

# The Kiev Putsch: Rebel Workers Take Power in the East

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In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

## Introduction

Not since the US and EU took over Eastern Europe, including the Baltic countries, East Germany, Poland and the Balkans and converted them into military outposts of NATO and economic vassals, have the Western powers moved so aggressively to seize a strategic country, such as the Ukraine, posing an existential threat to Russia.

Up until 2013 the Ukraine was a 'buffer state', basically a non-aligned country, with economic ties to both the EU and Russia. Ruled by a regime closely tied to local, European, Israeli and Russian based oligarchs, the political elite was a product of a political upheaval in 2004, (the so-called "Orange Revolution") funded by the US. Subsequently, for the better part of a decade the Ukraine underwent a failed experiment in Western backed 'neo-liberal' economic policies. After nearly two decades of political penetration, the US and EU were deeply entrenched in the political system via long-standing funding of so-called non-governmental organizations (NGO's), political parties and paramilitary groups.

The strategy of the US and EU was to install a pliant regime which would bring Ukraine into the European Common Market and NATO as a subordinate client state. Negotiations between the EU and the Ukraine government proceeded slowly. They eventually faltered because of the onerous conditions demanded by the EU and the more favorable economic concessions and subsidies offered by Russia. Having failed to negotiate the annexation of the Ukraine to the EU, and not willing to await scheduled constitutional elections, the NATO powers activated their well-financed and organized NGOs, client political leaders and armed paramilitary groups to violently overthrow the elected government. The violent putsch succeeded and a US-appointed civilian-military junta took power.

The junta was composed of pliant neo-liberal and chauvinist neo-fascist 'ministers'. The former were hand-picked by the US, to administer and enforce a new political and economic order, including privatization of public firms and resources, breaking trade and investment ties with Russia, eliminating a treaty allowing the Russian naval base in Crimea and ending military-industrial exports to Russia. The neo-fascists and sectors of the military and police were appointed to ministerial positions in order to violently repress any pro-democracy opposition in the West and East. They oversaw the repression of bilingual speakers (Russian-Ukrainian), institutions and practices - turning the opposition to the US-NATO imposed coup regime into an ethnic opposition. They purged all elected opposition office holders in the West and East and appointed local governors by fiat - essentially creating a martial law regime.

## **The Strategic Targets of the NATO-Junta**

NATO's violent, high-risk seizure of the Ukraine was driven by several strategic military objectives. These included:

- 1.) The ousting of Russia from its military bases in Crimea – turning them into NATO bases facing Russia.
- 2.) The conversion of the Ukraine into a springboard for penetrating Southern Russia and the Caucasus; a forward position to politically manage and support liberal pro-NATO parties and NGOs within Russia.
- 3.) The disruption of key sectors of the Russian military defense industry, linked to the Ukrainian factories, by ending the export of critical engines and parts to Russia.

The Ukraine had long been an important part of the Soviet Union's military industrial complex. NATO planners behind the putsch were keenly aware that one-third of the Soviet defense industry had remained in the Ukraine after the break-up of the USSR and that forty percent of the Ukraine's exports to Russia, until recently, consisted of armaments and related machinery. More specifically, the Motor-Sikh plant in Eastern Ukraine manufactured most of the engines for Russian military helicopters including a current contract to supply engines for one thousand attack helicopters. NATO strategists immediately directed their political stooges in Kiev to suspend all military deliveries to Russia, including medium-range air-to air-missiles, inter-continental ballistic missiles, transport planes and space rockets (Financial Times, 4/21/14, p3). US and EU military strategists viewed the Kiev putsch as a way to undermine Russian air, sea and border defenses. President Putin has acknowledged the blow but insists that Russia will be able to substitute domestic production for the critical parts within two years. This means the loss of thousands of skilled factory jobs in Eastern Ukraine.

4. The military encirclement of Russia with forward NATO bases in the Ukraine matching those from the Baltic to the Balkans, from Turkey to the Caucasus and then onward from Georgia into the autonomous Russian Federation.

The US-EU encirclement of Russia is designed to end Russian access to the North Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. By encircling and confining Russia to an isolated landmass without 'outlets to the sea', US-EU empire builders seek to limit Russia's role as a rival power center and possible counter-weight to its imperial ambitions in the Middle East, North Africa, Southwest Asia and the North Atlantic.

### **Ukraine Putsch: Integral to Imperial Expansion**

The US and EU are intent on destroying independent, nationalist and non-aligned governments throughout the world and converting them into imperial satellites by whatever means are effective. For example, the current NATO-armed mercenary invasion of Syria is directed at overthrowing the nationalist, secular Assad government and establishing a pro-NATO vassal state, regardless of the bloody consequences to the diverse Syrian people. The attack on Syria serves multiple purposes: Eliminating a Russian ally and its Mediterranean naval base; undermining a supporter of Palestine and adversary of Israel; encircling the Islamic Republic of Iran and the powerful militant Hezbollah Party in Lebanon and establishing new military bases on Syrian soil.

