

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

Ukraine War Edition

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THE BIDEN/PUTIN CRIMINAL WAR IN UKRAINE

by RAY LIGHT

What is it about? Where is it heading?

Now, more than seven months into the war between Russia and Ukraine, there is no sign of serious negotiations between them. On the contrary, with the U.S.-led NATO military alliance supplying the Ukraine as its proxy, there is a great danger of the war growing into a major European war or even a world war. Nuclear war may well be on the horizon.

Indeed, swollen with the arrogance of Empire, President Biden's recent "unscripted" remarks, strongly supported by Republican gurus, George Will, and infamous global war criminal Henry Kissinger, sound like a bipartisan, "Republicrat" Trial Balloon being floated about launching a nuclear first strike against Russia! And Russian President Putin, continues his own saber-rattling still mostly directed against Ukraine and the European Union.

In this increasingly dangerous world situation, what should be the standpoint of the international proletariat? In this global context we offer the following Questions and Answers with Ray Light, our veteran leader.

Questions and Answers with Ray Light

-NATO'S POST-SOVIET EXPANSION and
U.S. SABOTAGE of the NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE-

Question 1. Comrade Ray, more than eight years ago, you wrote a substantial piece on the Ukraine, calling it "the current focal point of the U.S.-led Imperialist War Drive."* In the closing portion of that article you raised the following: "The Russian oligarchs have their own interests that have conflicted and will, in the future, conflict even more sharply with the interests of Wall Street finance capital. When Putin or other representatives of the Russian monopoly capitalist class

feel sufficiently threatened or find the opportunity/need to struggle against U.S. imperialism they will do so by whatever means are at hand."

Eight years later, do you still believe it is such threats, needs and/or opportunities that motivated the Putin Regime to send the Russian military into Ukraine this past February? If so, what are the most important issues?

ANSWER: *Yes. First*, let's not forget that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) led by Russia, was territorially the largest country in the world in the mid and late twentieth century. The Soviet-led crushing military defeat of German Nazism in World War II featured the liberation of all the fascist-occupied countries on the road of the Soviet Red Army's

Nato's expansion since 1997



- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| ① Estonia | ⑤ Czech Republic | ⑨ Slovenia | ⑬ North Macedonia |
| ② Latvia | ⑥ Slovakia | ⑩ Croatia | ⑭ Bulgaria |
| ③ Lithuania | ⑦ Hungary | ⑪ Montenegro | |
| ④ Poland | ⑧ Romania | ⑫ Albania | |

*It appeared in the May-June 2014 issue of *Ray O' Light Newsletter* # 84. A reprint of that complete article makes up the second part of this special 2022 Newsletter on Ukraine. See page 19.

victorious march to Berlin in 1945. This resulted in the establishment of the Warsaw Pact, an alliance of anti-fascist and socialist-led countries under Soviet leadership that became a *big buffer* between the U.S.-led western European capitalist powers and the USSR.

With the rise of modern revisionism and reformism within the ruling Communist and Socialist parties in this Soviet bloc, all the Warsaw Pact countries were seeking rapprochement with U.S.-led imperialism, even the USSR, and they degenerated into capitalist states. Over the past years, Putin and the Russian oligarchs have felt increasingly threatened by U.S.-led NATO's growth in membership and its surrounding of Russia. And now the U.S./NATO moves to place Ukraine itself inside NATO had become a matter of great concern for Russia.

Secondly, for years now, Germany has been the leading country of the European Union and one of the leading industrial countries in the entire world. Of great immediacy in 2021 was the imminent opening of the massive and strategically important Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, constructed to pump Russian gas directly to Germany and then on to other E.U. countries to provide the fuel for the great global workshop of Germany and the E.U. This pipeline's activation, expected by the end of 2021, would have doubled the already huge amount of Russian gas (40%!) being used in the E.U.; it would have further weakened U.S. imperialism's economic and political dominance over the E.U. and strengthened Russia's growing economic influence across the E.U. And it would have strengthened both the E.U. and Russia economically at the expense of the United States-led Empire, already in decline.

Writing three weeks before Putin's incursion into Ukraine, Canadian John Foster, an international petroleum economist who has held positions with the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, BP and Petro-Canada, observed: "Russia is a petrostate. It's the world's single largest exporter of natural gas, and the second largest oil exporter—just behind Saudi Arabia. Pipelines and sea routes to market are vital to its economy. Russia wants to sell oil and gas in Asia and Europe, and they want to buy it. ***Nord Stream 2 makes commercial sense.*** It incurs no transit fees. The route to market is much shorter than aging pipelines via Ukraine." However, Foster adds, "Nord Stream 2 remains ... bitterly opposed by Poland and Ukraine who presume it will reduce volumes and transit fees on pipelines through their countries. ***Others (notably Germany, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy) want it.***" ("Pipeline Politics Hits Multipolar Realities: Nord Stream 2 and the Ukraine Crisis," *Counterpunch*, 2-3-22, *My emphasis, ROL*) Clearly, with the exception of Poland, virtually the entire European Union membership, and especially its leading country, Germany, strongly supported the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline Project.

Quite the opposite has been the position of U.S. imperialism. Since the 1960's when Europe first began importing Russian gas, Washington perceived Russian energy as a threat to its leadership. In the recent period, using reckless and destructive massive fracking, the U.S. has become the world's largest gas producer and a major exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). U.S. imperialism now certainly wants to displace Russian gas for use by the E.U. in order to channel the energy super-profits to powerful U.S. oil and gas magnates. But, even more importantly, *blocking* NORD STREAM 2 would weaken Russia's leverage with the European Union and strengthen current U.S. imperialist domination over the E.U. countries. However, following on the ten years of success of Nord Stream 1, the prospect for success for NORD STREAM 2, was virtually guaranteed because of its far greater efficiency and reliability than the best energy deals the U.S. could offer. Consequently, it threatened to provide a decisive blow to the plans of the U.S. Empire for Europe. Even Biden's U.S. Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, had admitted, by June 2021, that Nord Stream 2 was "inevitable."



In a prophetic article, less than two weeks before the Russian military incursion into Ukraine, Michael Hudson, an economics professor, explained: "The only way left for U.S. diplomats to block European [energy] purchases is to goad Russia into a military response to Ukraine and then claim that avenging this response outweighs any purely national economic interest. The problem is to create a suitably offensive incident and depict Russia as the aggressor." ("America's Real Adversaries are Its European and Other Allies," *CounterPunch*, 2-11-22)

Over the past few years, constant U.S. government interference and provocation delayed Nord Stream 2 pipeline construction long enough to lead to punishing fees that applied to no other pipeline. And U.S. imperialist delays gave it time to set up a scenario — the Russian war on Ukraine, where the German-led E.U. might turn its own back on Russia, even though *seriously weakening itself!* Hudson cites the calculation of "hawkish" Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, **Victoria Nuland**, who declared on January 27, as follows: "If Russia

invades Ukraine one way or another Nord Stream 2 will not move forward.”

Under tremendous political and military pressure from Nuland and U.S./NATO, in the name of “solidarity of NATO” and “solidarity with Ukraine” in a war that no other force beside the USA “saw coming” (sic!), the German government aligned with the U.S. in threatening to cancel the Nord Stream 2 pipeline!*

On the eve of Russia’s march into Ukraine, with U.S.-led NATO having set up the Ukrainian government and people as a proxy in the war on Russia, Germany canceled its Nord Stream 2 contract with Russia. Thus, the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline has never yet been approved to transport the Russian energy resources so urgently needed by Germany and other important E.U. countries. Now, after more than seven months of war in Ukraine, with the choking of the economies of the German-led E.U. as well as Russia in relation to U.S. imperialism, *the U.S. dollar has caught up in value to the Euro.*

-NATO SEIZES CONTROL OF UKRAINE’S PRESIDENCY-

Question 2. Why was 2014 such a pivotal year in modern Ukrainian history? How did 2014 events there set up the conditions for the escalation moving toward full-blown war that Russia began in late February 2022?

ANSWER: In February 2014, the Maidan uprising of pro-western youth, *backed by U.S. imperialism*, overthrew the elected President Victor Yanukovich who was forced to flee. Yanukovich’s election victory had been certified by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).** *The successful coup meant an openly U.S./NATO lackey government was installed. And this situation has remained ever since.*

Indeed, early in 2014, **Victoria Nuland**,*** assistant U.S. Secretary of State for European and Eurasian

*It opposed the overwhelming support for the pipeline of three-quarters of its own people from every political cross-section of German society. And it undermined the global power of the European Union, which it leads in the cutthroat world of the economic war among the great powers!

**Three decades earlier, the OSCE had been set up by the U.S., Europeans and the Soviet Union to guarantee security for all 57 participating countries, not just NATO’s thirty countries.

***Amazingly, now as U.S. Under Secretary of State for political affairs, Nuland remains today, as she has been for most of the past thirty years, at the center of U.S. state power in relation to the Ukraine and its connections to the USA, NATO, the E.U. and Russia.

Affairs, made crystal clear this U.S./NATO domination not only of Ukraine but also of the European Union.

This occurred in her secretly recorded and widely leaked telephone conversation with the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt. Discussing the make-up of the next Ukrainian government, Nuland told Pyatt that Arseniy Yatsenuk should be the next Prime Minister of Ukraine and that a few other specific leaders should be kept out of the government. When Pyatt responded that the “E.U. would not commit to mediate,” Nuland dismissively responded, “F___ the E.U.” German Chancellor Angela Merkel, responded that Nuland’s remark was “absolutely unacceptable” *but no official E.U. or U.S. government measures were taken against her.* Nuland also indicated in the call that then Vice President Joe Biden would be giving the final “attaboy” on her choices. (No wonder Hunter Biden ended up with such a privileged corporate board job in Ukraine.) Arseniy Yatsenuk became prime minister that year and served for two years until he was ousted for blatant corruption.

