

# Ukraine: Where To From Here?

My PR agency, 5WPR, has worked extensively in Ukraine, and my wife was born and raised there. While media headlines cover the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, there are undoubtedly countless Americans wondering what exactly is happening there.

Simply, it's a very quick-moving political situation in a country that is vitally important for both the West and Russia for many reasons. The Ukrainian conflict is a battle between East and West—Putin versus Obama and the European Union.

While Putin is a master politician, Obama remains a mere pawn and continues to fail miserably at protecting American interests. We know well that America, under the Obama administration, has continually made threats with empty promises—in Egypt, Syria, Iran and now the Ukraine.

Let's hope that this situation doesn't lose, with American interests in the world once again being weakened, as we have seen repeatedly during this administration.

President Barack Obama recently foolishly said, "Our approach in the United States is not to see these as some Cold War chessboard in which we're in competition with Russia." He is wrong, as superpowers are constantly in competition. This battle is about Russia wanting to limit the West's influence with former Soviet Union countries.

There has not been a time in recent American history that America has had poorer relations with so many foreign countries, and bluntly, as former President Bush used to say, "Liberals do not like me talking about liberals."

I wanted to provide some perspective about the region:

- "Well, announcing expectations is all very well, but I'm not sure who is impressed by it," George Will has said.

“What we are seeing in the Ukraine, what we’ve seen in Syria, and what we will see again in Iran is a complete failure of what I think was the centerpiece of the president’s foreign policy, and that is the reset of the relations with Russia.”

- “In the aftermath of Mr. Obama telling the Syrian regime that using chemical weapons would cross a ‘red line,’ and then doing nothing serious in response to it, the president’s latest threat is probably evoking belly laughs in Kiev,” Peter Wehner has said.
- “Proof that the old axiom ‘into any vacuum a leader will eventually come,’ Putin has been handed this by what is essentially Jimmy Carter on steroids,” Oliver North has stated. “If you could have imagined that someone is happy that Obama is president, it has to be Jimmy Carter because he is no longer the worst president in our history. I’m the last person in the world that’s going to advocate for putting in American troops to quell the civil war that’s occurring now in Kiev, the civil war in Syria, like the civil war in Egypt. But it would have been nice to have had the credibility, of being at least respected by adversaries or admired by our allies. And we have neither as a consequence of his total failure of leadership.”
- “I think that the importance of Ukraine is not entirely appreciated,” Sen. Bob Corker has noted. “With the exception of Russia, Ukraine is the largest country in Europe, with a population of 46 million people and vast, unrealized potential. And while Ukraine is critically important in its own right, what’s often missed is that positive change in Ukraine would help stimulate positive change in Russia.”
- “This is a valuable country,” Bill Richardson has explained. “It’s a very strong country, resource-wise. It’s a prize of the former Soviet Union. A lot of nuclear weapons were there, a lot of Ukrainian-Americans. We have interest in a peaceful resolution of

this issue.”

- “A great confusion has set in about what American political figures should and should not say when confronted with violent political events in other countries,” Peggy Noonan has commented. “Exemplifying the confusion, as he does on so many issues, is President Obama.”
- “Watch out for Vladimir Putin because he will try to make mischief because he believes that Ukraine is part of Russia,” Sen. John McCain has said.
- “Ukraine, by most standards, should be an economic juggernaut,” Greg Satell has stated. “It has ample natural resources, a highly educated, diligent workforce, and is situated in an advantageous geographical position.”
- “The reality today is that Russia supplies 31 percent of EU gas imports, 27 percent of crude oil imports, 24 percent of EU coal imports, 30 percent of total EU uranium imports, and is the EU’s third-largest supplier of electricity,” Edward Goldberg has explained. “In turn, the EU is not only easily Russia’s largest trading partner, but it is the market for 88 percent of Russia’s oil exports, 70 percent of its gas exports, and 50 percent of its coal exports.”
- “We commend the House’s overwhelming passage of H. Res. 447, a bipartisan resolution expressing support for the Ukrainian people’s struggle to build an independent, democratic, and strong Ukraine that is free from foreign meddling,” Speaker John Boehner, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Whip Kevin McCarthy, Conference Chair Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, and Deputy Whip Peter Roskam have said. “We call upon the Ukrainian government to exercise restraint and respect the democratic wishes of the people, and we call upon all sides to avoid violence. While we are encouraged by the partial repeal of recently enacted anti-democratic measures, we continue to urge the Government of Ukraine to uphold all

democratic rights of Ukrainian citizens. We look forward to supporting Ukraine's continued involvement in the Eastern Partnership, an important program to promote economic cooperation, human rights, democratic values, and the rule of law."

