁴Institute for the Study of War, "The Kremlin's Occupation Playbook: Coerced Russification and Ethnic Cleansing in Occupied Ukraine," February 8, 2024, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/kremlins-occupation-playbook-coerced-russification-and-ethnic-cleansing-occupied>.

¹⁵⁵Shaun Walker, "Deportation and Re-Education: Life in Russian-Occupied Areas of Ukraine," *The Guardian*, March 6, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/06/deportation-re-population-russia-occupied-ukraine-zaporizhzhia>.

¹⁵⁶Anna Oliinyk. *The Military-Patriotic Infrastructure in Eastern Ukraine: Russian Proxy Republics (2014–2022)* (Oslo: Norwegian Defence University College, 2023); and Jade McGlynn, *Russian Propaganda Tactics in Wartime Ukraine* (Washington DC: Russia Program at George Washington University, November 2023).

¹⁵⁷Ghanna Mamonova, "Russia Runs a Hidden Prison System for Ukrainian Detainees in Crimea: Human Rights Monitors Claim That Occupation Forces Engage in Torture and Prolonged Captivity in a Sprawling Penal Network," *Vanity Fair*, April 9, 2024, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/russia-prison-system-crimea>.

¹⁵⁸Walker, "Deportation and Re-Education."

¹⁵⁹Alla Hurska, "Russia Converts Ukrainian Children Into Enemies," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 7, 2024, <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-converts-ukrainian-children-into-enemies/>.

these are historically Russian territories. ... What does Ukraine have to do with this? It has nothing to do with it. Neither Crimea nor the entire Black Sea coast in general. Odesa is a Russian city. We know this. Everyone knows this. But no, they drummed up all sorts of historical nonsense.¹⁶⁰

Ukrainians in Crimea and the other occupied regions are forced to exchange their Ukrainian passports for Russian credentials. Failure to do so means they are denied access to social benefits, healthcare, and pensions. Moscow has threatened to deport Ukrainians who have not obtained Russian passports. During sham referendums and elections, these Ukrainians are forced to vote, often by armed men coming to their homes and forcing them to do so.¹⁶¹

Instructors, teachers, and propagandists sent from Russia to Crimea, the DPR/LPR, and southeastern Ukraine promote imperial nationalist, Soviet, and Russian Orthodox fundamentalist propaganda in seven core areas¹⁶²:

1. *Soviet Nostalgia*: Soviet identity and nostalgia are promoted using the template developed during Putin's presidency. Soviet history is glorified for its progress, modernization, and industrialization. The Soviet Union is revived through Soviet-style pioneer groups, sports festivals, and youth groups (*YunArmiia*) under the control of the Russian Ministry of Defense.
2. *Russian-Ukrainian Brotherhood*: Schoolchildren are taught Russian "Fatherland History," which highlights close ties between the four occupied regions and Russia while downplaying links between them and "Nazi-ruled" Ukraine. Children are being indoctrinated to love Russia and are brought up "in a spirit of estrangement and hostility toward Ukraine." The DPR "minister of education" inculcates "an idea about socialism, about creating a cult, a cult of the Slavic world, for the Russian world."¹⁶³
3. *Cult of Stalin*: The cult of Stalin has been promoted in Putin's Russia as

¹⁶⁰TASS, "Putin Proclaims Odessa Russian City, Challenges Ukraine's Historical Narrative," December 14, 2023, <https://tass.com/politics/1721001>.

¹⁶¹Halya Coynash, "Russians With Machine Guns Ensure Occupied Ukraine 'Cotes' for Putin," Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, March 13, 2024, <https://khpg.org/en/1608813476>.

¹⁶²*Novaya Gazeta*, "Tolko piat ballov! (2019). 'Kak idet borba za shkolnikov samoprovozglashennykh respublik Donbassa,'" September 3, 2019, <https://novyagazeta.ru/articles/2019/09/03/81826-tolko-pyat-ballov>.

