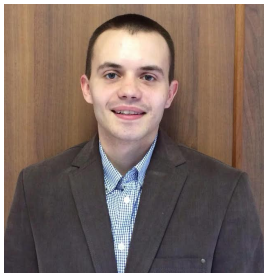


Real scale of the Ukrainian crisis and the Big Battle for Eurasia



FULL ENGLISH TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW GIVEN BY ANDREW KORYBKO TO THE PROMINENT CROATIAN MEDIA HOLDING "ADVANCE" ON AUGUST 10, 2014.



Andrew Korybko is a political analyst and journalist for Voice of Russia, Moscow and a regular contributor to Oriental Review online journal. He specializes in Russian affairs and is keenly interested in how the US' grand strategy towards Eurasia affects the countries of the former Soviet Union. Another one of his focuses is in exploring how the US applies its policy of regime change all across the world, with heightened attention being paid to the tactics of Color Revolutions and Unconventional Warfare. As such, he has commentated extensively on the situations in Syria and Ukraine. Andrew also has a personal connection to the Balkans through his maternal grandparents, who are from Ljubljana and Kočevje in Slovenia, and he kindly invites you to follow him on [Facebook](#).

1. It seems as if the new conflicts are starting almost every other week now, with situation in Ukraine and Gaza being the most talked about, but we have instabilities and armed clashes in Lebanon, Libya, war still raging in Syria, ISIL advancing in Iraq and now clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh. Before we get into the details about specific crisis spots, do you see any connection in these instabilities? Is permanent war the new reality?

There has always been some type of 'permanent war' ongoing in the world, especially during the global proxy conflicts of the Cold War. Today's difference in perception, however, is largely attributable to advances in communications technology and 24-hour news reporting that brings this to the forefront of the population's psyche. As for a connection, yes, there does seem to be one in most instances. Zbigniew Brzezinski conceived the idea of the "Eurasian Balkans", which in essence is strategically directed chaos (e.g. Color Revolutions, Unconventional Warfare, etc.) and state fragmentation in order to ensure the US' Eurasian dominance throughout the 21st century. It utilizes the Lead From Behind template to contract significant regional transformation responsibility to its geostrategic allies (e.g. Turkey in Syria), all the while providing back-end support and supervision. This explains a lot if one keeps it in mind and analyzes the pattern and overall effect that these crises are having in advancing US/NATO influence across the world and offsetting Russia and Iran (and soon China). Also, experiments in weaponizing chaos in Libya and South Sudan, for example, can go terribly wrong and get out of the control and management of the US, as is tragically seen in those states. Chaos is a true Pandora's Box.

2. Wider Middle East has been tense for decades, but it seems as if the lid was blown off with the coming of the so called Arab Spring in late 2010/early 2011. On the one side of the debate we have those pointing out that people have the right to rebel against governments and regimes, but the other side is warning that these rebellions, even if they were genuine in their start, quickly become hijacked for larger geopolitical interests. Do you view the Arab Spring phenomena as something positive or negative?

First of all, I would begin my stating that the Arab Spring events were a large theater-wide Color Revolution supported by the US. There were times that it strayed out of the control and away from the benefit of the US (Bahrain, Yemen, overthrow of Morsi, contemporary Libya), but overall, important objectives were accomplished. Most of the leaders were getting old and had been in power for ages, meaning that they were ripe to either pass away or be removed by one way or another. The US decided to seize the initiative and instigate this transformation on its own in order to control the process of leadership transition. They sought to use the transnational Muslim Brotherhood in the same fashion as the Soviet Union used the Communist Party of last century, but like the world saw in Egypt and with the rift between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, this has not been as successful as anticipated. Regardless, it did provide the impetus needed to destabilize key countries and unleash the 'Balkanization' undercurrents of the Mideast. The Black Hole that was created during this operation and its subsequent aftermath provided a valuable opportunity for certain extremist groups not affiliated with the US to strengthen their positions and carry out attacks, just as we saw with the killing of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens in 2012. Overall, the Arab Spring events have been a mixed bag of success for the US.

3. How do you comment the fact that some of these mass protests were followed closely by the global media, while others - for example in Bahrain - were left out of focus?

