

Post-Minsk EU Sanctions on Russia

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Imposing new sanctions shows Brussels wants confrontation, not conflict resolution.

Russia's NATO representative, Alexander Grushko, calls relations with the Alliance "close to the freezing point."

"(W)e...have (no) illusions regarding the dangers that might be caused by NATO," he said. (It) found a new meaning of life. (It's) play(ing) out against us, against Russia."

On February 16, Brussels sanctioned 19 more Russian and Donbas officials. Its blacklist totals 151 individuals, as well as 37 Russian companies and other entities. Sanctions are war by other means.

Three top Russian military officials were added. Including Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov, First Deputy Defense Minister, General Arkady Bakhin, and General Staff Operation Directorate head Lt. General Andrey Kartapolov.

Two additional lower House State Duma members were sanctioned, as well as Moscow Communist Party head Valery Rashkin and singer Iosif Kobzon.

Fourteen others are Donbas government and military officials. Eight rebel self-defense battalions and the Novorossiia movement were sanctioned.

Measures imposed include freezing assets held in European Union countries and an EU-wide travel ban.

State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Aleksey Pushkov said new sanctions are "contrary to the (letter and spirit) of Minsk. (They) will not solve anything, but will complicate political dialogue."

Russia's Foreign Ministry said new sanctions defy common sense. Moscow vows an "appropriate" response. Brussels shamelessly accommodates Washington and Kiev's "party of war."

Moscow's EU representative, Vladimir Chizhov, said extending sanctions and adding new ones "will not only give a signal to Russian public opinion and force Russia to return to our own sanctions list, but will dissuade both sides of the conflict from the active implementation of the provisions of the Minsk documents."

It shows no matter what efforts Russia makes toward resolving Ukraine's conflict, it will continue being targeted unfairly.

Energy giant Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin said “(i)n the longterm, sanctions against Russia endanger Europe’s security of supply.”

Losers on both sides are assured. Spain’s Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo said “(s)anctions have had a heavy cost for us all.”

“The EU so far lost 21 billion euros. In Spain, we have been badly hit in terms of agriculture and tourism.

Czech President Milos Zeman called for lifting sanctions. Saying “I long for solid trade and economic relations between the Czech Republic and Russia, which shouldn’t be hampered by sanctions.”

“Especially if those sanctions are useless.” Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras rhetorically opposes sanctions while approving their renewal. At the same time, he wants things resolved diplomatically, adding:

“The difficult way of talks is always favorable to the easy way of sanctions, which leads to a dead end.”

Dark forces in America, EU countries and Ukraine want war continued, not ended. Huge geopolitical issues are at stake.

Key is targeting Russia for regime change. Washington’s longstanding goal is eliminating a major rival, controlling its vast land mass, balkanizing it for easier control, plundering its resources and exploiting its people.

At the same time, war-profiteers are making fortunes. Russian State Duma Deputy Chairman Sergey Zheleznyak said Ukrainian generals are enriched by war.

Ending it cuts off their income stream. They have clear incentives to keep conflict going.

So do volunteer elements. They’re profiteering like others. As long as war enriches them they’ll keep fighting.

On Monday, Angela Merkel called things “extremely unstable.” Restoring peace remains “extremely difficult.”

“The situation is fragile. It was always clear that much remains to be done.”

“And I have always said that there are no guarantees that what we are trying to do succeeds. It will be an extremely difficult path.”

Impossible as long as Washington and war-profiteers want conflict continued. It bears repeating what other articles stressed.

Obama didn’t initiate proxy war to quit. Chances for a durable, sustainable peace are virtually nil.

Low-intensity conflict continues. It’s just a matter of time before things heat up again full force. Will direct US/Russia confrontation follow?

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His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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