¹⁶³Andrew E. Kramer, "Ukrainian Separatists Rewrite History of 1930s Famine," *The New York Times*, April 29, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/30/world/europe/ukraine-separatists-rewrite-history-of-1930s-famine.html#:~:text=On%20the%20Ukrainian%20side%2C%20those,right%20to%20rule%20their%20country>.

part of the transformation of the Great Patriotic War into a quasi-religious cult. It has been exported to Crimea, the DPR/LPR, and southeastern Ukraine. In these four occupied regions, the authorities deny the 1933 famine was a genocide against Ukrainians and have banned the use of the term *Holodomor*.¹⁶⁴ Monuments to the *Holodomor* have been pulled down. The 1930s are praised as a time of modernization, industrialization, growth in literacy, and expansion in the realms of science and technology. Stalin's crimes are downplayed or ignored. During the Victory Day festivities on May 9 that celebrate the end of the Great Patriotic War, Donetsk went by "Stalino," the city's name from 1924 to 1961. Luhansk used "Voroshilovgrad," the city's name from 1935 to 1958 and from 1970 to 1990.

4. *Great Patriotic War*: Imported from Russia, a quasi-religious cult of the Great Patriotic War in 1941–45 is central to the version of revisionist

history being taught in occupied Crimea, the DPR/LPR, and southeastern Ukraine.¹⁶⁵ Young Ukrainians and schoolchildren are taught that the Soviet Union fought the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War and are fighting "Nazis" who came to power in Ukraine during the Euromaidan "putsch." Russia is reversing de-communization, which was introduced in Ukraine in 2015. One tenet of this process was to change the celebration of the Great Patriotic War to the commemoration of World War II in 1939–45.

5. *De-Ukrainianization and Russification*: Crimean and Donbas media have a long record of producing and publishing anti-Tatar and anti-Ukrainian reports that have grown in scale since 2014.¹⁶⁶ In Crimea and the DPR/LPR from 2014 and southeastern Ukraine from 2022, the Ukrainian language is no longer taught in schools and universities or used in official institutions. Russian is the "state language."¹⁶⁷ The Ukrainian language is described as "artificial"

¹⁶⁴Vasyl Marochko, "'Russkii Mir' u Feodosii: zaborona Slova Pro Holodomor," *Istorychna Pravda*, January 28, 2015, <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/columns/54c90ec7ad1ed>.

¹⁶⁵Alla Hurska, "Ukraine's Occupied Donbas Adopts Russia's Youth Militarization Policies," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, May 28, 2019, <https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-occupied-donbas-adopts-russias-youth-militarization-policies>.

¹⁶⁶Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 295.

¹⁶⁷Razumkov Center, *Ukrayina Pislya Vyboryv: Suspilni Ochikovannya, Politychni Priorytety, Perspektyvy Rozvytku*, 2019, http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019_Koalits_Ugoda.pdf; and Jack Losh, "Rebel-Held Ukraine Overhauls Education

and spoken by the uneducated part of the population. No Ukrainian nation exists, as Russians and Ukrainians are “one people.” In this “history,” the Ukrainian state never existed, and the artificial polity that occupies the land now is merely a US puppet.

6. *Russian Orthodox Church:* The only church permitted to operate in Soviet Ukraine was the Russian Orthodox Church. Then and now, from Crimea to the other parts of occupied Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, Orthodox Church of Ukraine, and Protestant Church are banned, and their clergy are repressed and murdered.¹⁶⁸
7. *Anti-Western Rhetoric:* Since 2014, in Crimea and the DPR/LPR, the media, official discourse, and politicians have fanned the flames of extreme anti-Western rhetoric. Since 2022, these narratives have been exported to southeastern Ukraine. European and liberal values are declared incompatible with the Russian world's spiritual values. Moscow has exported intolerance toward LGBTQ individuals and supported defending “traditional

values” in Crimea and the other occupied territories.

Russian Atrocities Against Crimean Tatars

In the late 1980s and especially after 1991, the Crimean Tatars began to return to Crimea from Central Asia, where they had been deported in 1944. By the 2014 Russian invasion, they accounted for 15 percent of the peninsula's population.¹⁶⁹ In the 1990s, Crimean Tatars raised six demands in Ukraine through the *Mejlis*, the central ruling body of the National Convention (*Qurultay*) of Crimean Tatars. The council was founded in 1991 to act as a representative body before Kyiv, the Crimean government, and international organizations. Until 2014, it was led by Mustafa Dzhemilev, a former dissident and political prisoner in the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁰

The *Mejlis* demanded:

1. Recognition of Tatars as the indigenous national group in Crimea;
2. Recognition of the 1944 ethnic cleansing of Tatars from Crimea to Central Asia as an act of genocide that killed half the population;

