

Obama and Kerry lecture Russia on Ukraine

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1 March 2014

US Secretary of State John Kerry used a State Department press conference Friday to lecture Russia on the necessity to uphold the “stability” and “territorial integrity” of Ukraine as Western intervention has brought the situation there to the boiling point.

The remarks came just shy of one week after the concerted intervention of the United States, Germany, France and other European powers led to a violent coup by fascist and far-right forces in the capital of Kiev.

“The United States totally supports the Ukraine’s territorial integrity and the sovereignty [sic], and we expect other nations to do the same,” Kerry declared. He added that he had earlier that day instructed Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that “it is important for everybody to be extremely careful not to inflame the situation and not to send the wrong messages.”

Later in the day, these remarks were echoed by President Barack Obama, who said he found reports of Russian troop movements “deeply disturbing.” He declared that “Any violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity would be deeply destabilizing,” adding menacingly that “there will be costs for any military intervention in Ukraine.”

Who do Kerry and Obama think they are kidding? Washington has intervened blatantly in the internal affairs of Ukraine, pouring some \$5 billion since the 1990s—by the admission last December of the undersecretary of state for Europe and Eurasia, Victoria Nuland—into programs aimed at fashioning a political instrument for pro-Western regime change in the eastern European country.

Nuland herself made at least four trips to Kiev in the course of the recent upheavals, handing out bread and cookies to the neo-fascist “protesters” in Independence Square and holding meetings with opposition figures Arseny Yatseniuk, Vitali Klitschko—referred to as “Yats” and “Klitsch” in her infamous recorded

conversation with the US ambassador—as well as with the leader of the anti-Semitic and fascistic Svoboda party, Oleh Tyahnybok.

All of this was aimed not at assuring “territorial integrity,” “sovereignty” and “stability,” but at unleashing violent mayhem to overthrow an elected government and install a regime that toes Washington’s line and projects US power to Russia’s border.

Kerry spoke Thursday in particular of the pro-Russian demonstrations in Crimea and the need “to diffuse these tensions.” He made no mention of the fact that these “tensions” had been stoked by one of the first acts of the so-called interim government, which was to abolish minority language rights for Russian-speakers, over 30 percent of the population and the majority in much of the south and east, as well as for Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian and Polish minorities. The act was taken on the initiative of the Svoboda party.

The US-backed coup in Ukraine represents the high point of a protracted process of intervention in Eastern Europe in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union 25 years ago.

To claim that “territorial integrity” has been some inviolable principle advanced by US imperialism in this aggressive venture would be ludicrous. On the contrary, US intervention began in the former Yugoslavia with the bellicose promotion of separatist movements and support for secession and wholesale “ethnic cleansing” to carve out new ethnic-based statelets under Washington’s domination. Twice in the 1990s, this led to US-NATO wars that saw thousands killed and wounded and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes.

In these cases, Washington’s position was clear: existing states had no right to defend their territorial integrity against US designs, and if they tried, the American military would bomb them.

Nor is this anything new for US imperialism. It grabbed Panama and the site of the future canal from Colombia at the beginning of the 20th century by creating its own secessionist movement and making it clear it would attack Colombia if it resisted.

Over the past decade, Washington has rode roughshod over the “territorial integrity” of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria with direct invasions and proxy wars for regime change.

One can be assured that the supposedly sacred principle of “territorial integrity” will go by the wayside in relation to Russia itself, where Washington is sure to follow up its adventure in Ukraine with the stoking of ethnic and national conflicts with the aim of dismembering and subjugating Russia.

As for the lecture to Russia about respecting “sovereignty,” it is worth recalling that US imperialism has essentially claimed ownership over the lands to its south since the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1825. Only last year, it was Kerry who in Senate testimony referred to Latin America as “our backyard.”

That Washington is now able to attempt to spread *Pax Americana* to the borders of Russia is thanks, in the final analysis, to the processes set into motion by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the final and historically monumental crime of the Moscow Stalinist bureaucracy.

Stalinism betrayed the interests of the working class in Ukraine, Russia and the rest of the Soviet Union, as well as internationally. The privileged bureaucrats transformed themselves into capitalists, plundering and monopolizing the social wealth built up in the 75 years since the October 1917 revolution.

Opposing the colonial re-enslavement of the peoples of the Ukraine, Eastern Europe and the rest of the former USSR by US and German imperialism is not a matter of defending the national interests of Russia or the rule of any of the political factions in Ukraine, all of which function as direct instruments of a handful of oligarchs.

The aggressive drive by US imperialism into Ukraine has served to expose the rot and bankruptcy of the Russian regime headed by Vladimir Putin. Representing the interests of a layer of gangsters and ex-Stalinist bureaucrats who make up a corrupt comprador ruling class, it is unable and has no desire to mobilize any genuine popular opposition to US imperialist

intervention. The military exercises launched on the Ukrainian border represent basically the least that Moscow could do under the circumstances.

The struggle against the imperialist carve-up of the territories of the former Soviet Union—and yet another catastrophic destruction of living standards as well as bloodletting that will inevitably accompany it—cannot be waged on a national basis. The only realistic alternative lies in the perspective of the world Trotskyist movement, the International Committee of the Fourth International, for the independent political mobilization and international unification of the working class in the struggle to put an end to capitalism and reorganize economic and social life on socialist foundations.



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