Letter to the American People on Ukraine

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In this difficult hour of serious trouble on our Western borders, I would like to address the American people in order to help you understand better the positions of our Russian patriots which are shared by the majority of our society.

Difference Between the two Meanings of Being American (In the Russian View)

1. We distinguish between two different things: the American people and the American political elite. We sincerely love the first and we profoundly hate the second.

2. The American people has its own traditions, habits, values, ideals, options and beliefs that are their own. These grant to everybody the right to be different, to choose freely, to be what one wants to be and can be or become. It is wonderful feature. It gives strength and pride, self-esteem and assurance. We Russians admire that.

3. But the American political elite, above all on an international level, are and act quite contrary to these values. They insist on conformity and regard the American way of life as something universal and obligatory. They deny other people the right to difference, they impose on everybody the standards of so called “democracy”, “liberalism”, “human rights” and so on that have in many cases nothing to do with the set of values shared by the non-Western or simply not North-American society. It is an obvious contradiction with inner ideals and standards of America. Nationally the right to difference is assured, internationally it is denied. So we think that something is wrong with the American political elite and their double standards. Where habits became the norms and contradictions are taken for logic. We cannot understand it, nor can we accept it: it seems that the American political elite is not American at all.

4. So here is the contradiction: the American people are essentially good, but the American elite is essentially bad. What we feel regarding the American elite should not be applied to the American people and vise versa.

5. Because of this paradox it is not so easy for a Russian to express correctly his attitude towards the USA. We can say we love it, we can say we hate it – because both are true. But it is not easy to always express this distinction clearly. It creates many misunderstandings. But if you want to know what Russians really think about the USA you should always keep in mind this remark. It is easy to manipulate this semantic duality and interpret anti-Americanism of Russians in an improper sense. But with these clarifications in mind all that you hear from us will be much better understood.

A Short Survey of Russian History

1. The American Nation was born with capitalism. It didn’t exist in the Middle Ages. The ancestors of Americans had not experienced an American Middle Age, but a European one. So that is a feature of America. Maybe that’s the reason why Americans sincerely think that Russian Nation was born with communism, with the Soviet Union. But that is a total misconception. We are much older than that. The Soviet period was just a short epoch in our long history. We existed before the Soviet Union and we are existing after the Soviet Union. So in order to understand Russians (and Ukrainians as well) you should take into consideration our past.

2. Russians consider Ukraine as being part of the Greater Russia. That was historically so – not by the conquest, but by the genesis of Russian Statehood that started precisely in Kiev. Around Kiev our people and our State were constructed in the IX century. It is our center, our first beloved capital. Later in the XII-XIII centuries different parts of Kievian Russia were more or less independent with two main rivals – the Western principalities Galitsia and Wolyn and the Eastern principality of Vladimir (which later became Moscow) existing. All of these areas were populated by the same nation, Eastern Slavs, all of whom were Orthodox Christian. But the princes of the West were more engaged in European politics and they had more direct contact with Western Christianity and relatively less with the Eastern branches. The title of Great Princes was held in the East by royalty who were considered the masters of the whole of Russia (not always de facto but de jure). In the Mongol period the West as well as the East of our Russian principalities were held under the Golden Horde. Eastern Russia was more or less solid and its power grew around the new capital Moscow. After the fall of the Tartars the rule of the Moscow principality affirmed itself as a regional hegemon that was confirmed by the fall of Byzantine Empire. Hence the doctrine of Moscow as the Third Rome.

The destiny of the Western area was quite different. It was incorporated first in a Lithuanian State that later became Polish. The Orthodox western Russians we put under Catholic rule. The earlier main principalities – Galitsia and Wolyn were fragmented and have lost any trace of independence. Some parts were under Lithuania, others under Austria and Hungary, a third belonged to Romania. But all that concerns us now is only the Right-Bank of modern Ukraine. The Left Bank was peopled by Cossacks – the nomad population common to the all lands of Novorossia, space that include Eastern and South-Eastern Ukraine and South Western Russia. Crimea was at that time under Ottoman rule.

3. The growth of the Moscowit Empire integrated first all the Cossack lands (Novorossia) and little by little other territories peopled by Western Russians liberating them from the Poles and Germans. The Moscowit princes believed that they were restoring Old Russia, Kievan Russia uniting all Orthodox Slavs – Eastern and Western in this unique Kingdom.

4. During the XVIII – XIX century the unification of the Western Russian lands was accomplished and in many battles the Moscowit Emperors had finally taken Crimea from the Ottoman Turks.

5. In WWI the Germans conquered the Western Russian lands. It didn’t last long. After that came the October Revolution and the Empire was split into many parts with new nations being born into existence. There was an attempt to construct a Ukrainian nation by different people – Petlyura, Makhno and Levitsky who tried to found three ephemeral States. These States were attacked by Whites and Reds and fought among themselves. Finally the Bolsheviks restored the lands of the Tsarist Empire and proclaimed the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union then artificially created the Ukrainian Republic consisting of Western Russia (Galitsia, Wolyn) and Southern Russia (Novorossia). Later in the 1960′s to that the Republic of Crimea was added. So in this Republic were united three main ethnic groups: Western Russians, the descendants of the Galitsia / Wolyn principalities; the Cossacks / Great Russian population of Novorossia; the Crimea peopled by Great Russians and the rest of the pre-Russian Tartars. This Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was created by the Bolsheviks and was the origin of modern Ukraine. This Ukraine declared independence in 1991 after the split of the USSR. More than that the declaration of independence provoked this split.

