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From the Black Sea to the East Med, do not poke The Russian Bear

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8-10 minutes

By Pepe Escobar, posted with the author's permission and cross-posted with The Cradle.

This is what happens when a bunch of ragged hyenas, jackals and tiny rodents poke The Bear: a new geopolitical order is born in breathtaking speed.

From a dramatic meeting of the Russian Security Council to a history lesson delivered by President Putin and the subsequent [birth of the Baby Twins](#) – the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk – all the way to their appeal to President Putin to intervene militarily to expel the NATO-backed Ukrainian bombing-and-shelling forces from Donbass, it was a seamless process.

The (nuclear) straw that (nearly) broke the Bear's back – and forced its paws to pounce – was Zelensky the Comedian, back from the Russophobia-drenched Munich Security Conference where he was hailed like a Messiah, saying that the 1994 Budapest memorandum should be revised and Ukraine should be nuclear-rearmed.

That would be the equivalent of a nuclear Mexico south of the Hegemon.

Putin immediately turned Responsibility to Protect (R2P) upside down: an American concept invented to launch wars in MENA (remember Libya?) was retrofitted to stop a slow-motion genocide in Donbass.

First came the recognition of the Baby Twins – Putin’s most important foreign policy decision since going to Syria in 2015. That was the preamble for the next game-changer: a “special military operation (...) aimed at demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine”, as Putin defined it.

Up to the last minute, the Kremlin was trying to rely on diplomacy, explaining to Kiev the necessary imperatives to prevent heavy metal thunder: recognition of Crimea as Russian; abandon any plans to join NATO; negotiate directly with the Baby Twins – an anathema for the Americans since 2015; finally, demilitarize and declare Ukraine as neutral.

Kiev’s handlers, predictably, would never accept the package – as they didn’t accept the Master Package that really matters: the Russian demand for “indivisible security”.

The sequence, then, became inevitable. In a flash, all Ukrainian forces between the so-called line of contact and the original borders of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts were boxed in as the occupying force of territories of two Russian allies that Moscow had just sworn to protect.

So it was Get Out – Or Else. “Or else” came as rolling thunder: the Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Defense were not bluffing. Timed to the end of Putin’s speech announcing the operation, the Russians decapitated with precision missiles everything that mattered in terms of the Ukrainian military in just one hour: Air Force, Navy, airfields, bridges, command and control centers, the whole Turkish Bayraktar drone fleet.

And it was not only Russian raw power. It was the artillery of one of the Baby Twins, the DPR, that hit the HQ of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Donbass, which actually housed the entire Ukrainian military command. This means that the Ukrainian General Staff instantly lost control of all its troops.

This was Shock and Awe against Iraq, 19 years ago, in reverse: not for conquest, not as a prelude for an invasion and occupation. The political-military leadership in Kiev did not even have time to declare war. They froze. Demoralized troops started deserting. Total defeat – in one hour.

The water supply to Crimea was instantly re-established.

Humanitarian corridors were set up for the deserters.

“Remnants” now include mostly surviving Azov batallion Nazis, mercenaries trained by the usual Blackwater/Academi suspects, and a bunch of Salafi-jihadis.

Predictably, Western corporate media has already gone totally berserk branding it as the much-awaited Russian “invasion”. A reminder: when Israel routinely bombs Syria and when the House of One Saudi routinely bombs Yemeni civilians, there is never any peep in NATOstan media.

As it stands, realpolitik spells out a possible endgame (see Donetsk’s head, Denis Pushilin: “The special operation in Donbass will soon be over and all the cities will be liberated.”)

We could soon witness the birth of an independent Novorossiya – east of the Dnieper, south along Sea of Azov/Black Sea, the way it was when attached to Ukraine by Lenin in 1922. But now totally aligned with Russia, and providing a land bridge to Transnistria.

Ukraine, of course, would lose any access to the Black Sea.

History loves playing tricks: what was a “gift” to Ukraine in 1922

may become a parting gift a hundred years later.

It's creative destruction time

It will be fascinating to watch what Prof. Sergey Karaganov masterfully described, in detail, as the new Putin doctrine of [constructive destruction](#) , and how it will interconnect with West Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean and further on down the Global South road.

President Erdogan, the ceremonial NATO Sultan, branded the recognition of the Baby Twins as “unacceptable”. No wonder: that definitely smashed all his elaborate plans to pose as privileged mediator between Moscow and Kiev during Putin’s upcoming visit to Ankara. The Kremlin – as well as the Foreign Ministry – don’t waste time talking to NATO minions.

Lavrov, for his part, had a recent, very [productive](#) entente with Syrian Foreign Minister Faysal Mekdad. Russia, this past weekend, has staged a spectacular [strategic missile display](#), hypersonic and otherwise, featuring Khinzal, Zircon, Kalibr, Yars ICBMs, Iskander and Sineva – irony of ironies, in synch with the Russophobia-fest in Munich. In parallel, Russian Navy ships of the Pacific, Northern and Black Sea fleets performed a series of submarine search drills in the Mediterranean.

The Putin doctrine privileges the asymmetrical – and that applies to the near abroad and beyond. Putin’s body language, in his last two crucial interventions, spell out nearly maximum exasperation. As in realizing, not auspiciously, but rather in resignation, that the only language those neo-con and “humanitarian” imperialist psychos in the Beltway understand is heavy meal thunder (they are definitely deaf, dumb and blind to History, Geography and Diplomacy, for that matter. No to mention they never accepted their defeat in Syria.)

So we can always game the Russian military, for instance, imposing a no-fly zone in Syria to conduct a series of visits by Mr. Khinzal not only to the Turk-protected shady jihadist umbrella in Idlib but also the jihadists protected by the Americans in Al-Tanf base, near the Syria-Jordan border. After all these specimens are all NATO proxies.

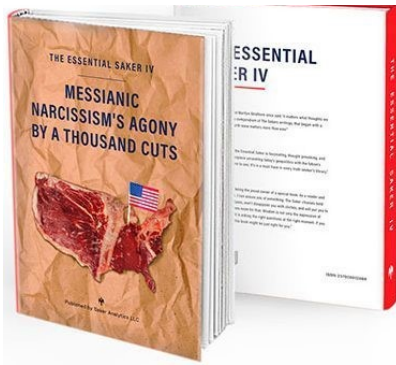
The United States government barks non-stop about “territorial sovereignty”. So let’s game the Kremlin asking the White House for a road map on getting out of Syria: after all the Americans are illegally occupying a section of Syrian territory and most of all adding extra disaster to the Syrian economy by stealing their oil.

NATO’s stultifying Stoltenberg has announced the alliance is dusting off its “defense plans”: that may include little more than hide behind their expensive Brussels desks. They are as inconsequential in the Black Sea as in the East Med – as the Empire remains quite vulnerable in Syria.

There are now four Russian TU-22M3 strategic bombers in Hymeimim base, each capable of carrying three S-32 anti-ship missiles that fly at supersonic Mach 4.3 with a range of 1,000 km. No Aegis system is able to handle them.

Russia in Syria also has stationed a few Mig-31Ks in Latakia equipped with hypersonic Khinzals – more than enough to sink any kind of US surface group, including aircraft carriers, in the East Med. The US has no air defense mechanism whatsoever with even a minimal chance of intercepting them.

So the rules have changed. Drastically. The Hegemon is naked. The new deal starts with turning the post-Cold War set-up in Eastern Europe completely upside down. The East Med will be next. The Bear is back, baby. Hear him roar.



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