

# Right-wing Ukrainian government celebrates Independence Day

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Monday marked 24 years since Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union. The right-wing regime in Kiev celebrated the country's Independence Day with highly-scripted militaristic parades and speeches meant to promote nationalist sentiment.

The day's jingoistic events were used to press for the continuation of the war against Russian-backed separatists in the eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, which has cost the lives of over 6,900 Ukrainian citizens and devastated the country's economy.

US President Barack Obama marked the day by sending friendly greetings to the puppet regime in Kiev which was installed last year in a fascist-spearheaded coup backed by the United States and Germany.

"Our two nations are working together to support and protect the right of the Ukrainian people to freely choose their own way forward," Obama said. "At this time, when you are working to carry out crucial reforms despite the aggression by Russia to the east and the occupation of the Crimea, the United States will remain consistent in its support of Ukraine."

Speaking before a military parade of 2,000 Ukrainian soldiers, President Petro Poroshenko stated, "We must get through the 25th year of independence as if we were on thin ice. We must understand that the smallest misstep could be fatal. The war for independence is still ongoing."

In his speech on Kiev's Maidan square and later through his official Twitter account, Poroshenko also compared the separatist controlled Donbass region to the evil kingdom "Mordor" in JRR Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" books.

A number of soldiers in the parade wore traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts, which are typically worn by Ukrainian nationalists. In a fascistic ritual,

Poroshenko held a Ukrainian military flag while soldiers knelt before him and kissed the flag.

While military vehicles were not included in the Kiev parade as in last year's celebration, Poroshenko used the occasion to inform the public that were not present as they had been sent to the east.

"The day before yesterday we sent a large party, the biggest in the history of Ukraine, of tanks, armored personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles, cars, howitzers, anti-aircraft missile systems and artillery," Poroshenko announced. He boasted further that, "By the end of the current year the Ukrainian Armed Forces will have more than three hundred armored vehicles, four hundred cars, and 30 thousand rockets and ammunition."

Poroshenko also used his speech to cynically defend the government's policy of conscription which is despised and has been widely resisted by the Ukrainian working class who are forced to serve in military units that are often deployed to the Donbass region.

"We are for peace, but we are not pacifists" he stated facetiously. "Therefore, we will increase spending on the armed forces to increase the pay of soldiers and strengthen the contract component of the army. However, I cannot promise the abolition of conscription and the absence of new waves of mobilization. In conditions of aggression, a one-hundred percent contract army cannot exist. History knows of no such examples."

In an attempt to whip up war fever in the face of a supposed Russian invasion, Poroshenko accused Russia of supplying the separatists with arms and claimed that Russia had moved 50,000 troops towards Ukraine's eastern border.

Despite constant references to "democracy" and "freedom" in his speech, Poroshenko made no

reference to the increasing crackdown and censorship of Russian language films and literature being brought into or shown in the country and the growing database of supposedly “anti-Ukrainian” figures who are now banned from entering the country.

Poroshenko’s speech was also a warning to the Ukrainian working-class that the deplorable social and economic conditions produced by the imperialist war would also continue. According to the IMF, in the past year production in Ukraine’s agricultural sector has fallen by 9.3 percent, while industrial output has fallen by 20.5 percent. Exports have fallen by 35.4 percent and the country’s GDP is expected to fall by 9 percent in 2015.

The statements by Poroshenko make clear that the imperialist backed right-wing regime in Kiev has nothing to offer the Ukrainian working class other than bankrupt nationalism, impoverishment, and war.

After Monday’s events, Poroshenko traveled to Berlin for a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande to discuss the deteriorating Minsk Protocol cease fire agreement between Russia and Ukraine. Shelling last week between government forces and separatist forces resulted in the deaths of at least nine people.

In Donetsk, citizens and local government officials reported overnight shelling coming from Ukrainian government forces. In contrast to the pro-war celebration held in Kiev, Donetsk residents rallied to demand an end to the shelling and held signs pointing out that the city had become a virtual war prison in supposedly independent Ukraine.



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