This simply goes to show that the US was trying to place pressure on countries where it had a stake (and predetermined alternative) in leadership transition. In Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, for instance, no such plans were underway, hence why it tried to deflect media attention from these events. The situation in Yemen, however, was so genuine and large-scale, and the authorities were not able to contain it, that some type of motion of transition had to take place to temporarily placate the masses, hence why the current leader is a carbon copy of the previous one (and not coincidentally the former Vice President). It must be said that Russian media had been reporting on developments in these countries for some time, especially the situation in Bahrain, so it was not left out of the focus of all global media outlets (even if they did happen to be non-Western).



4. Of all the fallouts of the Arab Spring, War in Syria became the biggest one. Russia used its veto power in the UN Security Council to prevent certain resolutions which might have had been a justification for foreign aggression against Syria. On the other hand, Russia showed certain amount of restraint when it comes to backing Damascus government, for example by not providing Syrian army with the advanced anti-air units such as S-300 which would be essential in case if Syria one day really becomes a target for foreign military aggression. Would you say that Russia is being careful or that it is doing what it believes is enough?

The Mideast has always had a delicate balance of power, and this is even more so nowadays during its dramatic outside-directed transformation attempt than ever before. Commenting on the decision to delay (but importantly not shelve) the implementation of the agreement, Putin said in June 2013 that it was due to concerns about the

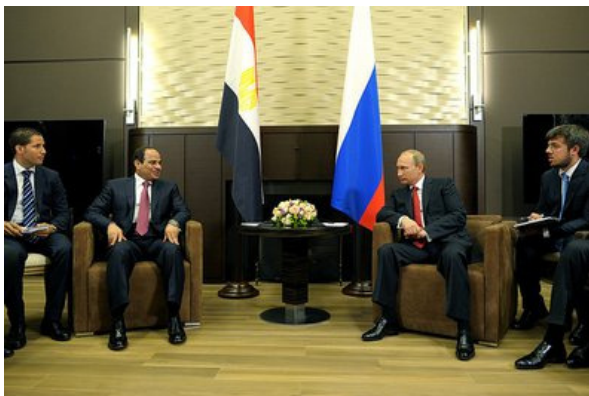
(conventional) balance of power. As you said, the S-300 would aid in defending against foreign military aggression, but I must comment that it is only applicable against conventional air forces, not unconventional anti-government insurgents like the ones that are openly supported by the West and are currently ravaging the country.

In my view, the understanding was that these powerful anti-air units could place Israel and possibly the US into such an hysteria that they may attack Syria preemptively before they are delivered. This is because a conventional bombing campaign to support regime change (as had happened in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya prior) would be all but impossible to carry out under those changed circumstances. Therefore, I look at Russia's decision as being motivated by precluding a preemptive external conventional attack on Syria, something that Russia was also vocally against after the false-flag Ghouta chemical weapons attack. Russia has been as consistent in trying to avoid conventional Western military intervention in Syria as the West has been in trying to invite it. This is the larger cat-and-mouse theme being played over Syria.

5. By vetoing US approved UN resolutions against Syria, relations between Washington and Moscow were strained even further. Some even suggest that Ukraine might be some sort of "revenge" against Russia for standing up to US plans in the Middle East, how do you view such claims?

The US was going to destabilize Ukraine anyhow, whether or not Russia stood up to it in Syria. The thing is, however, that the Color Revolution was pushed forward one year only partially in advance as "revenge", as you put it, for Russia's position. Ukraine's former National Security Chief, Alexander Yakimenko, even said in March that the US was originally preparing to overthrow Yanukovich after the 2015 elections but that they sped up the implementation of this plan. So what you have is two-fold: the US wanted to punish Russia for its Syria stance and it also wanted to "slow down or prevent" (as Hillary Clinton put it in December 2012) Ukraine's integration into the Eurasian Union, which became a near reality after the EU Association Agreement was delayed in November 2013. Taking together these two back-to-back setbacks for American foreign policy, in hindsight, it was inevitable that the US would launch its planned Ukrainian subversion campaign one year early in late 2013.

6. Before we move on to Ukraine, let me ask you this - do you think that Russia is effectively moving in to fill the vacuum created by some Middle-Eastern countries which became somewhat disenchanted with the US? For example Iraq and Egypt, two countries that signed large arms contracts with Russia in recent months.



Yes, Russia is doing the best that it can right now under the circumstances. Let's look more closely at the two countries you mentioned.