2014 was a busy year for Nuland: She served as the lead U.S. point person for the Revolution of Dignity, (the Maidan overthrow of elected President Yanukovich); she established loan guarantees to Ukraine, including a \$1 billion loan guarantee in 2014. And she provided allegedly “non-lethal” assistance to the Ukrainian military and border guard.



President Yanukovich beware of the maiden who organizes Maidan protests.

The secession of Crimea, and the autonomy of Donetsk and Luhansk were also a direct result of the 2014 Maidan coup. Crimea had been part of Russia since 1783. In 1954, Soviet revisionist traitor and U.S. imperialist stooge Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting the population, transferred Crimea to Ukraine when they were all still part of the Soviet Union. No wonder the referendum vote rapidly organized in Crimea in 2014 resulted in an 83% turnout and 97% vote *in favor* of the Russian annexation. And, given that the U.S./NATO forces had themselves gained control of the Ukrainian presidency, it is clear why the 2014 annexation of Crimea as well as the declaration of independence by the Luhansk and Donetsk Peoples Republics were not strongly and

immediately resisted by U.S.-led imperialism, NATO and the new Ukrainian lackey government.

The Minsk I and II Agreements of 2014 and 2015 were a compromise signed by Ukraine, the Donbas rebels, Russia and OSCE. Designed to stop the bloodshed in Eastern Ukraine, territorial integrity of Ukraine was acknowledged while a measure of autonomy was provided to Luhansk and Donetsk. Though Minsk II called for the Ukrainian government to hold meetings with the representatives of the two Donbas republics, as a U.S./NATO lackey, it never held any in the seven years that followed.

The 2014 advances for Russia and Crimea in Ukraine helped pave the way for Putin's overconfidence, and for his arrogant, great nation chauvinist crimes in launching the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 with no real preparation and seemingly without any substantial strategic and tactical plan. By contrast, taking advantage of their control of the Ukrainian government for the past eight years, the U.S. imperialists and U.S.-led NATO have built up the Ukrainian military, backed by NATO weaponry and training.

-NATO'S ROLE IN UKRAINE FROM 2014 UNTIL PUTIN'S 2022 INVASION-

Question 3. What important role did NATO play in the war preparations of Ukraine from 2014 to 2022? And how did Victoria Nuland skillfully utilize her four years away from her three decades as a top U.S. state department official (i.e. as "a woman without portfolio") to outmaneuver the Trump Regime's hostility to NATO so as to maintain and build up NATO's military presence in Ukraine in the interest of the U.S. Empire during a full half of this important eight year period?!

ANSWER: In this period, the U.S. Empire found NATO to be a valuable tool and an especially *versatile* one. Remember that Donald Trump, as U.S. president, served as Commander in Chief of the U.S. military. Trump was himself, however, hostile to *international alliances*, including NATO. Moreover, Trump was very friendly and extremely supportive of Vladimir Putin, the chief political figure in Russia. Upon Trump's inauguration as President in January 2017, Victoria Nuland, like many civil servants, resigned from the state department and government service.

In fact, Trump's four-year term was the only period that Nuland was absent from the U.S. State Department in the past thirty years or so. This fact makes it even more striking that, when the Trump Regime undertook new high-level talks with Russian government officials by scheduling a meeting between Russia's top general, Valery Gerasimov, and the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACE), General Curtis Scaparrotti, Nuland, *with no official U.S. government job title,*

weighed in! Nuland vouched for Scaparrotti as someone "uniquely positioned" to address concerns about Russia's ongoing military role in Ukraine, its active measures to undermine Transatlantic democracies and other strategic decisions. Nuland interjected the following: "channels are especially vital at a time when relations at the leader level are so unpredictable." *She was boldly observing how "unpredictably close" Trump and Putin were.*

Could these high-level ("back channel") talks between Russia's top general and NATO's top commander, *separate and independent from the Putin-Trump talks*, help explain the chaotic state of the Russian military from the moment it landed in Ukraine this past February? Do they have something to do with the chaotic command structure of the Russian military thus far during the war in Ukraine? Is this at least partially responsible for U.S./NATO forces knowing Russia's military capacity, what the Russian military was going to do, where it would place its forces, its vehicles and weaponry in Ukraine *before* Russia's military command and troops knew?!!

One thing seems certain: *U.S. / NATO combat readiness in Ukraine long preceded Russia's incursion.* At the end of March 2022, *Time Magazine* reporter Simon Shuster wrote a revealing feature story entitled, "Lifeline: Inside the 'Historic Mission to Provide Arms and Aid to Ukraine.'" (*Time*, April 11/April 18-22) Said Shuster, "...on the plains of eastern Poland... a flood of assistance from the U.S. and its allies has given Ukraine its best chance of surviving this war, *and maybe even winning it.*" (My italics, ROL) In the month since the first Russian troops had marched into Ukraine, Shuster cites the Pentagon statement that, "it's [made] the largest authorized transfer of arms in history from the U.S. military to any foreign country." (!)

Shuster focuses on several individuals. A 27-year-old named Victor is a member of Ukrainian special forces whose group came to the Polish border to receive the weapons aid and haul it back to Lviv. *Victor's unit has taken part in joint military exercises with NATO troops since 2014.* "The training has come in handy, he says, as have the weapons shipments from the U.S., especially the shoulder-mounted rockets capable of downing a plane or piercing the armor of a tank." *David Plaster, a former medic in the U.S. Army, has worked as a coordinator for foreign fighters in Ukraine for about eight years.* This foreign fighters coordinator, "working in coordination with Ukraine's armed forces," finds suitable units for them to join. Some teach "locals" the basic skills they need to defend themselves and stay alive. Plaster offers advice to the *Time* readers: "those without combat training are better off heading home.... But if they're capable, if they have the skills, they're welcome to help."

Perhaps the most informative person Shuster interviewed was Kristina Kvien, "top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine since

the start of 2020.” (Unless this date is a typo, Kvien had been in Ukraine for more than a year before Russia marched in!) According to Kvien, since U.S. diplomats evacuated Ukraine, her team’s headquarters had moved to the city of Rzeszow in Eastern Poland, a key city in the Polish corridor. This year in early February, soon after U.S. intelligence concluded that a Russian invasion was imminent, she arrived there. According to Kvien, her priority at the time was to convince the Ukrainian government that the invasion was coming, and to help them get ready. That mission ran into a wall of denial from President Volodymyr Zelensky and virtually all his aides. Their government did little to prepare. Ukraine did not call up reservists, warn civilians, stockpile food, or move weapons into position.” What a strange admission!

Finally, how fitting for the U.S./NATO forces tasked not only with **provoking** Putin’s Russia but also with **pushing** Zelensky’s Ukrainian government into war that it turns out that the top U.S. “diplomat” in Ukraine, Kristina Kvien, is “an alumnus of the U.S. Army War College.”



LVIV, UKRAINE 04.16.2021, Ukraine Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and Chargé d’Affaires, Kristina Kvien walk to host the JMTG-U-TOA (Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine-Transfer of Authority)

Contrast this model of ingenuity and efficiency, with the experience of Putin’s soldiers, as they marched into Ukraine.

Harassed, taunted and seemingly infiltrated by U.S. imperialist agents, Putin’s military planning and implementation has been disastrous since entering Ukraine in February. As the chief representative of the Russian oligarchs, Putin’s arrogance and great nation chauvinism, and monopoly bourgeois alienation from collective life, make him especially vulnerable to the provocations of the operatives of the U.S. Empire backed by their decades-long political, economic and military connections (NATO et al.) as well as their technological advantages in logistical support, command and control, etc.

With Russia’s sudden launch of the war on Ukraine, Putin fell into the trap set by the U.S. government. Accordingly, Putin’s forces immediately targeted Kyiv,

the capital of Ukraine and one of the largest cities in Europe with three million residents. And in the first days his army was on the road to Kyiv, a forty-mile-long truck convoy became bogged down when the trucks ran out of gas and truck parts. This was *just the beginning* of Putin’s military misadventure.

Clearly, it was U.S.-NATO that had been preparing for this war in Ukraine, and not Putin.

-PUTIN FALLS FOR U.S./NATO PROVOCATIONS LEADING TO OPEN WAR ON UKRAINE-

Question 4. Why did the Putin Regime fall into the U.S.-led NATO trap and angrily launch the half-hearted Russian “invasion” of Ukraine?

ANSWER: The Russian regime, under the domination of Putin and the Russian oligarchs, has been infamous for its corruption. As the main representative of the Russian billionaire oligarchs who stole the vast Soviet wealth created and accumulated by the Soviet working class over decades of heroic sacrifice and struggle, Putin is increasingly arrogant and out of touch with the Russian people and the working people of all lands, including the people of the Donbas and Ukraine. Indeed, these Russian renegades look up to the West’s corrupt financial oligarchy and would rather join it than fight it. In this light, the Putin government’s handling of the sensitive 2022 Ukraine situation, could not have been worse.

