

**THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION CHALLENGES EUROPE:
ON THE HORNS OF A POTENTIAL DILEMMA**

This Sunday (March 16), a Referendum will be held in The Crimea. It is aimed at allowing the estimated 2.50 million residents of the sovereign territory of Ukraine to make a determination as to whether or not to remain as an integral part of the country or to become part of The Russian Federation.

It is questionable as to whether or not this Referendum is legal or that the results would be binding since it has not been endorsed by the Government of Ukraine, but only by an official of The Crimea, an official who has no legal standing in Kiev, the Capital City of Ukraine.

In due course, however, the matter of the legality of the Referendum may well turn out to be a moot point.

The Crimea Referendum, as history is bound to name it in time, is, pretty much, a waste of time, in any case, because the delicate situation in The Crimea, today, as far as The Russian Federation is concerned, is a fait accompli.

The Russian Federation, already, has control over most of the important real estate of the 10,100 square-mile, Ukrainian territory and of its civilian population, about 58 percent of which hold Russian passports.

Thus far, nobody seems to have bothered to ask the important question as to how about 1.50 million, Crimean residents managed to obtain their Russian passports.

After all, one would have thought that Ukrainian citizens would hold Ukrainian passports when wanting to travel outside their country's borders.

But it is fact that many, if not most, Russian-speaking, Crimean residents hold passports, issued by The Russian Federation.

One is reminded of the outbursts of a former, Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Mr Volodymyr Ohryzko, who, in September of 2008, complained bitterly and vociferously when he was shown evidence that The Russia Federation was giving out passports to any and all of the Russian-speaking population of The Crimea – with or without these people, requesting the passports.

Foreign Minister Ohryzko publicly stated that such activity was '*a real problem*' in view of the fact that The Russia Federation had gone on record, stating that its policy was to protect Russian citizens where-ever they might be and, if needs be such, by military intervention.

On April 27, 2010, the Ukrainian Parliament entered into a treaty with Russia that extended the country's lease on the Russian naval base, stationed at the Crimean Port of Sevastopol, until 2042.

That treaty was, later, ratified by the Russian State Duma.

The Crimea is, officially, called The Autonomous Republic of Crimea. It is an autonomous parliamentary republic within Ukraine and it is governed by the Constitution of The Crimea in accordance with the laws of Ukraine.

This has been the situation since the collapse of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991.

The situation in The Crimea, today, is very fluid, changing hour by hour.

Last Sunday, Russian ‘invasion?’ forces, that were known to number at least 30,000, heavily armed soldiers, sealed off another Ukrainian-Government, military airport in The Crimea.

About 80 Russian soldiers blocked the entrance to the airport near the village of Saki. Machine-gun installations were promptly established along the landing strip of the airport.

Russian soldiers had, already, taken over strategic parts of The Crimea, including The Belbek Military Airport and the main civilian airport at Simferopol.

There have, so far, been no reports of Ukrainian forces, trying to resist the Russian troops or of trying to prevent the continued build-up of the Russian invasion force.

In fact, the interim Government of Ukraine is, steadfastly, trying to prevent an escalation of the present, very volatile situation in The Crimea because, inter alia, Ukraine would definitely come off second best in any armed conflict with its Russian neighbour.

History Repeats Itself

The actions of the Government of The Russian Federation take one back to The Anschluss of March 12, 1938, when Austria was annexed by the German Third Reich.

The Anschluss Österreichs, as it came to be called, had been several years in the making by supporters of both German and Austrian key figures, some being Nazis and some being non-Nazis.

The call had gone out, some time in the months, preceding the Anschluss Österreichs:

‘Heim ins Reich’ – Home in (our) Realm.

Nazi Germany, prior to the Anschluss Österreichs, had been providing support for Austrian Nazis when asked so to do.

The dye had been cast long before March 12, 1938, of that there was no question.

