

What America Should Know about “Annexed Crimea”: “We the People of Crimea...”

US Permanent Rep. to the UN Nikki Haley

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The [speech](#) by the new US permanent representative to the UN Security Council, Nikki Haley, at a Security Council meeting on 3 February backed up the idea that the new administration policy on Crimea will be followed up. Haley said exactly the same nonsense as Samantha Power before her: «Our Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until Russia returns control of the peninsula to Ukraine». The White House [supported](#) Haley’s statement the same day.

It is interesting that Mrs Haley was speaking about the territory of Crimea rather than the people. I wonder how she seeks the «return» of the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine – with the people or without them? It’s a pity that this question has remained unanswered yet.

Does Nikki Haley know whether the Crimean people regard themselves as Ukrainians or not?

It is unlikely that the US ambassador to the UN wants to move the people out of Crimea so that she can give the peninsula back to Ukraine.

Especially as she would have to move not only the living, but also the dead, since the ‘Ukrainian’ history of Crimea is very short, around a quarter of a century. It is surprising that the citizen of a country whose constitution begins with the words «We the people of the United States...» is doing everything to avoid a conversation in terms of «We the people of Crimea...»



From the point of view of the people who live on the Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine annexed Crimea in 1991, grossly violating the rules of international law. Crimea became part of independent Ukraine illegally, and repeated attempts by the Crimean people to redress this injustice met with opposition from Kiev.

In order to understand this, Nikki Haley just needs to be made aware of a few facts.

In 1990, the Parliament of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty, which hid behind the words «Expressing the will of the people of Ukraine...» and spoke of a new state being established within the existing boundaries of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic based on the Ukrainian nation’s right to self-determination. But did the Ukrainian nation have the right to self-determination in Crimea if the number of Ukrainians on the peninsula made up only 25.8 percent of the population?

The answer is obvious – no, it did not. This was the first step in the annexation of Crimea by the Ukrainian state, which, at that point, was the Ukrainian SSR separate from the Soviet Union.

On 20 January 1991, [the first Crimean referendum was held](#) on the restoration of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a subject of the USSR and as a party to the Union Treaty. (Between 1921 and 1945, the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.) With a high turnout of 81.37 percent, 93.26 percent of the Crimean population voted in favour of restoring autonomy. On 12 February 1991, the restoration of the Crimean ASSR [was confirmed by law](#): the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR accepted the results of the referendum. The Crimean people were clearly self-determining, and this self-determination differed hugely from the self-determination of the Ukrainian nation.



The Ukrainian SSR 1991 law on establishment of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, signed by the Chair of the Supreme Council of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk

So what did the Ukrainian state do next? On 24 August 1991, the Supreme Court of the Ukrainian SSR, again on the basis of self-determination, declared the independence of Ukraine, arbitrarily identifying the Crimean ASSR as a territory of the newly established state. By doing so, the founders of Ukraine ignored a law requiring a separate referendum to be held in Crimea on the Crimean ASSR's status within Ukraine. This was done deliberately, since Kiev knew perfectly well that the people of Crimea would never vote in favour of becoming part of Ukraine. At the same time, a huge scam to manipulate history was being prepared: on 1 December 1991, another [referendum](#) was held in the whole Ukraine including the Crimean ASSR, known as “the Ukrainian independence referendum”. The results in Crimea and Sevastopol were notably different from those in the mainland Ukraine (most of the Crimeans ignored the plebiscite), but the quorum was reached thanks to non-residents were allowed to vote at the Crimean poll stations. In this underhand way, Ukraine took its second step towards the annexation of Crimea.



A Crimean boy standing for boycott of the Ukrainian elections

The Crimeans did not agree with the Ukrainian sharp cookies, however. From the start of 1992, the number of protests began to increase – the Crimean people were outraged at the deception and demanded secession from Ukraine. Under pressure from the people, the Supreme Council of Crimea [adopted](#) the Act of State Independence of the Republic of Crimea, approved its own [constitution](#) (*link in Russian*), and passed a resolution to hold a referendum on 2 August 1992. It was another step towards the self-determination of the Russian majority of Crimea was pushing for lawfully and legitimately. The Constitution of Crimea began with the words: «*We the people, who make up the multi-ethnic nation of Crimea and are united by centuries-old ties of a common historical fate, are free and equal in dignity and rights...*»

By this time, however, Kiev had already gotten a taste for political tricking. The referendum was postponed to a later date (it was held in 1994 in the form of a public opinion poll) and the Constitution of Crimea, under pressure from Kiev, [was rewritten](#) dozens of times until the peninsula was tied to Ukraine for good. The first presidential elections took place in

Crimea in 1994, but by 1995, both the position of president and the Constitution of Crimea had been abolished. In late 1998, the Ukrainian authorities brought the legislation of the Autonomous Republic of Ukraine completely in line with the legislation of Ukraine. This was the penultimate step in the annexation of Crimea, the final step being to deprive Crimea of its autonomous status by establishing a Crimean region as part of Ukraine.

Over the next decade, Kiev did not dare do this, since any attempt to raise the issue of abolishing Crimean autonomy led to large-scale protests and demands to restore the 1992 Constitution and the statehood of the Republic of Crimea. Creeping Ukrainization was also unsuccessful – moulding Crimea to be more like Ukraine did not work even in light of the [2001 census](#):



The February (2014) uprising in Kiev was not supported in Crimea, but attempts by Crimeans to oppose it led to tragedy: on the night of 20 and 21 February, buses taking protesting Crimeans home from a chaotic Kiev were stopped by armed nationalists in the small city of Korsun-Shevchenkivskiyi. The Crimeans were beaten, tortured, forced to sing the Ukrainian national anthem under threat of death, and made to pick up broken glass from the buses' windows, which had been smashed with sticks, with their bare hands. This episode was reported in details in Andrei Kondrashov's 2015 documentary ["Crimea: way back home"](#):

In the [referendum on 16 March 2014](#), the Crimean people once again confirmed their historical choice, just as the United States once did when they broke away from the British Crown. In the US Declaration of Independence, it says that the Creator endowed people with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Just like Americans, Crimeans also want to live, be free and be happy. That is precisely why they spent decades trying to break away from the Ukrainian dictate, something they finally achieved in 2014 when they returned to Russia.

It seems that Nikki Haley, like millions of her fellow Americans, does not know the history of the Crimean people's struggle against its illegal annexation by Ukraine, which began in 1990 and ended in 2014. Questioning the choice of the Crimean people in 2014 seems to be the reason why the US permanent representative to the UN Security Council is keeping quiet about the Ukrainian annexation of Crimea in the 1990s. After all, no one in the world could doubt the results of the Crimean referendum held on 20 January 1991. If it is a case of the deliberate distortion of facts, however, then the situation looks a lot worse.

If you were to side with the Crimean people, then the history of Crimea's reunification with Russia becomes simple and understandable. It is enough to know that for each territory, whether that is the US or Crimea, exactly the same words are key: «We the people...»



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