On the eve of his open launching of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Putin government had only just days before recognized the Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk that had already been functioning for eight years! Instead of spending some weeks or months during which Russian diplomats could be engaged in formal political consultation with these Republics and be a “peace broker” between the Donbas republics and Ukraine, along with Germany and other European Union countries, Putin angrily and hastily sent his unprepared military into Ukraine.*

In his address to the Russian people launching the march into Ukraine, opportunistically wrapping himself in the heroic and popular Soviet banner of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, Putin claimed the 2022 goal was “de-Nazification of Ukraine.” But, buoyed by his

*Robert Kagan, co-creator of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) and still an aggressive promoter of wars for U.S. global hegemony, once characterized Americans as being from Mars [God of War], while Europeans were from Venus [Goddess of Love]. Thus, Putin’s bungling and thuggish approach to Ukraine pushed European (Goddess of Love) folks into the arms of U.S. and NATO (God of War) military aggressors.

vast wealth and that of the Russian oligarchs *stolen from the Soviet Union*, in his arrogant monopolist bourgeois fashion, Putin was dismissive of Lenin's proletarian teachings on the national question, especially the working class need to respect the right of *all* nations to self-determination. Putin rejected the Lenin-Stalin line of nurturing the flowering of nations and cultures (within what was then the new USSR) and specifically Ukraine. And he expressed disdain for Stalin's brilliant proletarian leadership in the Soviet-led global victory over actual German Nazism in World War II, instead of learning from it.*



Of course, there is much more for Putin to feel frustrated, angry and betrayed about.

In 1998, Russia joined the G8, a forum of eight large, developed countries, mostly NATO members. And in 2012 Russia joined the World Trade Organization. Such increased economic ties gave Russia access to new markets and capital as well as political contact with the west and elsewhere. It appeared that, at least temporarily, Russia had a stake in supporting U.S. imperialism.

During its "honeymoon period" with U.S. and western capitalism at the end of the Cold War, rather than demanding that this *anti-Soviet* NATO military alliance be scrapped, several major revisionist and corrupt Russian leaders even floated the idea of Russia *joining* NATO! In 1990, while negotiating German reunification with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Gorbachev inanely argued, "You say NATO is not aimed against us...therefore, we propose to join NATO." In 1991, as the Soviet Union was being dissolved, Russian president Yeltsin sent a letter to NATO, suggesting that Russia's long-term aim was to join NATO. During a more recent series of interviews with filmmaker Oliver Stone, President Putin said he'd raised the possibility of joining NATO with President Clinton in a Moscow visit in 2000. According to former Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen, the NATO Secretary General from 2009-2014, in the early days of Putin's presidency, around 2000-2001, Putin made many statements favorable to the idea

*Indeed, Stalin had been criticized for lack of military readiness in 1941, when he had held the massive Soviet Red Army back from the western Soviet borders *and* on alert to make sure that *the world's peoples and governments* clearly understood that Nazi Germany was *the invader* of the USSR, *the aggressor* against the USSR, and not vice-versa.

of Russia joining NATO. Shortly before the Putin-led invasion of Ukraine in 2022, this was also confirmed by former British Labour Defense secretary Robertson who led NATO from 1999 to 2003. Robertson stated that at their very first meeting, Putin made it clear he wanted Russia to be part of western Europe. According to Robertson, "Putin said, 'when are you going to invite us to join NATO?' ... They wanted to be part of that secure, stable prosperous west that Russia was out of at the time."

Russia even stooged for NATO, in 2009, allowing transit of non-military supplies through its territory for NATO use in Afghanistan. In mid-2011, NATO and Russia had a first ever joint fighter jet exercise right after a first joint submarine exercise. As we observed in our earlier Ukraine piece, in 2013, "Putin politically rescued U.S. imperialist chieftain Obama from the corner into which

he had painted himself in a build-up to a major imperialist war against the Syrian Regime! (See page 22) Even after the



suspension of practical cooperation following the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, in February 2017 Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov supported the resumption of *military cooperation* with the NATO alliance.

Putin and the Russian oligarchs have never given up their ardor about being included in the billionaire's club that has access to the USA, where they can openly feast on their ill-gotten gains in relative "freedom." This was the basis upon which Biden, in his first State of the Union address on March 1, 2022, a few days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, announced creation of a high-level U.S. special group to punish and harass the Russian oligarchs, restricting their access to the USA and England, to make it difficult for Russia's corrupt rulers to fully enjoy their immense wealth and privilege.

Putin can relate to Khrushchev's inability to buy/betray his way into this club, for Khrushchev had handed the Crimea over to Ukraine back in 1954. Putin can relate to Gorbachev, so anxious to please the leaders of the U.S. Empire to whom he surrendered East Germany for German reunification. In exchange, Gorbachev and the USSR received nothing but a simple "verbal" quid quo pro from U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in February 1990; Baker "promised" that NATO would go no further east than the newly "re-opening" eastern part of Germany. Gorbachev's legacy today includes the fact that the Putin Regime is compelled to deal with *fourteen additional countries (!)* that have been added to NATO

since the September 1990 treaty was signed. It turns out that treaty only addressed how NATO troops could operate in the territory of the former East Germany.*



From left, Bush, Gorbachev, Baker

Thus, it was understandable that, leading up to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia demanded that NATO end all military activity in Eastern Europe and also wanted a legally binding guarantee to end further eastward NATO expansion. Other related demands included a Russian veto on Ukrainian membership in NATO, the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe and the withdrawal of multinational NATO battalions from Poland and the Baltics.

Such were the stated aims of Putin and the Russian oligarchs. With this desperate move into Ukraine that quickly became the largest conventional military attack on a European state since World War II, they were also attempting to regain what had been the “breadbasket” of the former USSR and the vast mineral wealth of Ukraine. No wonder thus far, the war’s most tangible result has been the *addition of two new members of NATO* – Finland and Sweden.

Meanwhile, Biden’s Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland had been leading NATO forces within the Ukraine to entice/provoke Putin’s Russia to openly invade Ukraine. She was following the treacherous path of another war criminal, that path already taken by President Carter’s National Security Council (NSC) chief over forty years earlier. For, in 1979, U.S. National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski had enticed the Soviet leadership to send troops into Afghanistan, creating what Brzezinski hoped would become *Russia’s Vietnam*.

*Gorbachev must not have studied the bitter experience of the North American Native indigenous peoples in the USA, most of whom at least had treaties *signed* by the U.S. government!

- BIDEN-NULAND’S UKRAINE TRAP
and CARTER-BRZEZINSKI’S AFGHAN TRAP -

Question 5. How is the Joe Biden-Victoria Nuland “Ukraine trap” for Russia similar to the “Afghan trap” on the Soviet Union sprung by U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1979?

ANSWER: In July 1979, U.S. President Jimmy Carter issued his first secret directive providing aid to Islamic fundamentalists fighting to overthrow the *pro-Soviet* regime in Afghanistan. (Way back then, Afghani women had rights of modern women in that progressive society, especially in Kabul.) Carter’s National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, had envisioned that, by providing secret U.S. aid to the mujahideen’s war on the Afghan government, the U.S. imperialists would likely pressure the Soviet government to send in troops in the government’s defense and get drawn into what Brzezinski saw as Russia’s Vietnam. Given the fact that the Soviet Union had already been substantially weakened internally by revisionist degeneration, Carter and his NSC chief saw the possibility of draining the Soviet Union in an Afghan war that would lead to the overthrow of the government of the USSR.



In that instance, the Soviet leadership openly told the Soviet people the truth that U.S. imperialism was backing the reactionary Muslim uprising against the pro-Soviet government and that the Afghan government had requested Soviet military support. *U.S. imperialism lied to the world, denying its involvement*. Eventually, the Soviet troops got bogged down in Afghanistan and the Soviet populace, already disillusioned with the revisionist Soviet leadership, became war weary. Soviet military involvement in Afghanistan became a significant factor in the demise of the USSR, just as Brzezinski had foreseen.**

**In 1998 Brzezinski gave an interview to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Paris, January 15-21, 1998, p.76) in which the former NSC chief admitted that the U.S. military got involved in Afghanistan *prior* to the Soviet troops and that he and President Carter had lied about this. He was also dismissive of the explosive rise of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism that spread across the Middle East and beyond as a result of the Carter Regime’s massive funding of the Afghani mujahideen upon the successful drawing of the USSR into the “Afghan Trap.” What followed eventually included the U.S. war against the Taliban in Afghanistan — the longest war in U.S. history, and the chaotic sudden exit by the U.S. military, on Biden’s watch. (This Brzezinski interview is also reprinted as part of an essay by David Gibbs, entitled, “Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect,” in *International Politics*, #37 No. 2, June 2000, see pp. 241-242.)

On January 27, 2022, just a month before the Russian military launch into Ukraine, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs **Victoria Nuland**, explained in a State Department press briefing: “If Russia invades Ukraine one way or another Nord Stream 2 will not move forward.” According to Michael Hudson, writing for *Counterpunch* (2-11-22), “The only way left for U.S. diplomats to block European purchases [like Russian gas]... is to goad Russia into a military response and then claim that avenging this response outweighs any purely national economic interest.”

Thus, Nuland needed to goad Putin and the oligarchs to invade Ukraine. But first, she needed to press the German government representing a globally powerful economic machine to commit that, if Russia invaded Ukraine, *the Germans who needed the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline more than anyone else* would cancel its contract with Russia!

No doubt, Nuland was persuasive because she represents not just “one among equal states” voluntarily allied with each other such as the members of the European Union. As the long-time lead person for the U.S. government on Ukraine, *under both Republican and Democratic presidents*, she represented **the U.S. military, the overwhelming military power within NATO**, the reactionary military alliance under centralized military discipline, that is required by statute to have a *United States* top general or flag officer as NATO’s top military commander. In fact, since the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in April of 1949, the Supreme Allied Commander-Europe (SACEUR) has *always* been a United States military officer. According to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), “The SACEUR is responsible to NATO’s Military Committee, the highest military authority in NATO, for the overall direction and conduct of military operations for NATO. SACEUR, a United States Flag or General Officer, leads all NATO military operations and is dual-hatted as Commander US European Command...” SACEUR has command over Allied Command Operations (ACO) which is exercised from SHAPE based in Belgium.