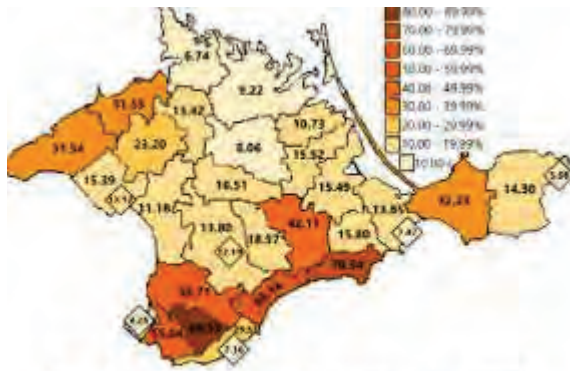
System as It Aligns Itself With Russia,” *The Guardian*, August 16, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/16/ukraine-rebel-territories-education-system-overhaul-russia>.

¹⁶⁸Tetiana Lozovenko, “Russians Capture Orthodox Church of Ukraine Cathedral in Crimea: Break Down Doors, Take Away Property,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, May 11, 2023.

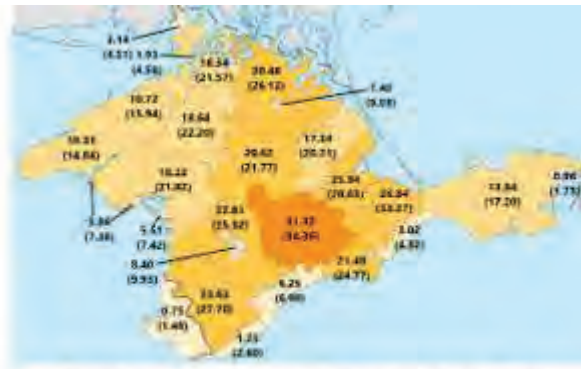
¹⁶⁹Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint?*, 25.

¹⁷⁰P. R. Magocsi, *This Blessed Land: Crimea and Crimean Tatars*.

De-Tatarization of Crimea



Population of Crimean Tatars based on 1939 Soviet census, before 1944 deportation



Population of Crimean Tatars based on 2014 Russian census

Source: Wikipedia

3. Adoption of legislation to provide for the official rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars, which could lead to the restitution of their property and land;
4. Restoration of guaranteed representation in the Crimean parliament, which had existed in the 1990s;
5. Construction of more mosques, of which there were only 200 up to 2014, compared to 1,700 in the Soviet Union prior to 1944; and
6. Increased school facilities with Tatar-language instruction for Crimean Tatar children. In 2014, there were only 15 secondary schools with Crimean Tatar as the main language of instruction.

The anniversary of the ethnic cleansing of the Tatars was commemorated on May 18 of each year until 2014.¹⁷¹ Ukraine's parliament adopted a resolution in November 2015 describing the 1944 deportation as a genocide, and May 18 was recognized as the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People.¹⁷²

Ukraine's recognition of the Tatars as the indigenous people of Crimea, having suffered genocide at the hands of Stalin's Soviet Union, reflected its own condemnation of the totalitarian Soviet crimes against Ukrainians, such as the *Holodomor*, and respect for the rights of national minorities. Crimean Tatars had been members of all center-right (national democratic) civic and political formations since the late 1980s—the Ukrainian Popular Movement for

¹⁷¹Halya Coynash, "Russia Bans School Remembrance of Victims of the Crimean Tatar Deportation as 'Provocation,'" Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, August 10, 2023, <https://khhpg.org/en/1608812616#:~:text=Within%20two%20months%20of%20its,Tatars%20for%20acts%20of%20remembrance>.

¹⁷²Verkhovna Rada, "Pro vyznannya henotsydu krymskotatarskoho narodu," November 12, 2015, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/792-19#Text>.

Restructuring (commonly known by its abbreviated form *Rukh*), Yushchenko's Our Ukraine, the Poroshenko Bloc, and European Solidarity Party.

Ukraine's tolerant approach to the Crimean Tatars and other national minorities directly contrasted the Kremlin's policies. Throughout the post-Soviet era, Russia has never reconciled with Ukraine defining ethnic Russians as a national minority and not designating Russian speakers as a special group. The Kremlin has consistently pursued fashioning Ukraine in the image of Lukashenka's Belarus, where ethnic Russians are co-rulers of the state and the Russian language is a state language. The Kremlin invaded Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 to forcibly transform the country into a pan-Russian state ruled by Russians and Ukrainians where the Russian language was again hegemonic.