Austria’s Chancellor of 1938 was Mr Kurt Schuschnigg who attempted to hold a referendum on the matter of the proposed, German annexation of his country, but, as history has recorded, he was facing an uphill battle despite his firm (or prayed) belief that the referendum would result in Austria, maintaining its autonomy from Germany.

Just prior to the referendum, taking place, there was a well-planned coup d’état by the Austrian Nazi Party.

And the referendum had to be cancelled.

The Wehrmacht entered Austria by ‘invitation’, thus enforcing the Anschluss Österreichs.

In April 1938, a plebiscite was held to ratify the fait accompli: The vote was 99.7561 percent in favour of the Anschluss Österreichs.

The Anschluss Österreichs was part of the master plan of Chancellor Adolf Hitler (1933-1945) to create a Greater German Reich.

The plan included, among other things, that all ethnic Germans and all the lands and territories that Germany had lost after World War I (1914-1918) would be returned and become part of the Third Reich.

After the Anschluss Österreichs, Chancellor Hitler turned his attentions to Czechoslovakia.

The Munich Agreement of September 1938 gave the Third Reich control of the industrial Sudetenland – northern, southwest, and western areas of Czechoslovakia that were inhabited mostly by German-speaking peoples, specifically the border districts of Bohemia, Moravia, and those parts of Silesia, located within Czechoslovakia.

The industrial Sudetenland was inhabited, mainly, by ethnic Germans so that Chancellor Hitler could call upon this fact as being the ratio decidendi for his country's demands.

Chancellor Adolf Hitler went on record, stating:

'The German Reich is no long willing to tolerate the suppression of 10 million Germans across its borders.'

He was referring, directly, to the perceived situation in Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Déjà vu?

The Russian Bear

People, to this day, have not forgotten the acts of barbarism of Germany from 1938 until 1945, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 50 million people, worldwide, with an estimated 20 million people, being killed in The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, alone.

(The confirmed figure of the number of people that were killed in this horrible war has never been documented in full because many hapless civilians died after the war from their wounds or due to prolonged malnutrition. World War II came to an end in Europe on May 8, 1945 [V-E Day] and, in Japan, on August 14, 1945 [V-J Day].)

The barbaric acts of aggression by the hateful regime of Adolf Hitler and his henchmen with the able assistance of the military forces of The Empire of Japan, whose hereditary leader was Emperor Showa, as he was called in Japan, but known in the Western World as Emperor Hirohito, have not faded into obscurity.

Never shall those acts be forgotten; never shall the people, responsible for those acts, be forgiven.

This is especially true with regard to the Jews of the world because this religious sect lost an estimated six million, men, women and children when Nazi Germany determined to cleanse Europe of the scourge of the Jews and the roaming gypsies, part of what Germany called the *'untermenschen'*.

The term, *'untermenschen'*, became infamous as the Nazis applied it in describing what they believed were inferior peoples, included in that term were, inter alia, Communists, Bolsheviks, Jews, gypsies, Slavic peoples, including Poles, Serbs, Belarusians, Russians, and Rusyns.

The Western World of today fears a revival of the horrors that took place between 1938 and 1945 because many political analysts point to the recent acts of aggression by The Russian Federation, the Government of which is led by its President, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, formerly a Lieutenant Colonel in the **KGB** – **Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti** – the main security agency for the USSR from 1954 until 1991.

As at today's date, the Russian troops that have taken control over large swaths of The Crimea, troops numbering in excess of 30,000, well-armed men, have not been known to have intentionally killed any Ukrainians, but the probability is high that they would not hesitate *'to defend'* themselves and shoot to kill if needs be such.

Many of the Russian-speaking residents of The Crimea have dubbed these Russian troops as their heroes who have come to rescue them from the terrible affliction of the Ukrainian Government.

The former President of Ukraine, Mr Viktor Yanukovych, who is, presently, obtaining sanctuary in The Russian Federation, had implored President Putin to send in Russian troops to put down what he termed the illegal governmental regime of Ukraine.