Clearly, there is no way the U.S.-controlled NATO forces, *a military bloc*, represent democracy in Europe against Russian autocracy. (Recall Secretary Nuland’s 2014 response to Ambassador Pyatt, “F___ the E.U.”)

In June 2021, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, officially Nuland’s “boss,” admitted that Nord Stream 2 was “inevitable.” The first line of it was fully completed by early June and the second line was completed in September 2021. *On October 21, 2021 Russian President Putin confidently stated that the pipeline would start gas delivery the day after Germany approved it.* On that October date, the approval of permits by the German regulator was still in process, to be followed before the year’s end with the final permits from the E.U. Commission. Moreover, economic pressures for its

approval were mounting, especially in Germany, as tight supplies and soaring prices increased costs in



transportation and heating fuel markets. Certainly, Vladimir Putin, along with U.S. Secretary of State Blinken, was expecting Nord Stream 2 to come online before the end of 2021.

But approvals for gas delivery through the fully constructed pipeline were *further delayed* in November when *Germany* required part of the Gazprom-owned business entity to be transferred to German ownership. On November 16, 2021, European natural gas prices rose by 17% after Germany’s energy regulator suspended approval of Nord Stream 2! And, simultaneously, the U.S. State Department imposed *more* sanctions on *Russian* companies connected to the project, something President Biden had earlier waived regarding *German* companies similarly involved with the project in a concession to Chancellor Angela Merkel.

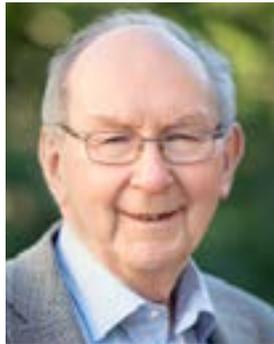
By mid-November 2021, it had to be clear to the Putin Regime that the German government was now working *in concert with U.S. imperialism* against the activation of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and against the needs and interests of German monopoly capital as well as the overwhelming sentiments of the German people! With the approval of the German government for *blocking* the pipeline, the U.S./NATO provocations against the Putin Regime no longer “APPEARED” aimed at the German-led E.U.

Putin and the Russian oligarchs had played by the rules: they had an excellent product, the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline and the Russian gas to run through it directly to Germany, that was vital for German capital and the German people. It was advantageous for Russian capital and the Russian people as well. It was a win-win for the entire European Union. But, as Secretary Nuland had made clear in her widely leaked, obscenity-laced 2014 phone communication with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Pyatt, the E.U. countries were at the bottom of her priority list. And the E.U.’s interests were in opposition to the interests of U.S. imperialism and its Empire, the masters of NATO, that Nuland clearly represents.

With Germany in NATO’s fold, Secretary Nuland continued to intensify the systematic provocation of Putin and the Russian military, daring them to invade Ukraine.

John Foster, the Canadian petroleum economist (who has worked for BP, World Bank, et al.) has been among

the most astute bourgeois observers of this unfolding tragic war. On the eve of the Russian incursion, Foster noted the following: “Ukraine is just a pawn in the game. Events in Donbass unfold daily, with intensified military bombardment (**February 17**), orders to civilians to evacuate to Russia (**February 18**), and powerful explosions in Donbass cities (**February 18**)... Following public debates in the Russian duma (parliament), President Putin signed decrees (**February 21**) recognizing the two breakaway republics, Donetsk and Lugansk, as independent states and extending them military protection The debate now is what constitutes a Russian attack on Ukraine — a ground invasion or a lesser intervention. With Russia’s recognition of the two Donbass republics, does its military support constitute an invasion of Ukraine?” “... With Russian troops now entering Donbass, the situation has become uncertain,” Foster concluded. (*ibid*, 2-22-22)



The observant and wise Canadian petroleum economist (and almost no one else!) had pointed to the steps in the mid-February days that led Putin to escalate the conflict. But on the vital question of war and peace, John Foster, with bourgeois underestimation of the U.S. Empire’s capacity and proclivity for violence, had missed the main point.

John Foster, Canadian international petroleum analyst

U.S./NATO’s Nuland had already answered that question: Nuland declared, “If Russia invades Ukraine one way or another Nord Stream 2 will not move forward.” (My emphasis, ROL) And Under Secretary of State Nuland was already orchestrating a “*shock and awe*” *global ideological and cultural propaganda assault* on the “Russian invaders of Ukraine” to keep the E.U. countries, as well as others, silent and compliant, as the “open Russian war” began to unfold.

-THE BIDEN/ NATO “SHOCK AND AWE” GLOBAL PROPAGANDA ASSAULT-

At the beginning of 2022, the U.S. imperialist-led media began feverish preparations for a new aggression against Russia. At first, the U.S. and western corporate media personalities who went to the Ukrainian border areas with Russia were able to find very few local citizens expressing concern about a Russian invasion. Even Ukrainian president Zelensky was critical of the U.S. government’s constant warnings of Russian invasion and U.S. media coverage that was stirring up the Ukrainian population as well as Putin.

No doubt Nuland-led NATO forces and U.S. intelligence oversaw western media coverage once Russian troops

arrived on the scene. The global capitalist media really began to spin its web. Especially the U.S. imperialist corporate media has carried on a constant barrage of CIA-packaged programming on CNN, MSNBC, NPR, New York Times, etc. presenting the Ukrainian people as weak and overwhelmed underdogs experiencing an unprecedentedly brutal invasion and occupation at the hands of the Russian military. The actual statistics presented on the war’s casualties by the same media (!) from the beginning presented a very different picture: an overwhelming death toll inflicted by the Ukrainians on the Russian invaders and a surprisingly small number of casualties created by the alleged “brutal, war criminal Russian invaders.” This latter stat held true for Ukrainian children and youth as well, even in days and weeks when the U.S. Empire’s mass media *alleged* the Russian military was deliberately targeting Ukrainian children and youth.

The brainwashing on TV news aimed at U.S. and world youth became so intense that within the first ten days there were already many articles in the U.S. press, advising parents on how to discuss the war in Ukraine with their children of all different age groups without traumatizing them.

At the SAG-AFTRA acting awards show televised on February 27, perhaps a dozen “actors” made “spontaneous” and “impassioned” statements of support for the “heroic” Ukrainian people who, regardless of whether they were so inclined, hadn’t even had time yet do anything heroic. Several prominent actors specifically appealed to the audience on the basis that Ukrainian President Zelensky, a former comedic actor, was “one of our own.” Jessica Chastain, whose entire acting career appears to be sponsored by the US-CIA, seemed to be performing a script and should have received an award for her over-the-top performance, tears included.

In another cultural arena with a global reach, international sports federations quickly moved to expel all athletes representing Russia (and Belarus) from participation in most upcoming global sporting events. This unprecedented move was initiated and spread by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).^{*} Under British Prime Minister Boris Johnson (who recently resigned in disgrace), the 2022 Wimbledon Tennis Tournament, the most prestigious major professional tennis tournament in the world, in an unprecedented chauvinistic display, decided to prohibit Russian and Belarus individual professional players from playing at Wimbledon for the crime of their place of birth! This was too much for the World Tennis Association and the

^{*}It is worth remembering that the IOC had no trouble holding the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, hosted by Adolph Hitler and German fascism. Indeed, then long-time head of the U.S. Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, was himself a known fascist.

governing body decided that the Wimbledon results would not count at all in the players' rankings going forward.

These powerful cultural symbols fostered the impression that the Russian invasion, still only a few days old, was somehow "the worst in human history." And that Russia deserved to be treated as a pariah state.

-WHITE SUPREMACY AND NATO STAND TOGETHER-

At the same time, with "flamboyant" reporting of selective video coverage, TV news seemed to justify massive mobilization of countries bordering Ukraine, such as Poland and Romania, to welcome the million or so women and children who were mostly fleeing Ukraine on crowded but regularly scheduled passenger trains, planes and buses. This welcome was extended to white European Ukrainians who filled hours of TV air time on network channels such as CNN and MSNBC every day; they were individually provided time to share the narrative of their personal trip to Poland, etc. Meanwhile, small reports got through about Ukrainian border guards harassing people of color among those seeking to exit Ukraine.

Margaret Kimberley of *Black Agenda Report* (BAR) observed that, "White supremacy is at the heart of U.S. war propaganda. The exhortation to 'stand with Ukraine' is no exception to this rule." Sister Kimberley reported that "African migrants and students in Ukraine were prohibited from boarding trains



Margaret Kimberley, exposes NATO's white supremacy

and buses that could take them to safety. A group of Jamaican students was forced to walk 20 kilometers when they were forced off a bus enroute to Poland." The BAR writer cites, as one of many expressing blatant white supremacist views, Ukraine's deputy chief prosecutor who admitted in a BBC interview that, "It is very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blonde hair being killed..." ("Ukraine Exposes White Supremacist Foreign Policy," (Margaret Kimberley, BAR Executive Editor, 3-2-22)

Finally, Sister Kimberley correctly links the rampant white supremacy with NATO. She states: "...the global south suffers from war and privation as a direct result of US/NATO actions. It is NATO that destroyed the nation of Libya. NATO which attempted to do the same in Syria. NATO that occupied Afghanistan,

NATO which wages war across African countries with U.S., French and British troops deployed across the continent. The white world causes suffering and then says that the people of the global south are 'uncivilized' with no rights that need to be respected." (BAR, *ibid.*)

The U.S.-led campaign to turn Russia into a global pariah reached its zenith at the rare emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly called by the UN Security Council on March 2. In the first such session in forty years, of the assembly's 193 members, 141 voted to condemn Russia's "aggression against Ukraine." Only Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea and Syria voted with Russia in opposition, while thirty-five members, including China, abstained. Reuters reported that "[w]hile General Assembly resolutions are non-binding, they carry political weight" and explained that the action increased "Moscow's international isolation."

