

CIA director in Ukraine as Washington steps up threats against Russia

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Seizing upon spreading protests and building occupations in eastern Ukraine in response to February's Western-backed putsch in Kiev, the Obama administration is escalating its accusations, threats and provocations against Russia.

In the clearest sign of intensifying US involvement in the Ukraine crisis, the White House admitted—after vehement denials—that CIA Director John Brennan flew into Kiev over the weekend. Brennan arrived, under a false name, for discussions on how to further exploit the crisis that the US and its allies deliberately triggered by orchestrating the February coup.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov demanded an explanation about the nature of the undercover visit, and deposed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich accused Brennan of ordering a crackdown on protests in the east of the country.

The CIA initially ridiculed these accusations as “completely false.” Yesterday, however, White House spokesman Jay Carney declared: “We don't normally comment on the CIA director's travel, but given the extraordinary circumstances in this case and the false claims being leveled by the Russians at the CIA, we can confirm that the director was in Kiev as part of a trip to Europe.”

Ludicrously, Carney told reporters that “senior level visits of intelligence officials are a standard means of fostering mutually beneficial security cooperation, including US-Russian intelligence collaboration.” He added that “to imply that US officials meeting with their counterparts is anything other than in the same spirit is absurd.”

To claim that Brennan's surreptitious presence in Ukraine was innocent and intended to foster security cooperation with Russia is obviously fatuous. The CIA has a documented record of orchestrating coups, plots and assassinations around the world, including in Indonesia in

1965–66 and Chile in 1973.

Brennan, nominated by Obama to take over as CIA chief after Obama's 2012 re-election, is known for his close involvement in the US occupation of Iraq, the CIA's use of torture against detainees, and US drone assassinations, including of American citizens. He is currently embroiled in a scandal over CIA spying on staff members of a US Senate committee reviewing the agency's program of detention and “enhanced interrogation” under President George W. Bush.

Following Brennan's discussions in Kiev, interim Ukrainian President Oleksandr Turchynov declared that the country was now “at war” with Russia. The head of Ukraine's state security service (SBU), Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, ratcheted up the warnings of violence against the demonstrators now occupying official buildings in at least ten eastern Ukrainian cities—threatening to “annihilate them.”

In another US provocation, the Pentagon accused an unarmed Russian military fighter of repeatedly buzzing a US navy destroyer in the Black Sea. The Pentagon conceded that the USS Donald Cook “was never under threat” from the Su-24 aircraft, which never came closer than a kilometre from the vessel.

Nevertheless, the incident was beaten up into allegations of Russian aggression, highlighting the danger that a single miscalculated incident could spark a catastrophic war. The double standards involved are staggering. Imagine the outcry if Russia sent a warship to the Gulf of Mexico and accused the US of a provocation when a US jet conducted reconnaissance flights over the vessel!

Without offering any evidence, Washington is stepping up its allegations that President Vladimir Putin's government is invading Ukraine by supposedly orchestrating the widespread popular resistance to the far-right regime installed in Kiev.

President Barack Obama yesterday rebuffed a phone

call from Putin, initiated by the Russian president, in which Putin appealed to Obama to prevail upon the unelected Kiev regime to drop its plans to launch a bloody crackdown on the protests.

According to the White House account of the phone conversation, Obama issued a series of demands to Putin, including that all “irregular forces in the country need to lay down their arms” and that Putin “use his influence with these armed, pro-Russian groups to convince them to depart the buildings they have seized.”

These are demands that the US government knows Putin cannot meet. While Moscow has responded to the Ukraine coup by whipping up Russian nationalism, including in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, it is far from exercising control over the building occupations that have erupted.

The protests are driven by deep-seated hostility to the fascistic character of the Kiev regime—recalling bitter memories of the reign of terror carried out by Nazi collaborators in Ukraine during World War II. The opposition has been further stoked by the regime’s proclaimed abolition of Russian as an official language, the brutal austerity measures it is imposing to qualify for an International Monetary Fund bailout package, and its pact with the European Union, which will inevitably mean the closure of factories and mines throughout eastern Ukraine.

Although the Kiev regime, which relies heavily on fascist Right Sector forces, did not attempt to enforce its Monday 9 a.m. local time deadline for occupiers to leave government buildings—its second such postponement in three days—it continued its declarations of intent to carry out a full-scale “anti-terrorist operation.”

Defying this ultimatum, occupations of administrative and police headquarters, and in some cases wider areas of towns, spread on Monday. Horlivka, with a population of about 300,000, became the latest city where activists have taken over key buildings, demanding autonomy from the Kiev regime.

Having fomented a right-wing coup in Kiev, spearheaded by fascist militias, the US, Germany and their allies are now utilising the predictable response of people throughout Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine to accuse Russia of intervening in a similar manner.

US Vice President Joe Biden is being sent to Kiev next week to underscore Washington’s backing for the Kiev regime, amid indications of preparations for more open military intervention.

- Ukraine’s acting president, Oleksandr Turchynov, appealed for a deployment of UN troops to eastern

Ukraine—a mobilisation that would be a vehicle for Western military forces.

- Reuters reported yesterday that Thomas Shannon, a senior adviser to US Secretary of State John Kerry, said providing arms to Ukrainian forces was “obviously” being “looked at as an option.”

- In an interview with the Associated Press, NATO’s European commander, US Air Force General Philip Breedlove, said plans to ensure “stability” in Europe could involve the deployment of American troops. NATO’s 28 member countries reportedly asked Breedlove to have a plan ready by early next week.

Moscow has agreed to meet with representatives of the Kiev regime, as well as the US and the EU, in Geneva on Thursday to discuss the crisis. But the White House has already publicly dismissed the prospect of any resolution emerging from the talks.

Belligerent editorials in the US media have declared that war with Russia is almost unavoidable, and demanded that the Obama administration end all pretence of seeking a diplomatic solution. Yesterday’s *Washington Post* editorial declared: “It may be too late to prevent war in eastern Ukraine.”

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialised that “the Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine may already be underway,” adding that “the US ought to drop its illusion that Mr. Putin is interested in diplomacy.” Putin’s real goal, it alleged “is to redraw the postwar map of Europe to Russia’s advantage, with faux diplomacy if he can, by force if necessary.”

This turns reality on its head. It is US imperialism and its partners that are seeking to redraw the European map, strategically and militarily encircling Russia, with the ultimate aim of dismembering the Russian Federation in order to assert unchallenged hegemony over the Eurasian landmass.



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