Egypt under al-Sisi, in my view, wants to be a 21st-century Mideast Yugoslavia, balancing between benefactors, albeit in a multipolar and not bipolar world. The change in international conditions, coupled with the overly dynamic and unstable region that Egypt finds itself current in, means that

such a large ambition may not be possible, but he is still trying to make it a reality. Russia and other Great Powers want this scenario to arise, as it is in their benefit to see an Egypt that works with everyone and is not an exclusive high-level partner of the US. The weapons deal with Egypt should be seen in this light and as the first of many future engagements that Russia hopes to make with the new authorities in Egypt.

Iraq is a bit different. Russia had privileged relations there during the Cold War but lost almost all of it except for some weapons contracts and natural resource agreements since then. The rapid ISIL offensive and the US' calculated dillydallying in not helping Baghdad dramatically altered the paradigm. Iraq saw that the US wanted to promote a three-way balance of power between the Kurds, Shia, and Sunni in Iraq, even if this results in the de-facto or de-jure fragmentation of the state. To Russia, terrorists are terrorists, regardless if they may be politically convenient in the short term for promoting a long-term strategic vision. Thus, Russia quickly reached the aircraft deal with Iraq that changed the dynamics of ISIL's offensive and quite possibly saved the country, or at least delayed its dissolution.

As a pattern, Russia first engages the government and military in these examined states. Once the authorities are institutionalized and secure, the grassroots and public diplomacy campaigns (i.e. soft power) can then blossom. The model here is Syria, where Russian is now taught in schools and cultural and social contacts between both countries are experiencing a renaissance.

7. On to Ukraine - even before Maidan came to be, fight for influence over Ukraine started heating up. Many analysts, especially those who have no ideological dog in this fight, claimed that tearing up the somewhat non-aligned status of Ukraine will mean big trouble. Overthrown president Viktor Yanukovich was last year prepared to sign the EU trade agreement, then he changed his mind and decided that working more closely with Russia would be the better option. Many would agree that this was the spark that fired up the Maidan, but why the sudden change in Yanukovich's stance?

We can only speculate on what Yanukovich was thinking, but if I ventured to guess, I would say that he realized the absolute disaster that the EU Association Agreement would have on the country's economy and general sovereignty. Russia is the umbilical cord for Ukraine's economy, and with the prospect that EU goods could filter in to Russia and the Customs Union via preferential trade agreements with Ukraine, it is obvious that Russia would have to plug the leak and prevent this from happening one way or another. Cutting Russia out of the Ukrainian economy to any degree is disastrous for Kiev, but the current authorities are not behaving rationally due to their ideological motivations. Yanukovich, however, likely saw the cost-benefit analysis quite clearly by the end of November and therefore decided to delay (not outright reject, unlike the Western misinformation campaign stated afterwards) the agreement's signing while evaluating other (Russian) options. Furthermore, the EU Association Agreement entails political reforms as well as economic ones, and following this path would place Ukraine solidly in Brussels' orbit, thereby negating its previously neutral position and complicating relations with Russia.



8. When talking about the Ukrainian opposition that took over after Yanukovich was overthrown, it's clear that they all have a pro-Western attitude, but are there certain, let's say, geopolitical divisions among them? There has been talks that Mr. Klitchko was the man that Berlin wanted to see as the new president of Ukraine. He suddenly lost the spotlight right about the time of that infamous "f*ck the EU" telephone call leak between US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the US ambassador to

Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt. Also, certain WikiLeaks documents describe the elected Petro Poroshenko as the "US man". Is there any EU vs US struggle for influence over Ukraine, or are we talking about the united western block solely focused on countering Russian influence?

Yes, there definitely are rivalries but there also is a commonality of purpose. Both entities want Ukraine to be integrated into Western institutions and larger Western 'civilization', even if it is out of place there and this results in a deterioration of relations with Russia. They want this objective for different reasons, but they do share this same goal.

Their differences are where things get interesting. The EU's approach is more benign and soft, and concerning Kiev's war on Eastern Ukraine, it is ambivalent, and if anything, does not want to see it continue with the casualties that it has had. The US is of the opposite disposition. It is malignant and has a hard approach, being very vocal about its support of Kiev in all instances. It is also a strong advocate of the so-called "anti-terrorist operation".

Concerning proxy politicians, yes, the EU wanted Klitchko because he was seen as 'European' due to his long time of stay in Germany. They felt they knew him, understood him, and could therefore work with him. He was seen as one of them. Poroshenko is a different actor altogether. The US ascertained that Ukraine should retain its oligarchic system and that instead of changing it, Washington should work within it to exert influence. This is why Poroshenko was appointed because he has extensive experience navigating this murky world.