Moscow's stated reason for intervening in Crimea and Donbas in 2014 and 2022 was to protect Russian speakers. The Kremlin's claims of discrimination against Russian speakers on both occasions were spurious at best. In the spring of 2014, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the United Nations found no evidence of

discrimination against Russian speakers in Crimea. Notably, they did find discrimination against Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians on the peninsula.¹⁷³ In the first year of Russia's occupation, the Crimean authorities banned Tatar- and Ukrainian-language radio and television stations. Islamic, Jewish, and Ukrainian religious and civic buildings and cemeteries became targets for extremist vandalism by Russian imperial nationalists and state-registered Cossacks. The May 18 commemoration of Stalin's 1944 ethnic cleansing of Crimean Tatars was banned.¹⁷⁴ Crimean Tatar institutions, such as the *Mejlis* and *Qurultay*, were banned. Crimean Tatar leaders are now prevented from re-entering Crimea, and 30,000 have fled to mainland Ukraine.

The Party of Regions, Crimean Russian imperial nationalists, Cossacks, the KPU, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) did not condemn and, in some cases, excused Stalin's ethnic cleansing of the Tatars. Post-2014 Crimean school textbooks provide inflammatory and historically inaccurate material, including accusations that Crimean Tatars collaborated with the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War.¹⁷⁵ In truth, more Crimean Tatars fought in the

¹⁷³Council of Europe, *Situation in Ukraine*.

¹⁷⁴Coynash, 'Russia Bans School Remembrance of Victims of the Crimean Tatar Deportation as 'Provocation.'

¹⁷⁵Halya Coynash, "Crimean Children Taught That Russia Didn't invade Crimea and That Ukraine Was an Accident," Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, December 4, 2020, <https://khpg.org/en/1588536818>; and Halya Coynash, "Russia Did Not Invade Crimea in New School Textbooks Edited by Putin Adviser," Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, August 20, 2021, <https://khpg.org/en/1608809430>.

Soviet army than the small number who collaborated with the Nazis.

After Russia's annexation of Crimea, the peninsula was flooded with Cossacks from Transnistria and the North Caucasus. Cossacks in Crimea are traditionally Islamophobic and intolerant of religious denominations other than Russian Orthodoxy.¹⁷⁶ In March 2014, Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov, who had expressed support for the Euromaidan Revolution and protested Russia's invasion and occupation, was murdered with three other Tatars.¹⁷⁷

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) condemned the fanning of anti-Tatar discourse and "hate speech" by the Crimean authorities.¹⁷⁸ The ECRI stated:

Anti-Tatar sentiment remains an issue in Ukraine and appears to have increased in recent years as politicians' rhetoric has given it a semblance of respectability. Local politicians' tendency to ignore or deny the specific problems faced by Crimean Tatars also pushes the latter to seek their own solutions and voice their identity more strongly. The

result is a risk of radicalization rather than resolution of the issues, to the detriment of Crimean society as a whole and Tatars as targets of prejudice. ECRI observes that there is a need for the authorities actively to combat prejudice against Crimean Tatars while working to raise the majority population's awareness and understanding of the problems they face.¹⁷⁹

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled on June 25, 2024, that Russia has been committing human rights violations in Crimea since 2014.¹⁸⁰ The decision is the first by an international legal organization recognizing Russian atrocities in occupied Crimea. The ECHR ruled that these have included violations of the rights to life, the right to liberty and security, the right to no punishment without law, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to freedom of religion, the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of assembly, the right to property, the right to education, and the right to freedom of movement. The evidence provided by the Ukrainian government to the court amounts to "a

¹⁷⁶Kuzio, "Crime and Politics in Crimea."

¹⁷⁷Kuzio, *Putin's War Against Ukraine*, 296.

¹⁷⁸European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, "Country Monitoring in Ukraine," Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/ukraine>.

¹⁷⁹European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, "ECRI Report on Ukraine," Council of Europe, February 21, 2012, <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-report-on-ukraine/16808b5ca5>.

¹⁸⁰European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Ukraine v. Russia (RE Crimea)*, final judgement, June 25, 2024.

pattern or system of violations” that Moscow has perpetrated in Crimea.

