



# UKRAINIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

## Асоціація Українських Правників Америки

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### A Question for President Obama – *Then What?*

On February 5, 2015, Terry Atlas, writing for [Bloomberg News](#), stated “Washington policy makers are caught up in a debate reminiscent of the Cold War era: Should the U.S. send weapons to help an outgunned country resist Russian-backed aggression?” According to the article, the indecision of policy makers - as well as that of President Obama - is grounded on the question -- if weapons are supplied to Ukraine, *Then What?* Would it only anger Russia and make it more aggressive? Would it escalate the warfare and make a political solution more difficult to achieve?

The question that Washington policy makers and President Obama should be asking is -- if weapons are **NOT** supplied to Ukraine, *Then What?*

The argument not to supply military aid to Ukraine is based in large part on the naïve assumption that hostilities in the eastern part of Ukraine are somehow not a war of aggression by Russia but are internal rebel activities by Ukrainians of Russian ethnicity and that Russia has good and honorable intentions to find a peaceful solution to this alleged “internal” crisis. This fallacious notion has been debunked by clear and convincing evidence to the contrary and is not reflective of a rational view of reality. The alleged “separatist rebels” are mercenaries hired, trained, supplied with weapons, and directed by Russia. Russian military personnel in the thousands are openly fighting, and many are dying, alongside these “separatist rebels” on Ukrainian soil.

There is also an unstated view in Western political circles that Russia would be politically satisfied with holding onto Crimea and that Eastern Ukraine [Luhansk and Donetsk regions] be quasi-independent entities within the sphere of direct influence of the Kremlin. According to this misguided rationale, if the West were to accept this scenario as the *status quo* [and convince Ukraine to such draconian terms], Russia would readily enter into a binding international agreement which would guarantee peace on the European continent for the future. As a reality check to this flawed logic, one only has to recall from recent memory countless historical events to realize that Russia has **never** lived up to any of its international agreements including nuclear non-proliferation treaties. One such glaring example that comes immediately to mind is the 1994 Budapest Memorandum wherein Russia profusely guaranteed that it would not violate Ukrainian sovereignty in exchange for which Ukraine surrendered the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Further, the Kremlin flagrantly continues to violate various other nuclear accords and proudly states that it will be expanding its nuclear armaments as well as its military potential -- and all international covenants to the contrary be damned. There is a saying “The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior.”

History is also the best teacher. To understand Russia and its political and military intentions towards Ukraine, we need to look at history. Over the centuries, Russian political thought always viewed Ukraine as the linchpin to its imperialistic ambitions and desires. It has continuously fought to control not only Ukraine's territory, but also sought to destroy Ukrainian culture and ethos. As former Ukrainian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, V. Vassylenko stated in his recent essay, [The 2014 War: An Endeavor for a Comprehensive Analysis](#);

The restoration of Ukraine's independence is intertwined with the inevitable revival of its national memory and individual national history, thus stripping Russia of a part of its alleged history, thereby destroying the myth of its millennium-old statehood, European identity and supposedly eternal and natural place of Russia in European civilization. Russian empire-minded chauvinists realize that, unless Ukraine with its territory, resources and human potential, is not subdued once again, Russia's attempts to restore its status of an empire will be futile..... p. 4

Meanwhile, another less obvious goal of the Russian aggression is to test how ready and capable Western democracies are in resisting Russia's revanchist and expansionist plans to use force to return territories that had been parts of the Russian empire in the past. ....p. 8

Russia's covert foreign policy objective is to undermine European and Euro-Atlantic unity and to create a Euro-Asian empire, stretching from Vladivostok to Lisbon thereby challenging and threatening the United States. p. 8

Viewed from the historical perspective, if weapons are not supplied to Ukraine so it can defend itself now, [and thereby, in essence, protect Western Europe] any "political solution" that does not permanently insure Ukrainian territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders from Russian incursion by giving Ukraine the unfettered military ability to protect its national boundaries, is only temporary window dressing to appease the gullible conscience of Western leaders and to lull them into an unrealistic sense of security. If Ukraine is not afforded the necessary means to defend itself, then after a temporary illusionary respite in hostilities and the easing of economic sanctions, Russia will regroup, strengthen itself,—and will exponentially continue its assault on Ukraine, thus drastically expanding the existing conflict to the entire European continent in the future. In the process, Russia will successfully undermine Western and NATO unity, European economic integration and security, greatly jeopardize world peace, and put America's national interests and security at high risk.

Then Washington foreign policy makers and future American Presidents will be asking the question: ***NOW WHAT?***

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