U.S. media reports tried to keep its narrative "perfect" hour after hour. Ukrainians were all "heroic" and Russians always villainous. For example, there was constant reporting on the heroic Ukrainian men who picked up arms to join the fight against the Russian invaders. It's important to note that the Ukrainian Army was bolstered in 2014 by NATO's addition into the Ukrainian military of the Ukrainian fascist street gangs that had contributed much to the overthrow of Yanukovich.

Particularly important was the absorption of the Azov Gang into the regular Ukrainian Army. In the bitter battle over Mariupol, several hundred of the supposed crack Azov Battalion troops were defeated by the Russian army and surrendered.



They had previously claimed they would die rather than surrender. The Zelensky government took great care to ensure that the lives of these Azov troops would be spared. But we are left with the strange spectacle of Russia's Putin, having deceitfully wrapped himself in the "anti-fascist cause," also taking care to make the deal that spared the lives of these fascists.

Likewise, there was widespread media coverage of the heroic women and children who courageously left their men at home to defend Ukraine, while they took regularly scheduled trains to Poland. There was virtually no mention that Zelensky, the former comedic actor who portrayed a comical Ukrainian president before becoming the actual one, had declared a real state of emergency for 30 days from February 24 that

actually *prohibited* Ukrainian men from leaving the country.*

-U.S./NATO FORCES “REIN IN” GERMAN-LED E.U.-

Question 6. Why did the German-led European Union go along with the U.S./NATO sanctions of Russia at its own expense?!

ANSWER: In June 2017, Germany, France, Austria and European Commission criticized the U.S. Senate over new sanctions against Russia targeting the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. They asserted that the USA was threatening Europe’s energy supplies.

In a joint statement, Austrian Chancellor Kern and German Foreign Minister Gabriel said, “Europe’s energy supply is a matter for Europe, and not for the United States of America.” They also said: “To threaten companies from Germany, Austria, and other European states with penalties on the U.S. market if they participate in natural gas projects such as Nord Stream 2 with Russia or finances them introduces a completely new and very negative quality into European-American relations.” German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz called the sanctions “a severe intervention in German and European internal affairs.”

Forsa, a German market research and opinion polling company, in a study conducted in May 2021 found that 75% of Germans were in favor of Nord Stream 2 across all voter groups, while only 17% were against it. Accordingly, the German Committee on Eastern European Relations criticized U.S. sanctions and obstruction efforts as threatening democratic processes in Germany and Europe.

In his *Wall Street Journal* “Political Economics” column, with the arrogance of a *WSJ* Editorial Board member, Joseph C. Sternberg announced that “...it’s **near miraculous** that Mr. Scholz announced on the morning after Russia’s move into Eastern Ukraine

*Mention of Zelensky’s state of emergency is problematic for the U.S. Empire, of course. Attempting to portray the Ukrainian president as a “democrat” is contradicted by his emergency measures that allow authorities to impose curfews and restrictions on movement, block rallies, and ban political parties and organizations “in the interests of national security and public order.” By way of explanation Ukrainian authorities expressed concern that pro-Russian groups inside the country, including a pro-Moscow political party represented in parliament, could try to destabilize it. From this it is clear that some significant proportion of the Ukrainian population, certainly from the Crimea to the Donbas Region, as well as spread out over the entire Ukrainian state, supports Russia’s involvement in Ukraine.

this week that he would block the opening of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.” Said Sternberg, “That project is overwhelmingly popular among German voters. Its salesman in chief is the country’s last SPD chancellor [before Scholtz] Gerhard Schroeder.” (My emphasis, ROL)

Sternberg could have declared it “*fully* miraculous” if he was willing to reveal that Scholz himself, while German Finance Minister, had condemned U.S. sanctions to block Nord Stream 2 as “a severe intervention in German and European affairs.” And now, as German chancellor, Scholz was *surrendering* to this severe U.S. intervention!



German Chancellor Scholz

By militarily seizing Ukraine, Putin still hoped to force the German industrialists, in particular, to opt for their own national self-interest and their bourgeois self-interest vis-à-vis USA/NATO with *its* inferior energy products, costs and reliability. But *the U.S.-led NATO superior capacity for military violence had kept German capital and the German government and the entire E.U. in line.*

-THE SMOKING GUN OF THE U.S. EMPIRE
IN THE WAR ON UKRAINE-

Question 7. As you outline in this piece, **Victoria Nuland**, the U.S. Under Secretary of State for political affairs, has clearly played an outsized leading role in the U.S./NATO-led war in Ukraine at least beginning in 2014. Her mobilization of the Ukrainian Maidan protest movement resulted that year in the overthrow of the elected President, a watershed moment in Ukraine’s modern history.

It is not widely known that Nuland’s husband is **Robert Kagan**, the co-creator of the Project for A New American Century (PNAC) that masterminded the George W. Bush-led U.S. “war of terror,” including the brutal, unprovoked U.S. war of “Shock and Awe” on Iraq and the U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan.

What, respectively, is the impact of Nuland and Kagan in the current war in Ukraine and what is their common message regarding U.S. global imperialist hegemony?

ANSWER: Under Secretary of State Nuland and her husband Robert Kagan represent the **SMOKING GUN OF THE U.S. EMPIRE IN THE WAR ON UKRAINE!** Each member of this couple has played a leading role in influencing and/or executing U.S. foreign policy through

Democratic and Republican Party (“Republicrat”) Administrations over several decades.

Under Secretary of State Nuland for at least a decade has been the leading force, with strong assistance from NATO, in promoting the interests of the U.S. Empire in Eastern Europe. This includes Nuland’s current role as the leading member of the Biden Administration in its aggressive and complex role, driving the NATO-Ukraine side of the war with Russia. To more fully understand what she is about, let’s look at her political record and her connection to Kagan, one of the most important political thinkers in the USA today.

From 1993 to 1996, during the Clinton corporate Democratic Regime, Nuland was chief of staff to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, arguably the top U.S. expert on the former Soviet Union. She then moved to the position of deputy director of former Soviet Union affairs.

From 2003 to 2005 Nuland served as principal deputy foreign policy adviser to Vice President Dick Cheney. Cheney himself guided U.S. foreign policy in the George W. Bush Regime. And Nuland wielded strong influence during the brutal unprovoked U.S. war on Iraq. Note too that, in VP Cheney, Nuland was serving a hard-core Republican warmonger who saved Halliburton Co. from bankruptcy, where he had been corporate CEO. In one of the most scandalous sweetheart deals in the corruption-filled history of the U.S. military-industrial complex, Cheney used the Big Lie of “weapons of mass destruction” and had it repeated by the Bush Regime’s most credible official, Secretary of State Colin Powell, in his infamous address at the United Nations. All this chicanery helped launch the barbaric U.S. war of Shock and Awe on Iraq, *as projected by Kagan and the PNAC before 9-11 and before the Bush-Cheney election*. It enabled Halliburton to get away with billions in lucrative federal government war contracts and Cheney himself millions.

From 2005 to 2008, during the second term of Republican George W. Bush, Nuland served as U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Brussels, where she focused on *mobilizing European support for the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan*. At the same time, as the Permanent Representative of the main military power in this military alliance, Nuland became an authoritative figure in NATO circles. Summer 2011 saw her become special envoy for Conventional Armed Forces in Europe followed by becoming the spokesperson for the U.S. State Department.



In 2013 this culminated with Nuland being named U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian

Affairs. In this role, she managed diplomatic relations with 50 countries in Europe as well as with NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Earlier we discussed Nuland’s central role in organizing the ultimately successful Maidan protests in 2014 that led to the low-level civil war in Ukraine leading up to the 2022 war with Russia. It is no wonder that when her leaked phone call in 2014 concerning the distribution of state power in Ukraine exposed her undiplomatic language, bullying behavior and, most importantly, her dismissive attitude toward the European Union, Nuland was already too powerfully connected to be adversely impacted.

In January 2017 Nuland resigned from the State Department along with many other career officials who left in the early days of the Trump Regime. In January 2018, she criticized “a trend toward U.S. isolationism” and criticized President Trump and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, around the dysfunction within the State Department. Also, in January 2018, though she no longer was a federal employee, Nuland weighed in in support of the high-level meeting of Russia’s top general with NATO’s top (U.S.) general since “relations at the leader level are so unpredictable.” Was this move the promotion of a back-door channel between NATO (U.S.) and Russia’s military behind the back of the “unpredictable” Putin and Trump?

Something of similar significance demonstrating Nuland’s political power as a long time, high-level operative of the U.S. Empire occurred about a month into the Russian invasion. This incident concerns Nuland’s influence at the highest levels of the Russian oligarchy! Anatoly Chubais, the Russian politician and economist most responsible for privatization in Russia and the creation of the Oligarchy of Russian billionaires, was an influential member of Boris Yeltsin’s Regime in the 1990’s, including serving several short terms as deputy prime minister. He was the privatization chief in Leningrad from 1990-1994 and, in more than twenty-five years since, Chubais held a number of key positions both in government and private industry.

On or about March 22, 2022, Under Secretary of State Nuland put out a press statement in which she expressed the view that Putin would likely need to be dealt with by *internal forces* in Russia. On March 23, Chubais seemed to respond immediately to Nuland’s public call by quitting his official job as “special envoy.” Leaving Russia *that day*, Chubais said it was an expression of his opposition to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Chubais arrived in Istanbul, Turkey on that same day, planning to remain abroad. All this, seemingly at the beck and call of Victoria Nuland. He is still the highest ranking official to leave and he seemed to be attempting to spark some bigger flow of defections from the Putin leadership in Russia.