The NATO seizure of the Ukraine has a multiplier effect that reaches 'upward' toward Russia and 'downward' toward the Middle East and consolidates control over its vast oil wealth.

The recent NATO wars against Russian allies or trading partners confirm this prognosis. In Libya, the independent, non-aligned policies of the Gadhafi regime stood out in stark contrast to the servile Western satellites like Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia. Gadhafi was overthrown and Libya destroyed via a massive NATO air assault. Egypt's mass popular anti-Mubarak rebellion and emerging democracy were subverted by a military coup and eventually returned the country to the US-Israeli-NATO orbit - under a brutal dictator. Armed incursions by NATO proxy, Israel, against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon as well as the US-EU sanctions against Iran are all directed against potential allies or trading partners of Russia.

The US has moved forcefully from encircling Russia via 'elections and free markets' in Eastern Europe to relying on military force, death squads, terror and economic sanctions in the Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Asia.

### **Regime Change in Russia: from Global Power to Vassal State**

Washington's strategic objective is to isolate Russia from without, undermine its military capability and erode its economy, in order to strengthen NATO's political and economic collaborators inside Russia - leading to its further fragmentation and return to the semi-vassal status.

The imperial strategic goal is to place neo-liberal political proxies in power in Moscow, just like the ones who oversaw the pillage and destruction of Russia during the infamous Yeltsin decade. The US-EU power grab in the Ukraine is a big step in that direction.

### **Evaluating the Encirclement and Conquest Strategy**

So far NATO's seizure of the Ukraine has not moved forward as planned. First of all, the violent seizure of power by overtly pro-NATO elites openly reneging on military treaty agreements with Russia over bases in Crimea, had forced Russia to intervene in support of the local, overwhelmingly ethnic Russian population. Following a free and open referendum, Russia annexed the region and secured its strategic military presence.

While Russia retained its naval presence on the Black Sea ... the NATO junta in Kiev unleashed a large-scale military offensive against the pro-democracy, anti-coup Russian-speaking majority in the eastern half of the Ukraine who have been demanding a federal form of government reflecting Ukraine's cultural diversity. The US-EU promoted a "military response" to mass popular dissent and encouraged the coup-regime to eliminate the civil rights of the Russian speaking majority through neo-Nazi terror and to force the population to accept junta-appointed regional rulers in place of their elected leaders. In response to this repression, popular self-defense committees and local militias quickly sprang up and the Ukrainian army was initially forced back with thousands of soldiers refusing to shoot their own compatriots on behalf of the Western -installed regime in Kiev. For a while, the NATO-backed neo-liberal-neo-fascist coalition junta had to contend with the disintegration of its 'power base'. At the same time, 'aid' from the EU, IMF and the US failed to compensate for the cut-off of Russian trade and energy subsidies. Under the advise of visiting US CIA Director, Brenner, the Kiev Junta then dispatched its elite "special forces" trained by the CIA and FBI to carry out massacres against pro-democracy civilians and popular militias. They

bussed in armed thugs to the diverse city of Odessa who staged an 'exemplary' massacre: Burning the city's major trade union headquarters and slaughtering 41, mostly unarmed civilians who were trapped in the building with its exits blocked by neo-Nazis. The dead included many women and teenagers who had sought shelter from the rampaging neo-Nazis. The survivors were brutally beaten and imprisoned by the 'police' who had passively watched while the building burned.

### **The Coming Collapse of the Putsch-Junta**

Obama's Ukraine power grab and his efforts to isolate Russia have provoked some opposition in the EU. Clearly US sanctions prejudice major European multi-nationals with deep ties in Russia. The US military build-up in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Black Sea raises tensions and threatens a large-scale military conflagration, disrupting major economic contracts. US-EU threats on Russia's border have increased popular support for President Putin and strengthened the Russian leadership. The strategic power grab in the Ukraine has radicalized and deepened the polarization of Ukrainian politics-between neo-fascist and pro-democracy forces.

While the imperial strategists are extending and escalating their military build-up in Estonia and Poland and pouring arms into the Ukraine, the entire power grab rests on very precarious political and economic foundations- which could collapse within the year - amidst a bloody civil war/ inter-ethnic slaughter.

The Ukraine junta has already lost political control of over a third of the country to pro-democracy, anti-coup movements and self-defense militias. By cutting off strategic exports to Russia to serve US military interests, the Ukraine lost one of its most important markets, which cannot be replaced. Under NATO control, Ukraine will have to buy NATO-specified military hardware leading to the closure of its factories geared to the Russian market. The loss of Russian trade is already leading to mass unemployment, especially among skilled industrial workers in the East who may be forced to immigrate to Russia. Ballooning trade deficits and the erosion of state revenues will bring a total economic collapse. Thirdly, as a result of the Kiev junta's submission to NATO, the Ukraine has lost billions of dollars in subsidized energy from Russia. High energy costs make Ukrainian industries non-competitive in global markets. Fourthly, in order to secure loans from the IMF and the EU, the junta has agreed to eliminate food and energy price subsidies, severely depressing household incomes and plunging pensioners into destitution. Bankruptcies are on the rise, as imports from the EU and elsewhere displace formerly protected local industries.

