

6. Mrz. 2014

von gast

 in Außenpolitik,
Militär, Security
Culture,
Sicherheitskultur,
Strategie

Kommentare (1)

A Second Yalta

by Klaus Segbers

1. The factual annexation of the Crimea by Russian troops and Russia-oriented militias is unacceptable. The claim that there was harassment against Russian speaking people on Crimea, and that human rights have been violated, is laughable. There was no attempt by the Russian government to address these alleged incidents with the Ukrainian government, or European agencies. Russian military moves were and are a cold-blooded attempt to rewrite the history of 1954, and the European map. Western societies and governments shouldn't leave any doubt about that. **There cannot be business as usual with the Russian leadership for the time being.**

2. The new and inexperienced Ukrainian government has to mature quickly. It admitted at least three grave mistakes: one, the (pending) modification of the status of the Russian language in Ukraine; two, the promotion of a few nationalist individuals to government positions, most of all as attorney general; three, to not include any representatives of Ukraine's Eastern provinces into the new government setting. **The forces of the Euro-Maidan were (understandably, but regrettably) not inclusive enough.**

3. Western countries and organizations have to come carefully, but quickly to terms with what their goals, and what their options are. Improvisation should be avoided.

4. To preserve the continuity of Crimea as an integral part of Ukraine has to be defined as the main goal. To achieve this without spelling blood comes next. At the same time, it is not realistic to assume that Russian troops (above the limits allowed for the Black Sea Fleet) will leave the area any time soon.

5. This should lead to **defining a red line, and to mean it:** No Russian troops in Eastern Ukraine. Western representatives, NGO's and media should be sent there immediately. Military exercises along the Russian border with Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics can be tolerated, as long as they do not cross borders westward. The Baltic countries will be assured that they are covered by article 5 of the NATO treaty.

6. When the current context won't change for the better, **clear signals must be sent to Russia.** The G 8 should not be canceled, but convene as

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G 7 at a different place. All military cooperation with Russia, including the NATO – Russia Council, should be suspended. Sanctions against individuals responsible for the invasion should be prepared and conditionally implemented. Cooperation with Russia in the field of sports and entertainment should be reconsidered as well, including its participation at the 2014 soccer championship in Brazil, and its organizer of the event in Russia in 2018. Talks about lifting visa regulations for Russian citizens should be terminated.

7. These steps have to be embedded into continuous appeals to use existing vehicles for negotiations or establishing new ones. The offer to talk has to remain on the table, and be repeated as long and as often as required. Another element is to send independent observer missions or joint Western/ Russian groups to Crimea, and also to Eastern Ukraine. This **double strategy between sanctions and incentives** has to be built and maintained without a defined time limit, i.e. with an open-ended commitment to both sides of this formula. It worked in the 1980's, and it may work again like this: no external force or state should be allowed to push Ukraine this way or the other. Not Russia, not the EU.

8. The current Russian leadership, particularly president V.V. Putin, is not much interested in its image in Western countries. But they are interested in not finding themselves and their families in a prolonged international isolation.

9. Part of the problem of Russian leaders' ignorance re. their image in "the West" is that **Western media notoriously misreport and stereotype developments in Russia.** In many, if not most Western print and electronic media and blogs, Cold War frames on Russia are still used as if the Soviet Union would be alive. But this is a gross error. In many regards, Russia is different today, more globalized, better educated and more "normal". To ignore Russian complexities today is a disservice for Russians and their Western observers alike. It didn't help much that many reports on the recent Olympic Games in Sochi were quite negative and alarmistic. There were plenty of problems, but also some under-reported achievements. **The link between Sochi (and certainly Syria) and Crimea may be closer than assumed so far.**

10. Right now, **there is hardly a reasonable forum for dialogue left between Russian and Western politicians** and social activists. And when they talk to each other, they are not listening. The trauma re. the collapse to the USSR is pointless, but partly existent. The *angst* re. Western governments contemplating and preparing colored revolutions in Russia proper is mistaken, but still has an impact. The Russian furor about an overextension of the UN Sec Council resolution on Libya may have been not realistic, but it is there, and is still causing misunderstandings. On the Western side, Russia is too often demonized, or Russian interests ignored – from NATO extension over ABM installations to Ukraine 2004/2014 and "being lectured".