One last thing – Klitchko's political future isn't over. He's merely being placed in a reserve position as the Mayor of Kiev in case he is needed later. Such a scenario could arise if Poroshenko falls out of favor and needs to be replaced. Tymoshenko and Yatsenyuk are still floating around, but both have a blighted political legacy. Klitchko, on the other hand, is seen as more 'clean', thereby making him of greater appeal to the overall electorate and less divisive if Washington needs to install another leader in Ukraine.

9. Since then the people of Crimea voted to join Russia and the Western powers call it the annexation. It seemed as the Russian maneuver was very well organized, we all saw those military bases being taken over without one single casualty. It was obvious that Russia fully supported this move regarding the Crimea, but then the armed rebellion broke in the Donbass region and the things started to get a lot complicated. Was the uprising in Donbass something that Russia expected would happen or was it caught off guard?



I think that Russia may have expected that some type of pushback would occur in Eastern Ukraine if there ever was a violent pro-Western seizure of power, but they did not anticipate it to this extent. The revolt is homegrown and domestic, and Russia does not have the degree of influence over its events that the West says it does. Crimea was different because of the unique historic and demographic situation there, which is not replicated in

Donbass. Therefore, different situations call for different measures and responses. The Western media likes to simplify Russia's foreign policy into a cookie cutter pattern of evil and aggression, but things are a lot more complex than that.

Russia adapted to the Donbass developments just as others did, but it has certain cultural and civilizational advantages that others do not have. This element of soft power is what makes Russia more appealing to Donbass than the West. Everyone needs to remember that the people of Donbass were first triggered to rise up because of the violent pro-Western coup in Kiev and the initial motion to scale back the rights of Russian speakers. This severed their psychological link to the central government, and the military operation against them made any future rapprochement all but impossible.

10. There are diverse opinions in Russian political elite regarding what should happen with the eastern Ukraine, it seems as the main idea brought forward from Kremlin is the process of federalization, but the leaders of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk were obviously hoping for more, perhaps for Crimea scenario. On the other hand it seems as Russia is not that keen on that idea, even president Putin suggested for the referendum in these areas to be postponed. Do you think Russia has some sort of an ideal scenario for eastern Ukraine?

The divide in the ideal end game scenario between Russia and the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics proves that the Russian government's influence over those two entities is weaker than the West has misleadingly reported. If they were in the same boat together and this was really a Russian 'destabilization' operation, wouldn't they have the public objectives? Why the dichotomy?



Obviously, Donetsk and Lugansk wanted something more than what Russia sees as ideal and preferable. This is because all the actors are independent and there is no conspiratorial coordination among them. Russia has an economic and military interest in seeing a united, peaceful, and neutral Ukraine on its border and not in seeing it unravel. Since the onset of the destabilization, however, Russia knows that this scenario is not likely to occur unless the process of federalization begins. Kiev doesn't want this because it is afraid of losing economic and military influence over the east, and it also doesn't want a structure in place that can stop rapid Western institutionalization within the EU and possibly NATO.

11. The border remains tense, shelling from Ukraine has already caused casualties on the Russian side. Now we have large Russian air force exercises taking place near the border. Is direct conflict between Russian and Ukrainian army a likely possibility?

Any civil war situation has the danger of spilling across the border and involving its neighbors, and Ukraine is no different. What we see here, however, are purposeful provocations to goad Russia into conflict with Ukraine. To those conditioned to the Western media, such an assertion may seem absurd, but please consider Brzezinski's recent plea for providing Kiev with anti-tank weaponry. He says that they would bog down any invading Russian force and inflict heavy losses on them. Remember – Brzezinski is the mastermind of the US' Mujahadeen strategy in instigating the Soviet-Afghan War. He even admitted that the decision was made to arm Afghan fighters nearly half a year *before* the Soviet intervention in December 1979. Brzezinski also taught Obama when he studied at Columbia University and was then put in charge of the foreign affairs aspect of his 2008 presidential campaign. It's even alleged that he helped staff his supporters into the White House and other key government institutions after

Obama won. With this being the case, it is not improbable that Brzezinski's geopolitical thinking, laid out in his many influential works such as the "The Grand Chessboard", is in vogue in Washington nowadays. If there is any direct conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it will be because of an American-advised provocation.