The situation for Crimean Tatars has deteriorated with each passing year since 2014, even more so since Russia’s 2022 full-scale invasion. The Russian occupation authorities have accused the Crimean Tatar community of supporting extremism and terrorism. Hundreds of Crimean Tatars have been arrested and imprisoned after show trials.¹⁸¹ Prior to 2014, Crimean Tatars accounted prior for 15 percent of Crimea’s population. They now account for two-thirds of the peninsula’s political prisoners.¹⁸² In prison, Crimean Tatars, who are overwhelmingly Muslims, are humiliated by being forced to eat pork, denied the Qur’an, and punished for praying. This brutality is reflected further in the widespread repression and numerous war crimes committed by Russian occupation forces in Crimea and the other occupied regions of Ukraine.¹⁸³

Ukrainian Security, Crimea, and Russia’s War Against Ukraine

At the time of writing, it would not be wholly accurate to say that Putin’s invasion has

failed. Russia’s initial goal of conquering Ukraine and installing a puppet regime has not happened, and Russia was forced to withdraw from the Kyiv, Kharkiv, and the Kherson regions. Putin has, nevertheless, achieved his imperial nationalist objective of occupying much of what he refers to by the Tsarist term of “New Russia”—that is, Ukraine’s southeast. Putin claims this area is “historical Russian land” wrongly included in the Soviet Ukrainian republic. Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipro, three cities that belonged to “New Russia,” are in Ukrainian hands but bombarded by Russia relentlessly. Kharkiv, though never historically part of “New Russia,” suffers the greatest from Russian attacks because of its closeness to the Russian-Ukrainian border. Russian invasion forces re-launched an attempt to occupy Kharkiv in May 2024, seeking to capitalize on stalled US military assistance to Ukraine and the slow mobilization of additional Ukrainian troops.

The failed Ukrainian counteroffensive in 2023 showed that liberating the southeast and Crimea will be difficult. It did not have to go this way. After Russia’s army was defeated in Kyiv in the spring and Kharkiv in the fall of

¹⁸¹Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, “Crimean Tatars’ Struggle for Human Rights,” April 18, 2023, <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-crimean-tatars-by-dunja-mijatovic-commissioner-for-human-rig/1680aaeb4b>.

¹⁸²Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe’s Next Flashpoint?* 25.

¹⁸³United Nations, “Ukraine: UN Commission Concerned by Continuing Patterns of Violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law,” March 15, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/ukraine-un-commission-concerned-continuing-patterns-violations-human-rights>; and United Nations, “Human Rights Situation During the Russian Occupation of Territory of Ukraine and Its Aftermath,” March 19, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/2024-03-20%20OHCHR%20Report%20on%20Occupation%20and%20Aftermath.pdf>.

2022, the West could have supplied sufficient military equipment and munitions to Ukraine that likely would have had an immediate breakthrough on the battlefield. Ukrainian forces may have been able to liberate the occupied southeast and, positioned along the Black Sea coast, threaten Russia's control over Crimea.

Instead, the slow delivery of military assistance in 2022 and 2023 provided Russia with a nine-month window to mobilize 300,000 soldiers, build three lines of fortifications, and lay tens of thousands of mines.¹⁸⁴ The United States and Germany have yet to clearly state that their goal is Russia's absolute military defeat.

The Biden administration had opposed the use of US weapons for attacks inside Russia. In May 2024, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken walked this back by stating the United States did not support or encourage attacks inside Russia and that it

was up to Ukrainians to decide how best to use US military assistance.¹⁸⁵ Washington had also stated its opposition to Ukrainian strikes at non-military targets, such as energy facilities, in the Russian Federation¹⁸⁶—though this was also walked back after strong objections.¹⁸⁷ With Russia attacking Ukrainian civilian and energy facilities mercilessly, such strikes represent a symmetrical response from Kyiv. Attacks on Russia's energy sector have reduced exports and will have a dramatic effect on the government budget and war machine.¹⁸⁸ Contrary to what has been claimed, Ukrainian attacks against energy facilities are having an important impact on Russia's economy, finances, and military.¹⁸⁹

The liberation of Crimea will be impossible without Russia first being defeated in Ukraine's southeast, principally in eastern Kherson and southern Zaporizhzhia. (Western Kherson was

¹⁸⁴Taras Kuzio, "Russia and the Anti-Western Axis Must Be Militarily Defeated: Shifting the Western Consensus Toward Ending Russia's Military Threat to Ukraine and the West" (London, Henry Jackson Society Research Brief, October 2023), <https://henryjacksonsociety.org/publications/russia-and-the-anti-western-axis-must-be-militarily-defeated-shifting-the-western-consensus-toward-ending-russias-military-threat-to-ukraine-and-the-west/>.