President Putin acquiesced to the repeated entreaties, made by Mr Viktor Yanukovych.

Last Tuesday, Mr Viktor Yanukovych, in a telecast, promised to return to Kiev in the role of the democratically elected President of the country and to take charge of the present chaotic situation.

He swore to evict the '*illegal*' team of amateurs that had claimed to have replaced him.

With Mr Viktor Yanukovych, supported by the well-armed troops of The Russian Federation, he is, quite likely, to feel somewhat secure in his position, but, as the maxim goes, one who sits near the man, holding the sword, can be cut, also.

One is, once more, reminded of the Anschluss Österreichs of March 12, 1938, when the Wehrmacht entered Austria, '*by invitation*', in order to enforce the Anschluss Österreichs that was ratified about one month after the Wehrmacht's triumphant entrance.

The Threat to European Order

The violation of Ukraine's sovereign territory by troops of The Russian Federation is, perhaps, the biggest threat to the European order since the early 1960s.

Russia is a powerhouse and its known military might, excluding male and female reservists, is well appreciated to be vast, probably much larger and better equipped than any other single nation of today.

With its military might, including a large cache of weapons of mass destruction, nobody wants a shooting war with The Russian Federation.

It is quite likely that this is the '*trump card*' that President Putin thinks that he holds, today.

He may well be correct – sadly.

Clearly, The Russian Federation must be stopped in its attempts to grab The Crimea and make it an integral part of the Russian '*Bear*'.

Similarly, the grand plan of President Putin must be thwarted ... or the civilised world might well have to suffer the terrible consequences of non prosecution – he who does not prosecute.

Again, looking back at historical events of pith and moment, one recalls the words of that famous author of the 20th Century, H. G. Wells, who is credited with suggesting that World War I would be the war that will end war.

The acts of The Russian Federation, today, are highly unlikely to end with The Crimea: If President Putin can be successful in bringing The Crimea into his '*empire*' – which, at this point, seems inevitably – he may well be encouraged to engage in similar acts in other parts of Ukraine and, perhaps, elsewhere in Europe.

There are known to be many parts of Ukraine with large, Russian-speaking populations and, since The Russian Federation is one of Ukraine's largest, single customers, pressure could be brought to bear on these parts with suggestions to the population that it would be in their best interests to become part of the expanding Russian empire of President Putin.

The first step for such a plan to succeed, however, must be to reinstate the former President, Mr Viktor Yanukovych, to power.

Once this is accomplished, upon taking up the reins of government, President-elect Viktor Yanukovich will, no doubt, oust – by force if necessary – the existing members of the Interim Government, who, as far as President Putin is concerned, must be viewed as amateur, radical politicians who are quite unlikely to be able to tackle the many problems, facing the country.

In short, therefore, in a similar fashion to the execution of Nazi Germany, annexing Austria under the pretext of Anschluss Österreichs, The Russian Federation will try to execute a plan to restore Ukraine to the bosom of *'Mother Russia'*.

What About Belarus?

Will Belarus be the next target in President Putin's master plan?

After all, this country's former name was The Socialist Soviet Republic of Byelorussia and it was one of the founding members of the USSR. Upon the establishment of the USSR, the name of the country was changed to **Byelorussia Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR)**.

The population of this small country is about 9.30 million people, of which number, about 8.30 percent, or about 772,000, are Russians.

Although about 84 percent of the total population is described as being Belarusians, one must remember, also, that, etymologically, Belarusians were, at one time, known as *'White Russians'*.

In fact, in March 2007, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in her speech to the European Council Summit, even referred to Belarus as *'Weißrussland'* – White Russia.

Compared with Ukraine, Belarus would be somewhat of a walkover for President Putin.

He just might like to give it a try if he can pull off his plan, smoothly, to annex The Crimea in its entirety.

What Can Europe Do?