12. Many news stories are coming from the eastern Ukraine. One side claims that the Ukrainian army is nearly bankrupt and that soon it simply won't have any money to keep this offensive going. The other side claims that Donetsk and Luhansk will soon be under a complete siege and that the rebellion will eventually be defeated. Let's presume both possibilities - if Ukrainian army runs out of funds, will the West start pumping in the money to keep it going? Other possibility - if we presume that the rebel strongholds were about to fall, would Russia allow it to happen or would it intervene in order to prevent such a scenario?



Both news stories are true to an extent: the Kiev army is basically broke and Donetsk and Lugansk are on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. To address your possibilities, the US is already pumping millions of dollars into Ukraine. It sent \$5 million and \$48 million in two separate instances to assist the Ukrainian military, and that's on top of the \$1 billion loan that was signed at the beginning of May. Moreover, the IMF agreed to \$17 billion for Ukraine, and Russia alleges that some of this money is being

laundered into the military. The West also provides indirect military support to Kiev as well, with the US slated to deploy advisors later this month. Russia's Foreign Ministry also complained about the presence of foreign (mostly Western) mercenaries in Ukraine, which Kiev finally acknowledged earlier this month.

If the pro-Federalists' support bastions fall, no, Russia will not directly intervene in Ukraine. It will only do so under two circumstances: a direct threat or border provocation by Ukraine or a humanitarian intervention. Russia is defending itself against a strategic war being waged against it in Ukraine, and thus, it is in the game for the long term. In this sense, military might takes on a less important but more destabilizing role for Russia. Economic, political, and social factors are the tools of the trade in strategic warfare, and if utilized properly, they can bring Russia closest to its desired post-conflict scenario in Ukraine. Even if Kiev does squash the pro-Federalists militarily, it will never exercise full control over Donbass except in the most totalitarian ways, as the region will always be unstable so long as it is occupied by the coup-imposed Kiev authorities.

13. Crash of the Malaysian flight MH17 is seen by many as the turning point in the conflict. Investigation is still ongoing, both sides blame each other and provide their reasons why the other is to blame. Hopefully we'll see some indisputable evidence in the future that will resolve this question. US intelligence claims that the rebels shot it down by "mistake". While US intelligence can hardly be seen as the unbiased actor, but even if it were true, do you think it's a bit hypocritical labeling Russia as "state that sponsors terrorism", as many Western media did, especially when we know

that such tragic incidents happened in the past, for example the downing of the Iranian passenger plane Iran Air Flight 655 in 1988. by US forces, killing all 290 people on board (in Iranian airspace)?

Right now there has been no concrete evidence presented concerning MH17 besides that which Russia immediately made public. The West has been reluctant to reveal much of the supposed intelligence that it has (and what it has revealed has been exposed as a forgery by Russia), and Kiev immediately seized the air traffic recordings pertaining to the incident. It increasingly looks like it was actually Kiev's forces that shot down the plane, not Russia's, but this question isn't about assigning blame to one or the other.

The West's knee-jerk reaction of 'blame Russia/Putin' was expected, especially in light of the intense information war being waged against the country right now. This follows the pattern of trying to 'isolate Russia', but in reality, it is only the West isolating *itself* from Russia. True to the judo philosophy that guides its president, Russia has used the West's economic and diplomatic offensive against it to pivot to Asia, and increasingly, to Latin America, thereby shielding itself from the blow and deflecting the intangible aggression being waged against it. These regions don't want to isolate Russia, they want to work with it.

Importantly, the West is also damaging itself and its own soft power by what it's doing. Other BRICS and emerging countries are looking at the West's behavior against Russia as a developing model that could one day be applied against them, should the circumstances arise and it is politically convenient. Accordingly, they are now thinking about precautionary measures to take just in case this happens. This, more than anything, may be the greatest (albeit unintended) legacy of the West's economic, information, and diplomatic war against Russia.

14. Information and misinformation has become rampant regarding the Ukrainian crisis, but what do you think about the recent report in the British The Independent which claims it has information from anonymous sources in Berlin that Russian president Putin and the German chancellor Merkel have been working on the so-called "secret deal" for ending the Ukrainian crisis? Reportedly Germany would acknowledge Crimea as part of Russia, Ukraine would promise not to become a NATO member, and Russia would end all its support for the rebellion on Donbass. Do you think there is any truth in these claims or the whole story is fabricated?