No new investments are flowing in because of the violence, instability and conflicts between neo-fascists and neo-liberals within the junta. Just to stabilize the day-to-day operations of government, the junta needs a no-interest \$30 billion dollar handout - from its NATO patrons, an amount, which is not forthcoming now or in the immediate future.

It is clear that NATO 'strategists' who planned the putsch were only thinking about weakening Russia militarily and gave no thought to the political, economic and social costs of sustaining a puppet regime in Kiev when Ukraine had been so dependent on Russian markets, loans and subsidized energy. Moreover, they appear to have overlooked the political, industrial and agricultural dynamics of the predictably hostile Eastern regions of the country. Alternately, Washington strategists may have based their calculations on instigating a Yugoslavia-style break-up accompanied by massive ethnic cleansing amidst population transfers and slaughter. Undeterred by the millions of civilian casualties,

Washington considers its policy of dismantling Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya to have been great political-military successes.

Ukraine most certainly will enter a prolonged and deep depression, including a precipitous decline in its exports, employment and output. Possibly, economic collapse will lead to nationwide protests and social unrest: spreading from East to West, from South to North. Social upheavals and mass misery may further undermine the morale of the Ukrainian armed forces. Even now, Kiev can barely afford to feed its soldiers and has to rely on neo-Fascist volunteer militias who may be hard to control. The US-EU are not likely to intervene directly with a Libya-style bombing campaign since they would face a prolonged war on Russia's border at a time when public opinion in the US is suffering from imperial war exhaustion, and European business interests with links to Russian resource companies are resisting consequential sanctions.

The US-EU putsch has produced a failing regime and a society riven by violent conflicts – spinning into open ethnic violence. What, in fact, has ensued is a system of dual power with contenders cutting across regional boundaries. The Kiev junta lacks the coherence and stability to serve as a reliable NATO military link in the encirclement of Russia. On the contrary, US-EU sanctions, military threats and bellicose rhetoric are forcing Russians to quickly rethink their 'openness' to the West. The strategic threats to its national security are leading Russia to review its ties to Western banks and corporations. Russia may have to resort to a policy of expanded industrialization via public investments and import substitution. Russian oligarchs, having lost their overseas holdings, may become less central to Russian economic policy.

What is clear is that the power grab in Kiev will not result in a 'knife pointed at the heartland of Russia'. The ultimate defeat and overthrow of the Kiev junta can lead to a radicalized self-governing Ukraine, based on the burgeoning democratic movements and rising working class consciousness. This will have to emerge from their struggle against IMF austerity programs and Western asset stripping of Ukraine's resources and enterprises. The industrial workers of Ukraine who succeed in throwing off the yoke of the western vassals in Kiev have no intention of submitting themselves to the yoke of the Russian oligarchs. Their struggle is for a democratic state, capable of developing an independent economic policy, free of imperial military alliances.

## **Epilogue:**

### **May Day 2014: Dual Popular Power in the East, Fascism Rising in the West**

The predictable falling out between the neo-fascists and neo-liberal partners in the Kiev junta was evidenced by large-scale riots, between rival street gangs and police on May Day. The US-EU strategy envisioned using the neo-fascists as 'shock troops' and street fighters in overthrowing the elected regime of Yankovich and later discarding them. As exemplified by the notorious taped conversation between Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland and the US Ambassador to Kiev, the EU-US strategists promote their own handpicked neoliberal proxies to represent foreign capital, impose austerity policies and sign treaties for foreign military bases. In contrast, the neo-fascist militias and parties would favor nationalist economic policies, retaining state enterprises and are likely to be hostile to oligarchs, especially those with 'dual Israeli-Ukraine' citizenship.

The Kiev junta's inability to develop an economic strategy, its violent seizure of power and

repression of pro-democracy dissidents in the East has led to a situation of 'dual power'. In many cases, troops sent to repress the pro-democracy movements have abandoned their weapons, abandoned the Kiev junta and joined the self-governing movements in the East.

Apart from its outside backers-the White House, Brussels and IMF - the Kiev junta has been abandoned by its rightwing allies in Kiev for being too subservient to NATO and resisted by the pro-democracy movement in the East for being authoritarian and centralist. The Kiev junta has fallen between two chairs: it lacks legitimacy among most Ukrainians and has lost control of all but a small patch of land occupied by government offices in Kiev and even those are under siege by the neo-fascist rightand increasingly from its own disenchanted former supporters.

Let us be absolutely clear, the struggle in the Ukraine is not between the US and Russia, it is between a NATO-imposed junta composed of neo-liberal oligarchs and fascists on one side and the industrial workers and their local militias and democratic councils on the other. The former defends and obeys the IMF and Washington; the latter relies on the productive capacity of local industry and rules by responding to the majority.

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