

## **THE WAR WHICH BRINGS IN THE COLD – UKRAINE AND CRIMEA – MASKIROVKA AND DISINFORMATSIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**FACTS:** AT PRESENT RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES OBVIOUSLY COMMAND AND HAVE FULL CONTROL OF ALL KEY POSITIONS IN CRIMEA: ACCESS AND MOVEMENT, NEWSPAPERS, BANKING, FOOD SUPPLIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. IN MILITARY TERMS THE RUSSIAN MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IS OBVIOUSLY CARRYING OUT A WELL KNOWN TYPE OPERATION OF RECONNAISSANCE THROUGH COMBAT, IN THE TRADITIONAL RUSSIAN MILITARY DOCTRINE EVERY MOVE MUST BE POWERFUL, SUDDEN, WITHOUT WARNING INVOLVING ALL BRANCHES OF MILITARY SERVICE AND THE GOAL IS TO REACH AS FAR INTO THE ENEMY TERRITORY SWIFTLY AND BY SURPRISE. THE CRIMEA AND UKRAINE OPERATION SHOW THE CAPABILITIES OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY TO CARRY OUT MISSIONS OF ATTACK AND OCCUPATION WHICH DENOTE CAREFUL PLANNING. THIS FACT SHOWS THAT THE MILITARY HAD LONG TIME AGO CONCEIVED WAR PLANS FOR THIS ZONE. THE MISSION WAS FULLY ACCOMPLISHED AND IT IS VERY SIMILAR WITH THE CAPTURE OF KABUL WHICH INVOLVED SPECIAL FORCES TROOPS WEARING A VARIETY OF UNIFORMS, AND LIKE IN KABUL IT WAS CARRIED OUT WITH A PERFECT TIMING AND PRECISION, IN A VERY SHORT TIME. THE WHOLE OPERATION WAS EXECUTED ACCORDING TO THE CLASSICAL RUSSIAN MILITARY DOCTRINE OF “MASKIROVKA” AND “DISINFORMATSIA”.

**SHORT TERM GOALS:** A TOP PRIORITY IS THE SWIFT ACQUISITION OF ALL UKRAINIAN MILITARY ASSETS INCLUDING THE LAND BASES, THE NAVAL VESSELS AND ALL THE OTHER MILITARY CAPACITIES. IN DOING SO THEY DESTROY THE MORALE AND REDUCE ANY POSSIBLE MILITARY OPPOSITION.

**NEXT STEPS:** A CLEAR IMAGE OF RUSSIA’S NEXT STEPS WOULD BE THE ARRIVAL IN CRIMEA OF PERSONNEL OF THE FEDERAL AGENCY OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TO CARRY FORWARD THE SITUATION. FAPSI’S FUNCTIONS ARE DIVIDED BETWEEN SECTIONS OF THE FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE, THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE AND SPECIAL SECTIONS OF THE FEDERAL PROTECTION SERVICE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION. IN THE REST OF UKRAINE, OCCUPATION FORCES WILL BE SEEKING EVIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST ETHNIC RUSSIAN POPULATION TO JUSTIFY FURTHER ACTION. SUCH ACTIVITIES WOULD ALSO HAVE THE VITAL PROPAGANDA PURPOSE OF DISCREDITING THE NEW UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT INTERNATIONALLY.

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**KEYWORDS:** UKRAINE, MASKIROVKA, DISINFORMATSIA, KNOUT, SPETSNAZ

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It's very obvious that the newly emerged authorities in Kiev do not have control over Ukraine, to say nothing about Crimea which *de facto* has joined Russia despite international legislation and political agreements.

Russia has planted firmly its boots on the ground and wields the knout once again over a long-time disputed territory which finally has come to the bosom of its mother.

It is the return of a long lost child: what has happened? Why did it happen? How?

If we resort to recent history we can see how in the dissolution of the USSR a new free state emerged. Nevertheless it inherited all the problems of the Soviet era, instead of passing through a period of transition peacefully orchestrated by democratic regimes it was torn apart by political ambitions, manipulated from the EAST or from the West (see the Orange Revolution). The last straw was the decision of the pro-Russian Yanukovichi regime to turn its back towards Europe at Vilnius. This really broke the camel's, back.

The popular revolt was successful because the regime could not offer any plausible option to the masses of people driven to despair by corruption, terror and manipulation.

The model of the Ukrainian State based on corruption and totalitarianism could only lead sooner or later to social explosions. The Euro – Maidan is such an example and it is not a new phenomenon in the recent history of Ukraine. What is new is the fact that the EU and the USA behaved differently. Somebody/ nobody in Washington and Brussels realized the mistake they had made in Vilnius, may be, they realized the mistake they made at the Bucharest NATO Summit<sup>3</sup> and it was time to act.