There probably is some partial truth to it, for example, Germany may have proposed this to Russia, but I don't think it will ever happen. Russia has absolutely nothing to gain from this 'deal' besides useless concessions. Crimea is already part of Russia and nothing is going to change that. Whether or not it's acknowledged by Germany, which itself cannot speak for the entire EU or the West, doesn't change the reality on the ground. Plus, Germany would not risk endangering its relations with Washington over Ukraine. It's cozied up closer to the US by going along with the latest round of sanctions, despite the numerous NSA scandals.



About Ukraine not being a NATO member, Russia can never trust the West on what it says about NATO expansion. It sprawled the organization across Eastern Europe after

the Cold War even though Russia was given assurances that this would not happen. Moscow naively believed the West and therefore rapidly withdrew its forces from the region during this time out of good faith. It didn't have to do that and it could have drawn the process out if it wanted to, which is something that the West conveniently forgets. Going back to this "secret deal", how can the Merkel government guarantee that Germany will keep its part of the bargain after it is no longer in power? It realistically can't, thereby signifying a fatal flaw in its logic.

To address this myth of Russian support for Donbass, it's been blown out of proportion. As I've argued, Russia does not have the gigantic influence over the region that the West alleges. Also, by ending "all support", is this taken to mean that it would not respond to a humanitarian crisis there? The whole deal, if true, is too vague to be understood, and given what I've mentioned above, Russia in no way would agree to it because it has nothing to gain from doing so.

15. Is the NATO in Ukraine a red line for Russia?



Yes, it is, and Russia has repeated this on a few occasions. I think, though, that the question should more accurately be "What form of NATO in Ukraine is a red line for Russia?" since the organization can be both de-facto and covert or de-jure and explicit. It's important to look at the criteria for officially joining NATO.

Importantly, a state cannot have an unresolved territorial dispute. Due to Kiev's insistence that Crimea is Ukrainian and their refusal to recognize its reunification with Russia, Ukraine can never be a de-jure member of the organization. This means that the country would not by extension have a mutual security treaty with the US, which is what worries Russia. If it does have this, then any provocation that the anti-Russian Kiev authorities partake in could potentially draw the US and Russia to blows, which is dangerous for the entire world. They may even manipulate this to drag the US in against its will, as some allege Saakashvili tried to do in South Ossetia in 2008, although Georgia thankfully wasn't a member of NATO.

The de-facto NATO integration of Ukraine is what I call 'Shadow NATO', and I've written deeply about it before. In brief, the US and certain NATO members can go about various backdoor methods for bringing Ukraine into the alliance's fold without officially admitting it. For example, the US is considering the 'Russian Aggression Prevention Act of 2014' that would make Ukraine a major non-NATO ally, and Poland and Lithuania, both NATO members, are planning to create a joint battalion with Ukraine. Through these networks and their probable future expansion, Ukraine can come as close to NATO as possible short of actually joining it. Also, NATO membership has to be unanimously agreed to by its existing members, which is one of the reasons that Macedonia still hasn't joined due to its naming dispute with Greece. There may be pragmatic members that don't want to risk their security by bringing a rogue state like contemporary Ukraine into their grouping, so this further makes the case for de-facto 'Shadow NATO' integration.

Therefore, there are two things that are red lines for Russia in Ukraine: de-jure NATO membership (which would grant it mutual security with the US) and an expansion of the missile defense shield to the country. Russia can deal with 'Shadow NATO' in Ukraine

even if it is not pleased with such a prospect, but it absolutely draws the line at the two developments I just mentioned.

16. Strategy of containment of Russia is usually dismissed by the US officials as a conspiracy theory and Russian propaganda, but some of the most influential American think-tanks and analysts have been proposing it for years. Could this actually happen and what is the end game for the encircling theory? Stop Russia from projecting its influence in the region? Wage a war against Russia?

This is not a conspiracy but a strategic and observable fact. The US has expanded NATO into Eastern Europe and parts of the former USSR, with plans for the de-facto or de-jure incorporation of other states like Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia. It is also weaponizing chaos, as I spoke about at the beginning of the interview, to direct against Russia's vulnerable southern flank in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh situation is one example, as is the regional mayhem that could likely break out after the NATO drawback in Afghanistan. They are attacking the center (Russia) by destabilizing the periphery (the former USSR). Concurrent to this, the US is attempting to stage either a national (Moscow-based) or regional (Northern Caucasus, autonomous republic) Color Revolution within the Russian Federation.