6. So modern Ukrainians have three lines of descent – Western Russian, Cossacks, Great Russian and a small Tartar minority in the Crimea.

Ukrainian Identity and the two Geopolitical Options

1. The contradiction of Ukraine consists in the multiplicity of identities. Just after the declaration of the new state – the modern Ukraine in 1991 – the question of pan-Ukrainian identity arose. Such a State and nation never existed in history. So the nation had to be constructed. But the three main identities were very different. Crimea populated by Greater Russians along with most parts of Novorossia which were clearly attracted to the Russian Federation. The Western Russians claimed to be the core of a very specific “Ukrainian nation” that they imagined in order to serve their cause. The Western Russians who partly supported Hitler in WWII (Bandera, Shukhevich) possessed and still possess strong ethnic identity where the hatred toward Great Russians (as well as toward Poles to a lesser scale) plays a central role in this identity. This can be traced to the past rivalry of the two Russian feudal principalities projected onto imperial times and followed by Stalin’s purges. These purges were directed against all ethnic groups, but Western Russians read it as the revenge of the Great Russians on them (Stalin was Georgian and the Bolsheviks were internationalists). So the chosen identity of the newly created State of Ukraine was exclusively Western Russian (purely Galitsia / Wolyn style) with no place for a Novorossia and Great Russian identity.

2. This particularity was expressed in two opposite geopolitical options: Western or Eastern, Europe or Russia. The Western lands of Ukraine were in favor of European integration, the Eastern and Crimea in favor of strengthening relations with Russia. The men from Galtsya were dominant in the political elite presenting a Ukraine with only one identity – a Western one – and denying any attempt of the South and East to express their own vision. In the Western Ukraine anti-sovietism was deeply rooted as well as certain complaisance with the ideas of Bandera and Shukhevich who were considered as national heroes of a new Ukraine. The hatred toward Great Russians was dominant and all anti-Russian xenophobic rhetoric hailed.

3. In the East and South soviet values were still solid and Great Russian identity was in turn the overwhelming feeling. But the East and South were passive and their political power was limited. Still the population regularly expressed their choice giving their votes to pro-Russian or at least not so openly Russo-phobic or pro-Western politicians.

4. The challenge for Ukrainian politicians therefore was how to keep this contradictory society together always balancing between these two opposite parts. Each part demanded completely irreconcilable choices. The Westerners insisted on a European direction, Easterners and Southerners on a Russian one. All of the Presidents of the new Ukraine were unpopular, almost to the point of being hated precisely because they were absolutely unable to resolve this problem that had no solution at all. If you please one half of the population immediately you are hated by the other half. In this situation Westerners were more active and vigorous and partly succeeded in imposing their version of a pan-Ukrainian identity on all of the political space of the country – with the considerable help of Western Europe and above all the USA.

Events and Their Meaning

1. Now we have approached the present crisis. The Orange revolution of 2004 was made by Westerners who challenged the legal victory of Victor Yanukovitch who was considered the candidate of the East. A Third round of elections (against all democratic norms) was revolutionary imposed in order to give the power to the Western candidate (Yustchenko). Four years later new elections gave the Western President only 4% of the votes and the Eastern candidate Yanukovitch was elected. This time his victory was so obvious that nobody could challenge it.

2. Yanukovitch led the politics of balance. He was not really pro-Russian but didn’t respond to all demands of the West either. He was not very lucky and effective, trying to trick Putin and Obama, disappointing both as well as Ukrainians of any side. He was an opportunist without a real integral strategy, which was almost impossible to develop in a society with a split personality and a split identity. He reacted more than acted.

3. Next, when he made a hesitating and reluctant step toward Russia, abstaining from signing the preparation Treaty of a distant entrance in EU, the opposition (Westerns) revolted. That was the reason Maidan was founded. The revolt was initially that of the West against the East and South. So its russophobic and Nazi nostalgic features are essential to its existence.

4. The opposition received huge support from the Western countries – above all from the USA. The role of America in all these events was decisive and the will to overthrow a pro-Russian President was shown by American representatives to be firm and strong. Now the fact that snipers who killed most of victims in the rioting were not those of Yanukovitch is exposed. It is clear that they were part of the USA’s plan for revolution in the Ukraine and part of a plot to escalate the conflict.

5. The Maidan opposition waged revolution, overthrew Yanukovitch who ran from the country to Russia, and quite illegally seized power in Kiev. There was an illegal putsch that brought the completely illegal junta to power.

6. The first steps of the Westerns after seizure of power were:

\* declaration of wishing entrance into NATO

\* attacks on the use of the Russian language

\* a plea to be accepted in the EU

\* a refusal for Russia to continue to have a Navy base in Sebastopol (Crimea)

\* the appointment of corrupted tycoons as governors in the East and South Ukraine.

