

What Goals does the US Pursue in Ukraine?

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The events in Donbass testify to the fact that the main goal of the United States and the new Ukrainian administration is finding ways to influence Russia instead of tackling the problems related to the ongoing crisis in Donbass.

Instead of launching a long-awaited dialogue with Donetsk and Lugansk, as promised by the President of Ukraine, the punitive operations have intensified. The authorities had not used heavy artillery and tanks before, now they are given a carte blanche to do it. The West quietly approved the use of air power when the government aviation delivered a strike against Lugansk. Now Kiev feels free to use it on much broader scale. The West seems to acquiesce in what Kiev is doing.

The United States exerts pressure on the European Union (especially France) and Kiev to make them toughen the policy towards Russia. Kiev is a player in the game. President Poroshenko asked French President Hollande to approve the imposition of sectoral sanctions including military sales. The contacts between Ukraine and France are indirectly influenced by Washington. The United States strongly opposes the Mistral deal that envisions selling French amphibious assault ships to Russia as well as building the boats of this class by Russian shipyards.

Moscow, reasonable Europeans and the people of Donbass resisting the Kiev regime support a ceased-fire and a dialogue as the way to manage the ongoing crisis. The United States sees things differently.

First, the continuation of Ukrainian conflict meets the US interest as Moscow has to concentrate on the issue of Ukraine at the expense of other international efforts.

Second, the intensification of punitive campaign gives Kiev a pretext for declaring the state of emergency. The anti-terrorist operation will be artificially prolonged to turn the country into a military dictatorship as the state of emergency continues to be in force.

Third, Gasprom switched over to prepayment system for gas. Now it delivers to Ukraine only the amount that has been paid for. Washington and Kiev plan to intimidate Europeans with the possibility of terrorist act committed to stop gas supplies to Europe. They realize the old continent has no alternative to energy provided by Russia.

According to Washington, there are two major scenarios of further development of events.

The first scenario envisions the growing numbers of refugees fleeing to Russia. At that Russia will not meddle into the ongoing conflict. It will give Washington time to toughen the state of emergency to strengthen the regime it has installed in Ukraine. But the scenario has

time limit. As soon as the association agreement with the European Union is signed the living standards of Ukrainians are going to go down increasing the possibility of popular uprising. The politicians who lost the recent presidential election will be willing to lead the protests. Many people believe that Yulia Timoshenko may play a major role if the events unfold according to this scenario.

Washington needs to avert these developments. A popular unrest may overthrow the regime in Kiev it has made come to power. So while the first scenario is being implemented, the US will try to implement the second one, which envisions direct involvement of Russia into the Ukrainian crisis. One thing will lead to another, the events like attacking the Russian embassy in Kiev, for instance. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was right saying the attack had not been planned by Kiev. Or planned not by Kiev only, to be precise. The provocation staged in front of the embassy without storming the building and compound is a game aimed at making Russia lose control. The escapades of Foreign Minister Andrei Deshitsu who entertained public near the embassy are an example to prove the point.

On June 13 -14 it was reported that Ukrainian military started provocations at the border trying to cross the line. It's just a start. There is a string of provocative actions ahead. The goal is to make Russia react the way Washington expects it. It will give the West a free hand. The United States have made the gas talks fail. Perhaps it cut off the nose to spite the face. It's hard to imagine how the exacerbation of gas conflict provoked by stubborn Kiev politicians could facilitate the strengthening of Trans-Atlantic solidarity.

Talking about the prospects for tackling the Ukrainian crisis, there is no light at the end of tunnel if the European Union will not find ways to reduce the influence of its overseas «strategic partner» upon Kiev.

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