¹⁸⁵Ben Aris, "US Secretary of State Blinken Says Ukraine Free to Use US-Made Weapons to Strike Russia," BNE Intellinews, May 15, 2024, <https://www.intellinews.com/us-secretary-of-state-blinken-says-ukraine-free-to-use-us-made-weapons-to-strike-russia-325478/#:~:text=US%20Secretary%20of%20State%20Antony%20Blinken%20said%20Ukraine%20has%20to,to%20strike%20targets%20inside%20Russia%20>.

¹⁸⁶Christopher Miller et al., "US Urged Ukraine to Halt Strikes on Russian Oil Refineries," *Financial Times*, March 22, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/98f15b60-bc4d-4d3c-9e57-cbdde122ac0c>

¹⁸⁷Michael Liebreich, Lauri Myllyvirta, and Sam Winter-Levy, "Why Ukraine Should Keep Striking Russian Oil Refineries: Washington's Fears About Energy Markets Are Misplaced," *Foreign Affairs*, May 8, 2024. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/why-ukraine-should-keep-striking-russian-oil-refineries#author-info>.

¹⁸⁸Andriy Yermak, "The Oil Weapon Against Moscow. In 1986, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia raised production. That Move Contributed to the Soviet Collapse," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-oil-weapon-against-moscow-russia-ukraine-europe-prices-5b3a58dc>.

¹⁸⁹Taras Kuzio, 'Ukraine's 'De-Naftification' of Russia,' *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, April 2024.

liberated in November 2022, and northern Zaporizhzhia was never occupied.) The Donbas region should be treated separately, as Russia has been occupying the region since 2014. Ukraine has been successful in making the stationing of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol and other ports in Crimea untenable with sea drones and Ukrainian, British, and French missiles.¹⁹⁰ The British and French have sent long-range Storm Shadow and SCALP missiles, respectively, and the United States finally agreed to send long-range ATACMs.¹⁹¹ Ukraine destroyed the Black Sea Fleet's headquarters in Sevastopol as well as other command and logistics centers. The Kerch Bridge, Putin's pride and joy, has been attacked numerous times and is no longer used as a supply route for the Russian military. German Taurus missiles would be capable of destroying the Kerch Bridge, but Chancellor Olaf Scholz continues to refuse to send them.¹⁹² Ukrainian partisans operate throughout the Russian-occupied southeast and Crimea, collecting intelligence on potential Russian targets, assassinating collaborators, and launching military ambushes of Russian military and security forces.

Another area that remains unresolved is Ukraine's future security. Russia was emboldened to invade Ukraine because it had been left in a "gray zone" between two competing blocs—NATO and Russian-controlled Eurasia. If Ukraine retains that status, Russia will continue to be tempted to invade in the future. At the July 2023 NATO summit in Vilnius, two-thirds of the alliance's members supported Ukraine's membership—a record number. Much discussion is sure to center on this topic at the upcoming summit in Washington in July.

NATO has offered Ukraine security pledges instead of full-fledged membership. These are an improvement from the inadequate security assurances in the Budapest Memorandum but fall short of fully guaranteeing Ukraine's security. Even if Russia is militarily defeated, the Kremlin would again attempt to conquer Ukraine after it has had time to rebuild its armed forces. NATO membership for Ukraine would likely prevent future European crises by ending Russia's desire to forcefully conquer its neighbor and transform it into a Little Russian satellite entity.

¹⁹⁰John C. K. Daly, "Ukraine Launches Unprecedented Drone Attack on Russian Black Sea Fleet's Sevastopol Headquarters," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, November 8, 2022; and Kuzio, "Ukraine's 'De-Naftification' of Russia."