Suddenly the world leaders came awake, level after level of formerly dormant bureaucracies was activated, decisions were made up and an enormous response was given which suddenly mobilized public opinion.

The Budapest Memorandum<sup>4</sup> was invoked and completely ignored by Moscow. But the issue is the fact that U.S.A. and Great Britain had given their word guaranteeing independence and security to Ukraine.

Would Russia have embarked on such an action – invasion and annexation if Ukraine had kept its nuclear arsenal?<sup>5</sup>

There is also another side to this problem – global security arrangements made by the USA and its allies have been ignored – practically Ukraine becomes a test for the credibility of USA and NATO.

The Ukrainian crises could overthrow global balance, and point out the fact that international agreements and facts do not really count.

On the other hand it brings to light the importance of NATO and questions its capacity to defend it's members.

So far NATO did not project a very credible image after Afghanistan and especially now when its Secretary General Rasmussen is replaced by the former Norwegian Prime Minister – Stoltesem<sup>6</sup> and when the commanding General of NATO forces Phillip Breedlove instead of saying something more meaningful is quoted to have said that. "Russia has the military capability and has the intent" – it is practically a recognition of the fact that Russian has the superiority in the field which in civilian language means that the Russian military has the initiative and is capable to implement its purposes which in fact the invasion and

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<sup>3</sup> Ukraine and Georgia were not give the green light to join NATO

<sup>4</sup> America, Great Britain, Russia guaranteed Ukraine's independence and security

<sup>5</sup> Ian Bremmer, "It's time to Look Beyond Crimea", in Revista Time, Vol.183, No. II/march24,2014. London

<sup>6</sup> NATO did not clearly say that, there were hints only that this was Rasmussen's last visit as NATO Secretary General living a grey zone as far as supreme command of NATO is concerned, which is a very confusing situation in military strategy

later the annexation showed clearly. Russian's military leaders have carried out successfully a master plan which belongs to a much more complicated scheme. It may be the restoration of USSR.

At present armed forces obviously have full control positions in Crimea: access and movement, newspapers TV channels, banking, food supplies and cooperation of the local authorities.

In military terms the troops have carried out successfully a type of operation known as reconnaissance through combat, in the traditional Russian military doctrine – every move must be powerful, sudden without warning, involving all kind of troops in the military service and the final goal is to reach as far into the enemy territory as possible, swiftly and decisively.

The Ukraine and Crimea operation show the capabilities of the Russian army to carry out missions of attack and occupation which denote faultless planning and strategy.

In fact it has become clear that military plans have been conceived long time before the occupation of Crimea. The rehearsal for this plan was carried out partially in Georgia. It may remind to the analyst a similar plan of taking over of Kabul, a successful operation carried out by troops wearing a variety of uniforms, masks and types of armament. They are the elite troops of the Russian army known as SPETSNAZ (special forces). This display of large contingents in strange uniforms is meant to disorient the enemy which may disconsider and dismiss the attacks as lacking importance. While the operation is underway the troops are being concentrated on specific target - city halls radio, military bases and little by little everything is in Russian hands.

The Crimean takeover relies heavily on two basic military principles camouflage and disinformation (maskirovka and disinformatsia).

The top priority of Russians actions is the swift acquisition of all Ukrainian military assets, and the land and sea bases, vessels and all the other military capacities. It includes the capture of military personnel which later can be either indoctrinated and turned or let to go home in shame and public disgrace. In doing so they undermined Ukrainian moral and boost up the situation of the pro Russian paramilitary troops. This also reduced drastically any possible military position.

All these goals were successfully achieved with the involuntary help of the new Ukrainian military authorities which did not issue in real time specific instructions for its soldiers and officers leaving them in a very vulnerable and helpless situation in front of a much superior enemy. A clear image of Russia's next steps before and after the takeover would be the arrival in Crimea of The Federal Agency of Government Communications and Information to carry on forward and stabilize the situation. Its well - known acronym is FAPSI. FAPSI's functions are divided between sections of Federal Security Service, for Intelligence Service and Special Sections of the Federal Protection Service of the Russian Federation.<sup>7</sup>

In the rest of Ukraine special forces of occupation will be looking for and preparing evidence of violence against the ethnic Russian population to justify forward action.