There has been, of late, a great deal of talk of imposing sanctions on The Russian Federation in order to weaken its, already, fragile economy and, by so doing, bring President Putin to heel.

If anything, sanctions could well spawn further firm determinations from President Putin.

Further, the sanctions could well result in part of the master plan of this former, very senior official of the KGB, being executed sooner rather than (originally being planned for) later.

The transition from communism to a form of capitalism, President Putin has, without argument, restored stability to the country of his birth.

Rising crude-oil prices, due in large part to the chaotic situations in the Middle East, played right into President Putin's plans for the economy of The Russian Federation: Higher oil prices meant much more money to be added to the Russian coffers.

The increase in the price of gold that followed on from the near-record price of crude oil on international markets, also put more money into the Russian treasury.

In addition, President Putin made certain that The Russian Federation had all the distinguishing characteristics for international companies to consider, setting up shop in the country where income tax was an across-the-board level of 13 percent.

President Putin's popularity rose as more and more Russians saw their incomes rise.

Higher disposable incomes resulted in Russian High Streets, ringing to the sounds of rubles, being spent, willy-nilly.

During the financial crises of 2008 and 2009, higher Russian Government spending managed, to a great extent, in buttressing the living standards of the average, man-in-the-street, throughout the country.

Of late, there has been considerable economic trouble in the country, with the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** Growth Rate, falling precipitously, Year-On-Year, to a negative 11.20 percent in respect of the 2013 calendar year, according to statistics, compiled by The World Bank, a United Nations's international financial institution.

Early this month, The Central Bank of Russia raised interest rates by 1.50 percentage points, stating that the move was due to the increased risk to financial stability and inflation.

In February, Russia's Annual Inflation Rate rose to 6.20 percent, up about 1.64 percentage points, compared with January's statistic.

All this points to President Putin, considering employing the '*Common Enemy Syndrome*' to those countries that do not pay homage to this, the most-senior politician of The Russian Federation.

The Common Enemy Syndrome is, simply put, that one may take whatever action appears to be in the best interests of the doer in any way that is deemed necessary, fitting and proper with regard to the prevailing circumstances without being responsible for any liability that might be forthcoming from the remedial actions of the doer, who is deemed to have acted in good faith.

Applying the Common Enemy Syndrome to President Putin, an action by him, or on his express orders, that results, let us say, in expanding the borders of The Russian Federation and, thereby, expanding, in part, the economy of the country, in spite of the cost, perhaps to real property of the residents of the country that has just become an integral part of The Russian Federation, the end will, always, justify the means.

President Barack Hussein Obama has, already, stubbed his toe at least once, during his latest attempts to negotiate with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and so it might behoove the leader of the largest, single economy of the world to think very carefully of the likely consequences of any acts that the United States of America may be planning in order to punish The Russian Federation in respect of that country's act of aggression in The Crimea.

Lack of careful planning by the US could well lead to a catastrophic backlash, regardless of the noble intentions of the ill-informed leaders of The Land of The Free and The Home of Brave.

This is, certainly, not the time to shoot first and ask questions later.

The Government of Ukraine had, as at December 31, 2010, approximately 134,000 army, navy and air-force personnel on active service, with about 73,000 soldiers in the army.

Today, it is quite likely that these numbers have been reduced, very materially, due in part to financial restrictions.

Against well-trained Russian troops, Ukraine would be powerless.

The Interim Government of Ukraine will not permit its military personnel to resist the forces of The Russian Federation, now patrolling The Crimea, because it would lead to a bloodbath for Ukrainian soldiers.

This is not the time to take sabers out of their scabbards or to attempt to impose sanctions that may have the reverse of a desired effect, but to keep a cool head and try to find a political solution to the situation that has been forced upon the world by President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of The Russian Federation.

It is more than likely that President Putin, also, is not very interested to learn how his military forces would fare against another country's because such a conflict would lead to both sides, holding onto the short end of the stick.

It is widely known and appreciated that only fools determine to go to court.

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