- "Ukraine, whose population [46 million] and size are approximately those of Spain, is a potential economic power," Will has noted.
- "In my view, what has transpired in Ukraine is one of the most recent examples of where U.S. leadership at the right moment could have been decisive," Corker has said.
- "Ukraine will make Europe better and Europe will make Ukraine better. ... We are here to support your just cause, the sovereign right of Ukraine to determine its own destiny freely and independently. And the destiny you seek lies in Europe," McCain has noted.
- "Twenty-five years after the people in the then-captive nations of Eastern Europe changed world history, we again see Ukrainians taking to the streets to demand nothing more than the right to independently chart the future course of their nation and a better life for themselves and their children," Sen. Marco Rubio has stated.
- "The United States must stand with our allies in the EU and demonstrate our desire to see Ukraine continue on their path towards integration with Europe," Rep. Tom Cotton has said. "We cannot allow President Putin to undermine these efforts through the threats of economic retaliation or implied force. We believe remaining silent on this issue sends the wrong message to our allies and erodes our strength as an economic and strategic partner."
- "The United States must not turn a blind eye to the struggle for freedom in a country where we have such a clear strategic interest," Sen. Ted Cruz has stated. "Putin's proposed Eurasian Customs Union, of which Ukraine would be a cornerstone, is a thinly veiled

attempt to re-assimilate the territory of 'greater Russia' that made up the old Soviet Union."

- "Now that the Olympics are over, we need to watch the behavior of the Russians, and I believe [President Obama] needs to up his game and send a clear unequivocal message, public message, to Putin not to interfere in what is happening in Ukraine—to let the Ukrainian people determine their future," Sen. Kelly Ayotte has noted.
- "Barack Obama and the foreign policy of this administration are responsible for this," Hank Sheinkopf has claimed. "It's very simple. He did not protect our relationship sufficiently with Ukraine and Poland, both the entries for the Russians, historically, into Europe. He sat back and he watched and he let the Russians do whatever they want."
- "It's in the interest of the people of the Ukraine to be able to trade more freely with the EU; it's in the interests of the people of Russia for that to happen as well," William Hague has said.
- "Ukraine is strategically important," Ariel Cohen has explained. "It has a massive industrial base; abundant agriculture; and a lengthy shoreline along the Black Sea. It also borders four NATO allies: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Russia covets it for its renewed sphere of influence. A lot is riding on next steps by the U.S. and our European allies. Washington has to exhibit strong leadership to resolve the crisis in Ukraine peacefully—and in accordance to strategic U.S. interests. It should call for an immediate cessation of government brutality and violence and helping Ukrainians to map out a path to a constitutional reform and the new elections this spring."
- "No one wants it to come apart," Mikhail Gorbachev has stated. "I think that today it's important not to tear it apart. I recently appealed to the leaders of the United States and Russia to act perhaps as mediators. And that would also include the European Union."

- “It’s lamentable that the United States has taken the back seat in so many of these crises that we’ve seen overseas,” Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen has said. “I understand that people are war-fatigued with Iraq and Afghanistan, and Karzai’s not helping us one bit, and so people say, ‘Eh, forget about these guys.’ But we see this bloodshed never ending in Syria. We see human rights protesters being shot and killed in Ukraine—student leaders, peaceful dissidents in Venezuela also being shot and killed.”
- “I think we need to stand with people who are supporting democracy and freedom,” Sen. Rob Portman has commented.

Join me in hoping that there will be peace and quiet in the region. The Ukrainian crisis is not likely to pass quietly or quickly—let us hope that American interests in the region are not weakened when the situation is concluded.

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