¹⁹¹Andrii Ryzhenko, "Ukraine's Drone and Missile Offensive in Black Sea Knocks Russian Navy Flat Aback," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 26, 2024, <https://jamestown.org/program/ukraines-drone-and-missile-offensive-in-black-sea-knocks-russian-navy-flat-aback/>.

¹⁹²James Rothwell, "Olaf Scholz Refuses to Send Taurus Missiles to Ukraine," *The Daily Telegraph*, April 24, 2024, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/04/24/olaf-scholz-refuses-to-send-aurus-missiles-to-ukraine/>.

Conclusion

The West did not sanction Russia for its 2008 invasion of Georgia and annexation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Washington rewarded Moscow with a reset of relations in the mistaken belief that Medvedev would improve relations with the West. These weak responses sent a signal to the Kremlin that the West would not react forcefully to Ukraine in 2014 and Syria in 2015, solidifying Putin's view of the West as divided and weak. This view was deepened by the chaotic and disastrous US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, only a month following the publication of Putin's long essay laying out the ideological treatise for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine seven months later.¹⁹³

Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea was a watershed as the first case of territorial expansion in Europe since the conclusion of World War II. Many Western policymakers, experts, and scholars, nevertheless, took Russia's side, either directly or indirectly. Ukrainian leaders were advised to accept Crimea was forever lost.¹⁹⁴ The two Minsk Accords, negotiated by France and Germany representing the West,

did not include Crimea. In 2014, Obama and UK Prime Minister David Cameron ignored their countries' security commitments to Ukraine under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which Kyiv had signed in exchange for nuclear disarmament. Most Russians, including liberal opposition leaders such as Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Alexei Navalny, did not condemn Crimea's annexation.¹⁹⁵ The West's acceptance of Moscow's illegal rule over Crimea could be seen in Ukraine not receiving Western support during the 2018 clash with Russia in the Azov Sea.

Acquiescing to Crimea's occupation was a major strategic blunder that served to whet Putin's appetite for further territorial conquest. Turning a blind eye to Russian revanchism and military aggression in Crimea, as in Georgia and Syria, while continuing "business as usual" with Russia reinforced Putin's determination to act on his obsession with Ukraine militarily. Instead of halting Moscow's ambitions earlier, the West was compelled to react forcefully in 2022 when the full-scale invasion of Ukraine unleashed a global crisis, causing some

¹⁹³Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," President of Russia, July 21, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.

¹⁹⁴*The Moscow Times*, "'Crimea Is Lost,' Pompeo Reportedly Tells Ukraine," February 5, 2020, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/02/05/crimea-is-lost-pompeo-reportedly-tells-ukraine-a69167>.

¹⁹⁵Anna Dolgov, "Navalny Wouldn't Return Crimea, Considers Immigration a Bigger Issue," *The Moscow Times*, October 16, 2024, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/10/16/the-rubles-senseless-and-harmful-devaluation-a40476>; and European Parliament, "Mikhail Khodorkovsky Asks MEPs to Back Russia's Opposition," December 2, 2014, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20141201IPR81710/mikhail-khodorkovsky-asks-meps-to-back-russia-s-opposition>.

strategists to suggest the need for a return to the Cold War-era policy of containment.¹⁹⁶

Russia began its conquest of Ukraine in 2014 in Crimea. Moscow's imperial appetite will not be defeated until Crimea and the other occupied territories are returned under Kyiv's sovereignty. Retaking Ukraine's territory has been made very difficult, if not impossible, by the slow delivery of military assistance and unwillingness to deliver certain equipment, including initially tanks and jets, alongside the West's continued refusal to send long-range missiles. Ukrainian forces lacked sufficient mine-clearing equipment and tanks during the 2023 offensive, and F-16 jets only arrived in 2024. As a result, Russia was given sufficient time to mobilize large numbers of troops, build fortifications, and lay mines throughout southeastern Ukraine.

With the slow or possible end to US military assistance depending on the outcomes of the 2024 presidential elections, Ukraine will only be able to rely on European aid to prevent a Russian advance on Kyiv and other large cities. Without Washington's support, Kyiv's objective of liberating the occupied southeast, let alone Crimea, will be impossible. Ukraine has shown it can threaten Russia's occupation of Crimea through the destruction of Black Sea Fleet

vessels. Moscow's hold on Crimea would be severely undermined if Ukrainian forces liberated the southeast and relocated to the Black Sea coastline, from where they could use British, French, and American long-range missiles to fire on Russian positions.