With the inauguration of Corporate Democrat Joe Biden as U.S. President in January 2021, Biden nominated Victoria Nuland to serve as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Hearings on Nuland's nomination were held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 15, 2021. The committee reported favorably on April 21 and her nomination was *confirmed by the entire Senate by voice vote* on April 29. Nuland started working as Under Secretary of State on May 3, 2021.

The **ease** with which Victoria Nuland was nominated by Biden and, vetted and confirmed by the entire Senate is noteworthy. Clearly President Biden, who had worked with her on Ukraine, when Vice-President, had no hesitation in nominating this aggressive warmonger as a leader of his diplomatic team. Biden could be confident no peace initiative would be coming forth from Nuland!

There was plenty of controversy in her lengthy state department record. There was brazen intervention in the affairs of other countries. There was frank criticism of President Trump and his regime, especially in relation to the Foreign Service. Yet there was not a ripple of resistance from the bi-partisan and bitterly divided Senate to Nuland being placed nearly at the top of the Foreign Policy Establishment in Washington, D.C. WHY?

Nuland is a fierce fighter in defense of U.S. monopoly capitalism and imperialism. She is an ardent defender of Wall Street finance capital. She is an ardent defender of the U.S. Empire. And no tactics and strategy are too vile and anti-human for her to implement.

The whole struggle to block the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline discussed at length in this document is evidence of this malevolent character of Victoria Nuland. *It is in keeping with the horrific Wall Street goal of maximum private profit for the superrich — and humanity's need for a sustainable human habitat be damned!*

Victoria Nuland and the U.S./NATO-led victory in blocking Nord Stream 2 has led to galloping inflation and food and other goods shortages around the world. It will lead to mass misery in Europe as winter cold arrives. The revival of fracking, widening instead of restricting the use of coal and other fossil fuels, is already killing people today. It threatens the existence of humanity and many other species on this planet. Biden and Nuland and NATO as well as Putin are playing with military brinkmanship and global war and possibly nuclear war. And Biden wonders why, as he recently blurted out, **“Our country is awash in weapons of war.”**

Biden's White House nominated Nuland, the U.S. Senate cheers her and NATO on, and the Trumpist U.S. Supreme Court will find no criminality in what they do in defense of the U.S. Empire.

Nuland and Kagan are both “Republicrats” of the first rank. Robert Kagan has held key jobs with both Democratic and Republican politicians throughout his career. For example, Kagan served as foreign policy advisor to John McCain, the Republican Party's nominee in the 2008 election. After 2011, Kagan also served on the 25 member State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Board under Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, both Democrats.

Arguably Kagan's most important political *act* was to co-found the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) with William Kristol in 1997. Through PNAC, Kagan was an early and strong advocate of U.S. military action in Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq where he specifically called for removing Saddam Hussein from power. Among other things, in January 2002 Kagan and Kristol falsely claimed that Saddam Hussein was supporting a terrorist training camp in Iraq. *The special attention to Saddam and Iraq was part of their effort to help keep the U.S. dollar as the global currency for oil transactions.* For Saddam Hussein was meeting with European leaders about possibly making the Euro an optional currency in which to deal with oil and gas. This development, *like the 2022 opening of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline*, would have provided the E.U. countries with some independence from U.S. economic domination.



Before George W. Bush even became a candidate for President in the 2000 election, the PNAC had already projected the idea of waging a U.S. war against Saddam's Iraqi Regime. The 9-11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001, despite having nothing to do with Iraq, provided the pretext for this vicious, unprovoked war that featured massive aerial bombardment of Baghdad, the capital city. Disgracefully, it was called the Shock and Awe Campaign by George W. Bush. Ten of the original twenty-five advocates of the PNAC became key functionaries of the Bush Regime and its War of Terror, including Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Senior Advisor Wolfowitz. War criminals one and all.

Rumsfeld's military leadership in Iraq was so heinous, his reign over Iraq was so criminal that, when it was exposed, he was forced to resign so that the U.S. Empire, still trying to get control of Iraq's oil, could continue its monstrous presence in Iraq.

Finally, Robert Kagan had the lead essay in the May/June 2022 issue of the authoritative *Foreign Affairs* magazine entitled, “The Price of Hegemony: Can America Learn to Use Its Power?” The aggressive, belligerent

approach to the proxy war being waged by U.S./NATO and its proxy Ukraine, with the overwhelming material advantage over Russia and other support from U.S./NATO, is working thus far. While Nuland is arguably the leading force prosecuting the complex warfare “on the ground,” ***Kagan used this “Ukraine moment” to promote brinkmanship and confrontation not only with Russia but with China, too.***

Kagan’s argument in favor of U.S. hegemony is so weak, dangerous and disgusting that he concludes, as follows: “If Americans learn anything from Russia’s brutalization of Ukraine, it should be that there really are worse things than U.S. hegemony.” (sic!)

Nuland and Kagan are arguably the most high-powered couple promoting the continuation of U.S. hegemonism in the face of the rising multi-polar political landscape, and especially in the face of China’s emergence.

President Biden, Under Secretary of State Nuland, the U.S. intelligence agencies and NATO have depicted Ukraine as poor, weak and alone, facing Putin’s big, bad Russia. Viewing the situation more broadly, however, it’s clear that Putin’s Russia has been somewhat isolated and has been overwhelmed militarily by the advanced armaments and combat technology of the big, bad U.S./NATO forces. Incredibly, at bottom, the U.S./NATO war in Ukraine is a futile but very dangerous and destructive effort to defend U.S. global hegemony.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Question 8. What then is the nature of the criminal war in Ukraine? Who are the winners and losers thus far? And what are the tasks of the international working class in this grim situation?

ANSWER: It is an *inter-imperialist war*. Great Lenin taught that there were three fundamental contradictions that plague imperialism, the last dying stage of capitalism. These are the contradiction between labor and capital; the contradiction between the handful of so-called



“civilized” nations on the one hand and the hundreds of millions [now billions] of colonial and dependent peoples and countries of the world on the other; and, finally, *the inter-imperialist contradiction*, among and between various powerful imperialist countries and groupings for control of the most valuable labor and most lucrative territories and markets in the world.

The inter-imperialist contradiction features attempts to seize and maintain monopoly control over highly prized natural resources such as oil and natural gas, water, prized agricultural land, modern-day scarce and in-demand mineral deposits as well as control over sovereign markets and human labor. It includes the power to compel or coerce other states to purchase high priced weapons and to accept financing at usurious rates for development projects needed or not. This inter-imperialist contradiction which has often driven countries to war helped lead to two world wars in the twentieth century.

Over decades U.S. imperialism has established and administered a global empire, as Great Britain had done before it.

Today, U.S. imperialism has the advantage of its long experience of global military, political and economic rule. But it faces a formidable challenge to its global imperialist hegemony from the Peoples Republic of China. And China has been backed by Putin’s Russia, a relatively stable and sustainable economy over a number of years now. According to Michael Hudson, writing in *Counterpunch*, China’s growth policies are in accord with the basic industrial logic by which Britain, the United States, Germany and France rose to industrial power with strong government support and social spending programs. However, since the 1980’s, the U.S. Empire abandoned this traditional industrial policy and now imposes neo-liberal policies on its own U.S. economy that are de-industrializing the USA, as the U.S. Empire has done to so many other *now failed* states!

Hudson continues, “the only way for the United States to sustain its international financial balance is by monopoly pricing of its arms, patented pharmaceutical and information technology exports, and by buying control of the most lucrative production and potentially rent-extracting sectors abroad — in other words, by spreading neoliberal economic policy throughout the world in a way that *obliges* other countries to depend on U.S. loans and investment.” (*My emphasis, ROL*)

Lenin taught that, “Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination instead of striving for liberty, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations — all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the ‘rentier state,’ the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by ‘clipping coupons.’ ... On the whole capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in

the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (England).” (Page 150, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916)

More than a hundred years ago, Lenin linked England, then the leading imperialist country, with *extreme parasitism*. Today, the U.S. Empire, the hegemonic imperialist power for more than fifty years, particularly exhibits this feature.

CURRENT WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE UKRAINE WAR

Considering the above, the core of the U.S. Empire, United States imperialism, especially the finance capitalists on Wall Street, have been the big winners in the Ukraine War *up to now*.

The Biden Regime has led the way in reversing the already too gradual introduction of green energy as part of the “war effort for Ukraine.” There has been more fossil fuel mining and use, more drilling and fracking. The U.S. military-industrial complex is using the war in Ukraine to provide “live demonstrations” of its lethal products. This is producing much greater sales and marketing of weapons, especially in Europe. There has been a ***boom in oil prices and gas***. All the economic opportunities lay the basis for greater loan opportunities and financialization.

Politically, the E.U. partner-rivals of U.S. imperialism have choked themselves economically by going to war with their best and most reliable oil and gas supplier, Russia, resulting in the decrease in the value of the Euro and the increase of the value of the dollar.

Essentially, however, all current leading forces in this conflict are enemies of the workers of the world; they are reactionaries, who need to be defeated. One indication of the bourgeois reactionary character of these regimes is that every one of them from *Ukraine’s Zelensky to Russia’s Putin to German Chancellor Scholz to U.S. imperialism’s Biden* welcomed the opportunity that this war brought to make their adversaries “the fall guy” that they could now blame for the ***inflation*** that was already taking so much of the wages and buying power of the workers in the Northern Hemisphere. The war provided these representatives of the oligarchs some relief from the pressure from militant workers who may now blame workers or governments of other lands instead of their own capitalists and the monopoly capitalist and imperialist *system* for the growing hardships their families and communities face.