The US wants to contain Russia before rolling it back out of its former Soviet sphere of influence, with the ultimate goal being to dismantle it from within. As this is happening, the US will 'Lead From Behind' by contracting various states, such as Ukraine and Georgia, to do whatever they can to disrupt Russian policy in the

region. This war is not fought by direct means but rather indirect ones. Ominously, however, this may change if the Missile Defense Shield is completed, as the US would then have a monopoly on carrying out a nuclear first strike against Russia, thereby placing it into the position to unilaterally dictate its will. This is why the Missile Defense Shield is a red line for Russia.

Just as F. William Engdahl believes, I also think that the end game is for the US to establish full spectrum dominance and subvert Russia, Iran, and China, the only significant holdouts opposing the Western political consensus in Eurasia. If one looks at how the US deals with Iran and China, they will also see the same pattern of containment as they do with Russia, including with missile defense infrastructure. The US wants to take these states down one-by-one and eliminate their resistance to its political, military, and economic will in Eurasia.

17. Some say that Russia does not need to fret military attack, but it could become a target for some new, probably updated, versions of "Color



Revolutions". In one program you said that such scenario is not very likely - do you think that the Russian people would reject such moves?



The US wants to pull off a Color Revolution in Russia but the people here are dead-set against it. Also, the Russian government is too strong right now and this provides a deterrent to its implementation. However, what we see with Color Revolutions and the Arab Spring events (which were a theater-wide Color Revolution) is that they do not have to be popularly supported to be successful. They are a fusion of evanescent non-state actors, intense information war (with a critical part being waged within the targeted state prior to the destabilization's onset), and outside destabilizing tactics like threats and sanctions. In the event that the Russian center is weakened by the peripheral destabilization being waged against it in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, then the scenario could arise where Color Revolutions may have a higher chance of success either over the country as a whole or in specific regions.

Right now, the US is trying to defeat Russia through indirect methods because an assured direct confrontational win is not yet possible until the Missile Defense Shield is completed. Thus, Color Revolutions and proxy warfare (like in Ukraine) become the destabilizations of the day.

18. There is no doubt that certain opposition groups in Russia are funded from the outside, but what about the domestic actors which are not posing as a fifth column? It is interesting to notice that during 2012. Russian presidential elections Western media was mostly talking about Mr. Mikhail Prokhorov, who was obviously a candidate of choice, but many of them almost completely failed to mention that the much stronger contender against Mr. Putin was the leader of the Russian Communist Party (KPRF), Mr. Gennady Zyuganov who got over 17% of the vote, that is twice more than Prokhorov. Does this show that the only opposition in Russia worthy of Western media coverage is pro-Western liberal opposition?

Yes, that is an interesting observation that is lost on casual Russia watchers. The KPRF is a lot more popular than any of the pro-Western liberal opposition members, but its foreign policy is not suited to Western interests. Therefore, they are not supported and are relegated to informational obscurity in the West. Another interest that the West has in giving coverage to the pro-Western liberal opposition is that because they always fail and have close to no prospects of ever winning a significant race, they can spin this into 'vote-rigging', 'fraud', and 'anti-Western' accusations. All of this makes uninformed Westerners cringe and think even worse about Russia, even though it's not true.

One more thing – the West has favorably covered Alexei Navalny even though he tries to exploit nationalist undertones to gain support. This may show a new change in Western direction over which proxies they support. In Ukraine, they did the same thing but on a more extreme and successful scale. They supported radical right-wing and Neo-Nazi groups that had the tactics, manpower, and will to violently destabilize the state and they fulfilled their regime change goals. Ukraine is not Russia and the Russian state is overwhelmingly more powerful, strong, and stable than that of Ukraine's, but this cannot be ignored as it may develop into a new trend and possible application against Russia.

19. Let's talk economy. Barack Obama has recently downplayed Moscow's role in the world in an interview with the British weekly "The Economist", dismissing Russia as a country that "doesn't make anything" and also saying "Immigrants aren't rushing to Moscow in search of opportunity". Besides the fact that this is a rather strange comment from Mr. Obama, how do you see the Russian economy in the current stage? Is it focusing solely on exporting resources or is it diversifying? Also, is the stronger state regulation advantage or disadvantage and - most important of all - does it benefit the Russian people?

First of all, I'd direct all the readers to check out RT's recent fact-checking piece on Obama's statements to see the obvious falsehoods behind his words that you're referencing. With that being said, this is a really big and important question that I'll attempt to answer in brief.