Ukraine's liberation of the occupied southeast through a major defeat of Russian forces, coupled with a serious threat to Russian control over Crimea, would bring an end to the war. Assuming Putin was not removed from power or killed, he would be forced to agree to talks. If he were removed from power, the new Russian government would likely not have the stomach to continue fighting in the hopes of rebuilding the Russian army to launch a future attempt at subjugating Ukraine. To prevent this, Ukraine, similar to Sweden and Finland, would need to be quickly admitted into NATO.

Only Russia's military defeat in southeastern Ukraine and the removal of Russia's grip over Crimea will ensure that Russian imperialism will not move further west. Each time Russia has suffered a past military defeat, it has led to reformers taking power—in 1856 during the Crimean War, 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War, and 1917 when Tsarist Russia ended its participation in World War I. Every Western

¹⁹⁶Moges Teshome, "Back to the Cold War Era: The War in Ukraine and an Appraisal of the Strategy of Containment," International Institute for Peace, May 31, 2022, <https://www.iipvienna.com/new-blog/2022/5/31/back-to-the-cold-war-era-the-war-in-ukraine-and-an-appraisal-of-the-strategy-of-containment>.

country should embrace Russia's military defeat, as Ukraine's absolute victory is necessary to restore peace and quell future Russian revanchism.

About the Author

Dr. Taras Kuzio is a professor of political science at the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy and an associate research fellow at the London-based think tank, the Henry Jackson Society. He is the winner of the 2022 Peterson Literary Prize for *Russian Nationalism and the Russian-Ukrainian War: Autocracy-Orthodoxy-Nationality* published by Routledge and author of *Fascism and Genocide: Russia's War Against Ukrainians* published by Ibidem and Columbia University Press in 2023. Dr. Kuzio has also held positions at the International Institute of Strategic Studies; NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv; Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies, George Washington University; German Marshall Fund; and Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, among others. He earned a BA in Economics from the University of Sussex and an MA in Area Studies (USSR and Europe) from the University of London. He completed a PhD in political science from the University of Birmingham, England, and finished a post-doctoral fellowship at Yale University.

Jamestown's Mission

The Jamestown Foundation's mission is to inform and educate policymakers and the broader community about events and trends in those societies that are strategically or tactically important to the United States but that frequently restrict access to such information.

Using indigenous and primary sources, Jamestown's material is delivered without political bias, filter, or agenda. It is often the only source of information that should be, but is not always, available through official or intelligence channels, especially in regard to Eurasia and terrorism.

Origins

Founded in 1984 by William Geimer, The Jamestown Foundation made a direct contribution to the downfall of Communism through its dissemination of information about the closed totalitarian societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

William Geimer worked with Arkady Shevchenko, the highest-ranking Soviet official ever to defect when he left his position as undersecretary general of the United Nations. Shevchenko's memoir *Breaking With Moscow* revealed the details of Soviet superpower diplomacy, arms control strategy, and tactics in the Third World at the height of the Cold War. Through its work with Shevchenko, Jamestown rapidly became the leading source of information about the inner workings of the captive nations of the former Communist Bloc.

In addition to Shevchenko, Jamestown assisted former top Romanian intelligence officer Ion Pacepa in writing his memoirs. Jamestown ensured that both men published their insights and experience in what became bestselling books. Even today, several decades later, some credit Pacepa's revelations about Nicolae Ceausescu's regime in his book *Red Horizons* with the fall of that government and the freeing of Romania.

The Jamestown Foundation has emerged as a leading provider of information about Eurasia. Our research and analysis on conflict and instability in Eurasia enabled Jamestown to become one of the most reliable sources of information on the post-Soviet space, China, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Furthermore, since 9/11, Jamestown has used its network of indigenous experts in more than

50 different countries to conduct research and analysis on terrorism and the growth of al-Qaeda and its offshoots throughout the globe.

By drawing on our ever-growing global network of experts, Jamestown has become a vital source of unfiltered, open-source information about major conflict zones around the world—from the Black Sea and Siberia to the Persian Gulf, Latin America, and the Pacific. Our core of intellectual talent includes former high-ranking government officials and military officers, political scientists, journalists, scholars, and economists. Their insights contribute significantly to policymakers engaged in addressing today's newly emerging global threats in the post-9/11 world.