7. In response to these things Putin took control over Crimea based on on the decrees of the only legal President of the Ukraine, Yankovitch. He also received from the Russian Parliament the right to deploy in Ukraine the Russian army. Crimean authorities were recognized by Moscow as the representatives of their land and Putin has plainly refused any relations with the Kiev junta.

8. So now we are here.

Short Prognosis

1. Where will this lead? Logically Ukraine as it was during the 23 years of its history has ceased to exist. It is irreversible. Russia has integrated Crimea and declared herself the guarantor of the liberty of the freedom of choice of the East and South of Ukraine (Novorossia).

2. So in the near future there will be the creation of two (at least) independent political entities corresponding to the two identities mentioned earlier. The Western Ukraine with their pro-NATO position and at the same time a ultra-nationalist ideology and Novorossia with a pro-Russian (and pro-Eurasian) orientation (apparently without any ideology, just like Russia herself). The West of Ukraine will protest trying to keep hold over the East and South. It is impossible by democratic means so the nationalists will try to use violence. After a certain time the resistance of the East and South will grow and / or Russia will intervene.

3. The USA and NATO countries will support by all means the Westerns and the Kiev junta. But in reality this strategy will only worsen the situation. The essence of the problem lays here: if Russia intervenes in the affairs of the State whose population (the majority) regard this intervention as illegitimate, the position of the USA and NATO States would be natural and well founded. But in this situation the population of the East and South of Ukraine welcomes Russia, waits for it, pleads for Russia to come. There is a kind of civil war in Ukraine now. Russia openly supports the East and South. The USA and NATO back the West. The Westerns are trying to get all Ukraine to affirm that not all the population of the East and South is happy with Russia. This is quite true. Also true is that not all of the population of the West is happy with Right Sector, Bandera, Shukhevich and the rule of tycoons. So if Russia would invade the Western parts of Ukraine or Kiev that could be considered as a kind of illegitimate aggression. But the same aggression is in present circumstances the position of the USA that strives to help the Kiev junta take the control of the East and South. It is perceived as an illegitimate act of aggression and it will provoke fierce resistance.

Conclusion

1. Now here is what I would say to the American people. The American political elite has tried in this situation as well as in many others to make the Russians hate Americans. But it has failed. We hate the American political elite that brings death, terror, lies and bloodshed everywhere – in Serbia, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Libya, in Syria – and now in Ukraine. We hate the global oligarchy that has usurped America and uses her as its tool. We hate the double standard of their politics where they call “fascist” innocent citizens without any feature resembling fascist ideology and in the same breath deny the open Hitlerists and Bandera admirers the qualification of “Nazi” in the Ukraine. All that the American political elite speaks or creates (with small exceptions) is one big lie. And we hate that lie because the victims of this lie are not only ourselves, but also you the American people. You believe them, you vote for them. You have confidence in them. But they deceive and betray you.

2. We have no thoughts of or desire to hurt America. We are far from you. America is for Americans as President Monroe used to say. For Americans interests and not for others. Not for Russians. Yes, this is quite reasonable. You want to be free. You and all others deserve it. But what the hell you are doing in the capital of ancient Russia, Victoria Nuland? Why do you intervene in our domestic affairs? We follow law and logic, lines of history and respect identities, differences. It is not an American affair. Is it?

3. I am sure that the separation line between Americans and the American political elite is very deep. Any honest American calmly studying the case will arrive to the conclusion: “let them decide for themselves. We are not similar to these strange and wild Russians, but let them go their own way. And we are going to go our own way.” But the American political elite has another agenda: to provoke wars, to mix in regional conflicts, to incite the hatred of different ethnic groups. The American political elites sacrifice American people to causes that are far from you, vague, uncertain and finally very very bad.

4. The American people should not choose to be with Ukrainians (Western Russians – Galitsya,Wolyn) or with Russians (Great Russians). That is not the case. Be with America, with real America, with your values and your people. Help yourselves and let us be what we are. But the American political elite makes the decisions instead of You. It lies to you, it dis-informs you. It shows faked pictures and falsely stages events with completely imagined explanations and idiotic commentary. They lie about us. And they lie about you. They give you a distorted image of yourself. The American political elite has stolen, perverted and counterfeited the American identity. And they make us hate you and they make you hate us.

5. This is my idea and suggestion: let us hate the American political elite together. Let us fight them for our identities – you for the American, us for the Russian, but the enemy is in both cases the same – the global oligarchy who rules the word using you and smashing us. Let us revolt. Let us resist. Together. Russians and Americans. We are the people. We are not their puppets.

Alexander Dugin (b. 1962) is one of the best-known writers and political commentators in post-Soviet Russia. In addition to the many books he has authored on political, philosophical and spiritual topics, he currently serves on the staff of Moscow State University, and is the intellectual leader of the Eurasia Movement. For more than a decade, he has also been an adviser to Vladimir Putin and others in the Kremlin on geopolitical matters.

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