A large and significant component of the Russian economy is of course dependent on natural resources, but it's a misleading stereotype to write Russia off as a 'Slavic Saudi Arabia', for example. The industrial and service sectors are also important and the Russian economy is among the top-ten in the world in size. A nation selling only natural resources, like Saudi Arabia, cannot reach this level without some other important economic foundations, which Russia clearly has but Saudi Arabia lacks.

The Russian economy definitely has to move towards accelerated diversification, and the ironic thing is that the recent sanctions against the country may actually provide this much-needed impetus. Russia is pivoting to Asia and possibly to Latin America, and the country is enacting stronger regulations to protect its economy. It is also looking to boost its domestic industries to make up for the sanctions' effects. Its decision makers finally realize the double-



edged sword that complex economic interdependence is: one can influence their partners, but they too can be influenced and punished. When one actor goes on a political crusade and is willing to sacrifice its economic interests, as the EU is by engaging in the latest round of sanctions, then this breaks the trust needed for such deep and expanding economic relations as the two previously had.

In the short term, there could likely be economic malaise on all sides, but securing a stronger economic position and freedom vis-à-vis its partners is in the advantage of Russia and all of its citizens. Russians have dealt with economic hardships many times in their history (most recently in the 1990s) and are more psychologically suited for it, whereas the West does not have this type of long-running experience. It is not to say that the 1990s environment will return to Russia – not at all! – but that, as the saying goes, some pain must come before some gain. Overall, Russia is moving on the right path in my opinion, and I believe that its decision makers finally understand the pressing circumstances they're in and what they need to do to make the country succeed.

19. For the last question, let's take a step back. The relations between Russia and US have deteriorated greatly in the last couple of years, some even claim that the new Cold war has already begun. Is there any hope for

optimism? Has the "can't we all just get along" idea become an overly unrealistic, even utopist, view of the world? Also on that point, since the escalation of tensions anti-Russian and anti-American sentiments has been steadily on the rise. Many of those following the situation, even casual followers, seem to be stepping into one of these camps. This, obviously, cannot be a good sign for lasting peace. Can perhaps things like economy overcome these tensions?

I'd say that we can always have hope, but it's important to be realistic so that one doesn't get their hopes up and then get miserably let down. With that being said, I don't see tensions decreasing any time in the near future, although I do hope I'm wrong. It just seems to me that the US is engaged in trying to assert its primacy all over Eurasia. This is bringing the US to odds with Russia, China, and Iran, each of which have specific regional interests which the US is pushing against as it delves deeper into the supercontinent.

About anti-Russian and anti-American sentiment, I think that the negative feelings are stronger in the West against Russia than they are in Russia against America. In the US there's anti-Russian sentiment, but in Russia, it's better to describe it as anti-unipolarity sentiment. Russians aren't against 'America' as much as they are against its unilateral actions against their country's real interests, as any patriotic individual would be toward another country trying to weaken their own. American mass media, largely a de-facto blow horn for the State Department, has cultivated this idea among its citizenry that Russians and their government are inferior to the West. This none-too-subtle Russophobia, on full display during the coverage of the Sochi Olympics, has led to the radical result of people ridiculously believing that Putin personally ordered MH-17 to be shot down.

This leads me to my next point, that no, I don't think the liberal approach of universal friendship is going to be resurrected anytime soon so long as the US continues to act unilaterally and prod Russia. Whenever Russia responds to these actions, it is portrayed as being aggressive and behaving this way for no reason at all, or worse, it's Russophobically written off as being part of 'the way Russia is'. Russia wanted to cooperate with the West and be treated as an equal and respected partner since the end of the Cold War, but unfortunately and for various reasons, the West bungled this historic opportunity. It instead set out on a campaign of slow-motion conquest over Russia and its former sphere of influence, with the expansion of NATO being the most glaring example. In such a position, Russia was of course forced to respond, and when its defensive reaction is spun into an offensive action, the world enters this 'new Cold War'.

On a closing note, you suggested that economic ties can be a tool for overcoming these tensions, and I agree. I'd like to, however, reference the saying 'don't shoot the messenger', and business can be the messenger of international peace and stability. With this understanding, by starting the sanctions war, the West is killing the last lever of institutional interdependence that can improve ties with Russia. It's a huge mistake, in my opinion, and it only completes the psychological divorce between both parties that has been a long way coming.

Thank you very much for this amazing opportunity to have my ideas presented to the Advance audience. I sincerely appreciate it and I hope that everyone enjoyed reading this interview.