All of them have “pledged allegiance” to deceased Queen Elizabeth II of Britain, British royalty and the British Crown jewels. Upon ascending to the throne,

King Charles III has become an immediate *multi-billionaire* (and is trying mightily to avoid paying Britain’s inheritance tax). And the crown worn by his grandmother, Elizabeth’s queen mother, includes the “Kohinoor Diamond,” one of the world’s largest cut diamonds. The British took it from the last ruler of the Sikh Empire in 1849 and it has been part of the British crown jewels ever since. Notice: *they took it, they didn’t buy it*.

In this light, all these imperialist stooges, Zelensky, Putin, Scholz, Biden and the financial capitalists they represent have sworn allegiance to the system of colonialism and capitalism and given their blessing and their system’s blessing to the outright theft of humanity’s treasure. Don’t forget that Trump also tried to get invited to THE FUNERAL and was spurned along with Putin. They are all white supremacists as well, Putin and Trump in particular.

The biggest losers thus far in the Ukraine War are the people of Russia and Ukraine who have had to shoulder the immense burdens of the war. But the global food and water shortages and the economic disruption and dislocation, and the more extreme weather events exacerbated by global warming, the homelessness, the healthcare crises, the hoarding of COVID vaccines by the imperialist powers of the Global North, all impact the oppressed peoples of the Global South even more sharply than those of us in the Global North.

The danger of global war, including possibly nuclear war, coming out of the Ukraine war and its offshoots is also increasing. It is worth noting that the two world wars in the Twentieth Century were both decisively ended by the Soviet people led by Leninism.

After three powerful three-hundred-year-old Royal dynasties of Europe all collapsed and the bloody First World War continued, the beginning of the peace occurred only when Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik Party were brought to state power by the Russian workers and peasants. They overthrew the Russian bourgeois (Kerensky) government that had replaced the Tsarist Romanov Royal Family earlier in that war on the empty promise that they, the bourgeoisie, could and would end Russia’s participation. The workers and peasants now realized Communist power was the only way out of World War I for them. Once the other reactionary feudal and capitalist powers saw the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and that worker-led movements were threatening to accomplish the same in Germany, Hungary and elsewhere, the imperialist powers made peace.

In World War II, the fascist Axis Powers of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan would not stop waging

war until they were overthrown. In Italy, the anti-fascist partisans, led by the Italian Communist Party, and aided by the anti-fascist alliance headed by the Soviet Union, England and the USA ultimately prevailed and hanged Mussolini, the Italian fascist leader, themselves. But in both Germany and Japan, the Soviet Red Army played the decisive role in the people's victory, with the Communist Party of China also contributing mightily to the defeat of Imperial Japan.

In the case of both World Wars in the Twentieth Century, it was Leninism that guided the working people as they fought for and won the peace. Leninism guided the peasant and worker army of Russia as the troops walked off the battlefields en masse and came home to make the Bolshevik Revolution in WWI. And Leninism guided the Soviet Union *and* the Communist International as the Soviet Red Army victoriously marched all the way to Berlin and then defeated the crack Japanese troops to end World War II.



Tragically, in 2022, there are few if any Marxist-Leninist Parties in the world. It is not too early to raise the need to establish Leninist parties to help end the war in Ukraine before it breaks out into a war that cannot be contained.

Leninism requires that the workers of the world unite in militant solidarity and struggle. Let us begin this most noble work in earnest. For Leninism has already proved its worth!

As we approach the 105th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia (November 7), we the workers of the world need to rediscover Leninism.

Long Live Leninism — key to our victories!

Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!

Comradely,

Ray Light

November 1, 2022

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Ukraine: Current Focal Point of the U.S.-Led Imperialist War Drive(2014*)

by RAY LIGHT

The picturesque cover of the 4-19 to 4-25-14 edition of the British ruling class newsweekly, *The Economist*, is a fancifully rendered map of western Russia, Ukraine and the Black Sea. Russia is imaginatively drawn as a big, hungry bear about to devour Ukraine and the word “Insatiable” is presented in large black type so that the cover’s message is unmistakably clear. (For this *Economist’s* cover—see page 20 of this Newsletter.)

However, it would be a real mistake for the working people of the USA and the workers and oppressed masses of the world to believe that this Disney cartoon-like fantasy map contains a real explanation for the events of the past few months involving Ukraine, Crimea and Russia.

The truth is just the opposite. As U.S. imperialist apologist G. John Ikenberry observes in the current issue of the authoritative *Foreign Affairs* quarterly journal, “As worrisome [for U.S. imperialism] as Russian President Vladimir Putin’s moves in Crimea have been, they reflect Russia’s geopolitical vulnerability, not its strength.” Ikenberry substantiates his argument as follows: “Over the last two decades, the West has crept closer to Russia’s borders. In 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland entered NATO. They were joined in 2004 by seven more former members of the Soviet bloc, and in 2009, by Albania and Croatia. In the meantime, six former Soviet republics have headed down the path to membership by joining NATO’s Partnership for Peace program. ... even though Putin is winning some small battles, he is losing the war. Russia is not on the rise; to the contrary, it is experiencing one of the greatest geopolitical contractions of any major power in the modern era.” (page 86, “The Illusion of Geopolitics,” *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 2014)

In this context, it is more accurate to view “the Russian bear,” surrounded by U.S and NATO military bases, and isolated politically and economically as well, like a cornered animal. *It is the insatiable appetite of U.S.-led imperialism for*

maximum private profit that has finally provoked the Russian bear to lash out and fight back.

-The Debate On the U.S.-led Response to Russia’s Annexation of Crimea-

The Economist’s lead article, like its front cover in the 4-19 to 4-25 edition, is also entitled “Insatiable.” It strongly editorializes for the western imperialist powers to “stand up” to Putin’s Russia right now in order to stifle and suppress the momentum caused by Russia’s successful annexation of Crimea.** Among *The Economist* recommendations: NATO military exercises in central and eastern Europe, “strengthen air and cyber defenses there and immediately send some troops, missiles and aircraft to the Baltics and Poland ... [and] NATO members should ... increase their military spending.” The article also recommends increasing economic and financial sanctions against powerful Russians and “cut Russia off from dollars, euros and sterling” which would “deprive Russia of revenues from oil and gas exports, priced in dollars, and force it to draw on reserves to pay for most of its imports.”(page 11)

Most of the other four or five articles on Ukraine and Russia that appeared in the same issue of *The Economist* were much more nuanced than the “insatiable” cover and lead article or *even contradicted them*. The article focusing on financial sanctions (“Turning off the taps”) explained that, “Finance is the obvious place to start because of the pre-eminence of the dollar, America’s central role in the clearing of cross-border bank and credit-card transactions, and the American-led globalization of money-laundering compliance.” Nevertheless, while pointing out that even the limited sanctions already applied had had a “chilling effect on business in Russia,” the article admits that “sanctions will have collateral damage; hit Rosneft and you hurt BP, which owns 20% of it, and ExxonMobil, its partner in various projects around the world.” Furthermore, the article points to the likelihood of

*Reprinted from *Ray O’ Light Newsletter*, #84, May-June 2014, pp. 1-6.

**Incredibly, the article admits Crimea “should have been Russian all along.”

“countermeasures” that the Russian government could take against “foreign investors” or against “American banks and exchanges.”

A second article on business in Russia focuses on the already weakened ruble. But it also points to “a long promised deal for Gazprom to sell gas to China. Rosneft is seeking to treble its exports of oil to China. Sukhoi, a state-owned aircraft-maker, has just struck a deal to sell a fleet of small passenger jets to a Chinese airline ... But its plane is chock full of key parts from American and European suppliers and thus its production is vulnerable to any tightening of sanctions.” Both these articles make clear that punitive measures against Russia are an even more complicated undertaking for U.S. and western finance capital than in the past. The increased internationalization of finance capital makes it even more of a priority to precisely “follow the money.”

Even the most alarming-sounding article, “Boys from the blackstuff,” dealing with “Russian-inspired occupations in the industrial east” in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea, observes that “Mr. Putin ... seems unlikely to want to annex any more of the country.” Still more noteworthy is the matter of fact statement in the article’s conclusion that, “Russia wants to turn Ukraine back into a buffer state ...”

It is this admission that Russia desires to have Ukraine as “a buffer state” that gives the lie to the whole propaganda campaign of U.S.-led imperialism against the allegedly “aggressive” Putin and Russia.

The May/June 2014 issue of *Foreign Affairs* contains three articles (including Ikenberry’s) that address the current crisis in Ukraine. Reminiscent of *The Economist’s* 4-19 to 4-25 “hungry bear” cover, Jeffrey Mankoff’s article is entitled, “Russia’s Latest Land Grab.” Mankoff, Deputy Director and Fellow in the Russian and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies,

opens with the following dramatic declaration: “Russia’s occupation and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in February and March have plunged Europe into one of its gravest crises since the end of the Cold War.”

But Mankoff then provides some historical perspective, pointing out that, “since the early 1990’s, Russia has either directly supported or contributed to the emergence of four breakaway ethnic regions in Eurasia: ... [Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh] ... in which the splinter territories remain beyond the control of the central governments and the local de facto authorities enjoy Russian protection and influence.” Furthermore, he observes that “In

each of those cases, Russia intervened when it felt its influence was threatened.”

“... In Ukraine, once again, Moscow has intervened to stop a former Soviet republic’s possible drift out of Russia’s orbit and has justified its actions as a response to ethnic persecution, the claims of which are exaggerated.”* Mankoff also acknowledges that one reason the Russian government has regarded the Crimean peninsula as being so strategically

important is that it already hosted Russia’s Black Sea fleet.