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11. **Russian elites**, at the same time, **are too often autistic** re. what a globalized world really means. Their **thinking is often framed in geopolitical** or Eurasian **concepts, completely inept to grasp what is happening in the 21st century**. In a world where flows of content resources, capital and people are dominating governments, zero-sum games are a romantic misrepresentation of realities. A related error assumes that modernization can be customized to some narrowly defined economic and technological fields, without affecting social relations, culture, and politics. Russia is still addicted to its carbon-based energy reserves, and now down to 1.5% growth of GDP (2013). And it will one day awake to a landscape with oil prices dropping below \$ 75 (the fact that Russia's invasion of Crimea send oil prices up is a bitter irony).

12. **The EU has to come to terms with its heterogeneous voices and domestic limitations**. Ms Nuland's educated guesses on EU capabilities and a very well working German-Polish diplomatic axis (with some French flavor) have led to a short-living, but well done temporary negotiation success in Kiev. Now, Europe has to follow-up: First, the current upheaval started with the EU's offer to six East European countries to sign association agreements. Armenia (blackmailed by Russia), Azerbaidzhan and Belarus' declined to sign; Moldova and Georgia expectably did sign. Ukraine changed its mind by the day, was represented by its then president, who smiled but did not sign. This caused the rebellion at home by concerned people who see their future only "in Europe". Second, the U.S. is neither capable nor willing to get involved. So Europe has to get things sorted out here. If this requires robust measures and language, they have to be applied. At the same time, the EU has to prepare – together with the IMF - short-term measures to **prevent a financial collapse** of the Ukrainian economy, given the UA government applies for it. A few days ago, one would have added "and to include Russia into this action".

13. **Germany is especially in the focus of attention** – not only for geographic reasons, or because of some *strategic partnership* with the Russian Federation. But because the relatively good state of the German economy, its role during the Eurocrisis, and **a recent awakening of German leaders to accept more responsibilities** has to be backed up now. The Federal President Gauck stated on January 31st in Munich that there is no right for Germany "to look the other way". Now, Germans have to look the right way, and this is eastward. Unfortunately, the Russia discourse on Germany has been hijacked by busineslobby groups who produce eternally apologetic noise, or by NGO's permanently accusing Russia of all possible sins. A rational quality debate on Russia is in Germany – out of all places – basically nonexistent.

14. **There still are joint interests between Western countries and Russia. Separatism is a malaise spreading all over the world**. While objectively nation states are losing influence, ever more regional elites start playing nation building games. It's not only South Sudan, parts of

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Indonesia, Myanmar. We can see the signs on the walls in Thailand, Nigeria, Spain, the UK and Russia. Yes, Russia. Russian leaders were crying wolf in Kosovo, just to later turn around and “acknowledging” ridiculous political units in Georgia like Southern Osetia and Abkhazia in 2008. A Russian support for a full-fledged independent Crimea would be great news for the “Russian” regions in Northern Caucasus. And, potentially, in the Volga area. Neither are a nuclearized Iran, nuclear proliferation to Saudi, Egypt, Turkey, and the Gulf, and an Iraqi-Syrian *khalifat* helpful for Moscow. There are people in Russia who understand this.

15. Chinese leaders will carefully watch how the West – and particularly the EU – will react to Russia’s aggression. This should suggest that ANY kind of acceptance of a *fait accompli* must be avoided. There must not be any tolerance of non-Ukrainian authorities claiming to speak for the Crimea. No visas or other documents will be issued to Ukrainian citizens living on Crimea applying for whatever through Russian organizations. Western reactions to attempts to change the formal status of Crimea should be at least as clear, if not clearer, as to the recent announcement of a Chinese flight air defense identification zone (ADIZ). Otherwise, there may be quite unwelcome lessons and moves re. the South and East China Sea islands.

16. So it is not yet predetermined that European spaces – and areas beyond – will be divided by a Yalta 2 arrangement. But it may happen for a while. It may happen when supposedly major actors will keep losing control – the Russian president on Russian-speaking militias in Ukraine; the Ukrainian government on nationalist tribes; the EU on an erratic Ukrainian government; the Tatar leadership in Simferopol on its kin. In these cases, outcomes much worse can be envisioned.



Klaus Segbers is Director of the Center for Global Politics and Professor at Free University of Berlin. He specializes in international relations, German foreign relations, terrorism research, comparative transformation studies, Eastern

Europe and international politics, globalization and global urban regions.

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