Political and military analysts unanimously agree that Ukraine and especially Crimea are territories of strategic importance indispensable to the strategic defense of the Russian Federation, just think in a pro - western Ukraine Moscow would be at a distance of 480 km of NATO. Putin clearly expressed in his discourse in front of the DUMA, that NATO is already too close and closing in on Russians borders. "I just cannot imagine he said, to go

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.janes.com/article/34790/analysis-russians-holding-whip-hand-in-crimea>.

on a visit to Sevastopol and to be met there by smiling NATO's soldiers."<sup>8</sup> It becomes clear that the battle for Ukraine remains a political confrontation backed by the military power of the Russian Federation. At the moment nothing can stand against an aggressive Russian army which could overrun any opposition (IE Romania can be overrun in 8 hours, according to senator Norica Nicolai in speech given in Suceava 31.3.2014).<sup>9</sup>

However nationalistic were the regimes of Iuscenko and Timosenko as long as Ukraine remained fairly neutral with slight leanings the towards Europe but not clearly pro European, everything was under control while Ianukovici was in power Russia was not worried either because UE and NATO did not really pose as a real threat. Their position was ambiguous and that suited perfectly to Russia and its economic and military interest. But when things got out of control and Ukraine exploded, a new government replaced the Ianukovici administration, Russia decided that the time was ripe to act and recuperated Crimea which Hruscirov gave away so foolishly to Ukraine in 1954.

A brief look into the past shows us how important Crimea and Ukraine were to Russia. From the Crimean war 1856 till 1991 when the Soviet regime crumbled, Russia and its leaders were extremely concerned about the plight of these territories. In the last 150 years there was several cycles of development and events which demonstrated the importance of these strategically placed lands. Nowadays Putin's Russia is within a new favorable historical cycle enjoying a relative affluence economically and takes advantage of a favorable, historical context. The top priority project of Putin's administration is the creation of Eurasian Union in fact a kind of reconstituted Soviet Union led of course by Moscow, and this is where Ukraine comes in and fits perfectly, without it there is no Eurasian Union.

Ukraine was an agricultural, industrial area during the USSR and at the same time a vital strategic territory. It's area today is larger than that of any member of EU. Thus Moscow's imperious need to get it back to its former status is imperative. Therefore Putin is not afraid of European and NATO sanctions at least not for the short term. His greater worry is that he could become the Russian leader who lost Ukraine, but so far he did his best to avoid that. From a military point of view the annexation was a great success and inside the Russian Federation it gained an enormous prestige for Putin. But hopefully the military chapter of the operation comes to an end at least for the time being. Now it is very interesting to see how will Russia manage the project politically. At present it is facing rather moral and political sanctions, NATO and the EU are not seeming to put up a serious plan of sanctions. Finally last week 27.03.2014 America came to the high table represented at the top level by President Obama. The Secretary General of NATO delivered a message of the utmost importance and also significantly increased its presence in the Baltic states and Poland bringing a lot of sophisticated military hardware. On one hand we have the rigid Russian roulette position – "we shall not change our position regarding Ukraine"<sup>10</sup> – Serghei Lavrov, and on the other we have an increased significant activity carried out by NATO in the region. The new G7 summit meeting in the Hague already decided to expel Russia from the organization so the next G8 meeting in Sochi will simply not take place. The organization will meet in the new format in Brussels and from there on we can expect a more coherent position of the US, EU and NATO. It is supposed that after the European elections with a

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2570335/Former-British-Ambassador-Moscow-warns-Russia-invaded-Ukraine-difficult-avoid-going-war.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.objectiv.info/norica-nicolai-cel-mai-iresponsabil-om-politic-roman\\_37046.html](http://www.objectiv.info/norica-nicolai-cel-mai-iresponsabil-om-politic-roman_37046.html) / Or less than 30' in Russian's Voice opinion

<sup>10</sup> [http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014\\_06\\_11/Attempts-to-replace-OSCE-roadmap-on-Ukrainian-settlement-with-other-plans-counter-productive-Lavrov-7187/](http://voiceofrussia.com/news/2014_06_11/Attempts-to-replace-OSCE-roadmap-on-Ukrainian-settlement-with-other-plans-counter-productive-Lavrov-7187/)

new parliament, with a new European leadership and a more aggressive NATO, the next steps of action will be far more drastic.

At the moment Russia seems to ignore all the short terms sanctions and its playing a dangerous game of Russian roulette but apparently it is not prepared to go to full time scale war, it is keeping open its options and will eventually little by little, unhurriedly go to the negotiation table.

As a conclusion Russia momentarily accomplished her plans of restoring its territories to former Soviet dimensions through a well organized military diplomatic plan of action. So far US, EU and NATO reactions have been slow, uncoordinated and not at all convincing for the Russians, but it is our hope that the response will be stern and will deeply affect the new world order.

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