Mankoff presents Putin’s plan to push economic and political integration with post-Soviet states. For example, Putin wants to form a Eurasian Union, a new supranational bloc directly modeled on the EU that he wants to launch in 2015. Evidently, Belarus and Kazakhstan have already signed on; and Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have expressed interest. Without Ukraine joining, this Eurasian bloc will not be capable of becoming a cultural and geopolitical alternative to the West.

*Notice Mankoff refers to the claims as “exaggerated” not false, an admission that there is indeed “ethnic persecution” going on under the pro-Western government in Kiev that deposed and replaced the elected Yanukovich regime. More on this later.

Mankoff explains that the prospect of the Kiev government signing an association agreement with the EU back in November would have meant the permanent exclusion of Ukraine from the Eurasian Union. It led Putin to offer President Yanukovich Russian loan guarantees so that he would reject the deal with the EU. As Mankoff points out, Yanukovich's refusal to sign on with EU spawned the protests that toppled him. And the interim Kiev government, loaded with pro Nazi fascists and put in by the Western imperialists, signed the agreement with EU. This in turn has led to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the current turmoil in Ukraine.

Clearly, even according to Mankoff, these recent events in Ukraine were precipitated by the U.S.-led western imperialist encroachments into this key former Soviet state on Russia's border.

The second article was written by Walter Russell Mead, a Bard College professor and the Editor-at-Large of *The American Interest*; he also provides the *Foreign Affairs* book reviews on The United States. Of the three articles by these U.S. imperialist apologists, Mead's argument contains the strongest rose-colored glasses by far. His article has the surprising title, "The Return of Geopolitics." For Mead argues that U.S. imperialism and its western European imperialist allies, far from having a geopolitical agenda, have been *selflessly* attempting to "construct a post-historical, win-win world." (!) According to Mead, Russia, especially in seizing Crimea, has (along with China and Iran) undermined the USA and EU both of whom "would rather move past geopolitical questions of territory and military power and focus instead on ones of world order and global governance." "Indeed," continues Mead, "since the end of the Cold War, the most important objective of U.S. and EU foreign policy has been to shift international relations away from zero-sum issues toward win-win ones." (Is he writing these things with a straight face?! What world has Mead been living in since 9-11-01, during the unending Bush-Obama war of terror on the peoples of the world, including in the USA?!)

The third article is G. John Ikenberry's "The Illusion of Geopolitics," cited earlier in this document. Its subtitle is "The Enduring Power of the Liberal Order." As the *Foreign Affairs* Book Reviewer for Political and Legal books, it seems likely that Ikenberry was asked by Pete Peterson, the billionaire publisher of *Foreign Affairs*, to write

an article to provide a reassuring counterbalance to what Ikenberry refers to as "Mead's alarmism" in response to Russia's successful annexation of Crimea. Ikenberry delivers.



He ridicules Mead's thesis that since the end of the Cold War, "the United States has ignored geopolitical issues involving territory and spheres of influence and instead adopted a Pollyannaish emphasis on building the global order." Exposing the "false dichotomy" that Mead makes between issues of global order and geopolitical conflict, Ikenberry reveals the fact that, "the construction of a U.S.-led global order did not begin with the end of the Cold War; it won the Cold War." (page 81)

Like Mankoff and Mead (as well as *The Economist* writers), Ikenberry is an imperialist apologist. He claims that, in the post WWII period, geopolitics and order building converged and that, "with some important exceptions, such as Vietnam, the United States has embraced *postimperial principles*." (!) (My emphasis) He finds no contradiction between his assertion, on the one hand, that U.S. "power is still unrivalled" based on its far reaching military presence and, on the other, the U.S. Empire's allegedly "postimperial principles." To this end, he cites the fact that "Washington and its allies account for more than 75 percent of global military spending" (page 87) and that "the United States boasts military partnerships with more than 60 countries, whereas Russia counts eight formal allies and China has just one (North Korea)." (page 82)

But Ikenberry's biggest reason for continued confidence in U.S.-led imperialism, even in the aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea, is the fact that "China and Russia have become deeply integrated into the existing international order. They are both permanent members of the UN Security Council, with veto rights, and they both participate actively in the World Trade Organization, The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the G-20. They are geopolitical insiders, sitting at all the high tables of global governance." (page 88)

Ikenberry concludes that China and Russia "wish to enhance their positions within the system, but they are not trying to replace it." (page 89)

- Russia's Putin as a Stooge for U.S. Imperialism-

Less than nine months ago, Vladimir Putin politically rescued U.S. imperialist chieftain Obama from the corner into which he had painted himself in a build-up to a major U.S. imperialist war against the Syrian Regime! As I pointed out at the time, "Had Congress voted on a bill to authorize an attack on Syria in the days immediately following the President's September 10th speech, there is no doubt that the bill would have been defeated in the U.S. House and in all likelihood in the Senate as well. Reflecting the current anti-war mood and will of the people, Congress would have represented a formidable, democratic opposition to an unjust imperialist war." ("Obama: Drum Major for Imperialist War," *Ray O'Light Newsletter #80*, September-October 2013)

There seemed to be no way out for Obama until he and Putin met secretly in Moscow during the G-20 Summit just ahead of the scheduled speech.* Putin and Obama met and "agreed to cooperate with each other on an effort to take from the Syrian government and 'secure' the Syrian chemical weapons stockpiles. *Putin's cooperation with Obama immediately allowed U.S. imperialism to break out of its international isolation on Syria.*" (*ibid.*, emphasis in original)

*Obama had declared to the world that he would *not* meet with Putin during the Moscow Summit to protest Russia's harboring of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden.

In the days that followed, Putin was crucial to the successful efforts to get the Assad Regime in Syria to agree to get rid of its chemical weapons stockpiles and even extended this major deal with Obama and U.S. imperialism to include cooperation from the Iranian regime.**

Putin must have been stunned when he realized, so soon thereafter, that Obama and the U.S.-led major imperialist powers of Western Europe had convinced the corrupt Yanukovich Regime in Ukraine to move decisively into the European Union orbit. This



is the provocation that led Putin to provide loan guarantees for Ukraine that led Yanukovich to opt to move closer to Russia. This in turn led to the western-inspired "street demonstrations" that led to the ouster of Yanukovich by Ukrainian fascist elements around the Svoboda party and the Right Sector. Among the first actions of the rump Rada or parliament were to terminate the official status of Russian and Greek as minority languages, rescinding the Crimea's autonomy and outlawing the Ukrainian Communist Party. The new unelected pro-western and chauvinistic government in Kiev thus scared the Russian-speaking enclaves throughout eastern Ukraine and especially the people on the Crimean Peninsula who rushed into the embrace of Putin's Russia.***

**Additionally, Ikenberry refers to the fact that U.S. imperialism had been successful in making Iran "the target of the strongest international sanctions regime ever assembled, with help from China and Russia." (*opus cit.*, page 87, my emphasis)

***The one humorous aspect to this serious situation was the spectacle of Barack Obama, still wrapped in his wretched and tattered costume of "U.S. Democracy," trying to explain to the peoples of the world why the vote by the overwhelming majority of the Crimean people to become part of Russia should be considered "illegitimate."

It is no wonder, too, that imperialist apologists like Walter Russell Mead and *The Economist* writers are extremely worried about how quickly and decisively the Putin government ceased functioning as a stooge for U.S. imperialism (at least for the moment) and made the bold move of annexing Crimea. And this has led to a general uprising of Russian speakers throughout Ukraine that Putin is trying to help the U.S.-led imperialists to contain!

-The Contradiction Among the Imperialist Countries and Groupings-

Comrade Lenin taught that, along with the contradiction between labor and capital and the contradiction between the hundreds of millions (now billions) of colonial and dependent peoples of the world and the handful of “civilized” (i.e. bestial) oppressor nations or “great powers,” the other fundamental contradiction plaguing imperialism as the last, dying stage of capitalism is the contradiction between and among the imperialist powers and groupings themselves.

The brief period of time between Putin’s rescue of Obama on Syria and Obama’s and western imperialism’s attempt to further isolate Russia economically and militarily by removing Ukraine from its orbit underscores the fact that this fundamental contradiction is an *objective* phenomenon. Russian and U.S. imperialism are *partner-rivals*. U.S.-led western imperialism, just like Russian imperialism is motivated by the constant need for maximum private profit. It is a fundamental weakness of the political-economic system of imperialism that cannot be wished away or signed away by treaties and other paper promises. *Regarding Ukraine, we can hear Obama saying to Putin: “Nothing personal; it’s just business.” And, regarding Crimea, we now hear Putin saying to Obama: “Nothing personal; it’s just business.”*

The Russian oligarchs have their own interests that have conflicted and will, in the future, conflict even more sharply with the interests of Wall Street finance capital. When Putin or other political representatives of the Russian monopoly capitalist class feel sufficiently threatened or find the opportunity/need to struggle against U.S. imperialism they will do so by whatever means are at hand. Economic, political and military blocs have been formed and will continue to be formed until such a time when a major war will break out so as to settle on a new redivision of the world or until

the international working class leads humanity in putting an end to imperialist war and plunder and human exploitation entirely.

CONCLUSION: For now, the U.S.-led imperialist bloc is still the most belligerent and violent bloc. It remains the main danger of new wars of all kinds. The working class and oppressed peoples in the USA as well as the tiny U.S. revolutionary vanguard have a special responsibility to oppose “our own” imperialists in Crimea and Ukraine and in so many other countries around the world.

**Down with U.S.-led Imperialism
Main Source of War and Terror!**

For A Soviet Socialist World!

* * * * *

*“The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise.”*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O’ Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class “... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies.” In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that “our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action,” we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

Ray Light, Editor

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