

News and Current Events :: Ukraine slides into civil war**Ukraine slides into civil war , on: 2014/5/4 9:31**

Ukraine slides into civil war amid Merkel's bid to bridge US-Russian differences. Putin resigns responsibility

DEBKAFfile Special Report May 3, 2014, 5:34 PM (IDT)

German Chancellor Angela Merkel bid during her visit to Washington Friday, April 2, to bridge the differences between President Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin over Ukraine was overtaken by events on the ground. That morning, the US-backed interim government in Kiev launched its first serious offensive to retake the eastern Ukrainian cities captured by pro-Russian militias, starting with Slavyansk. In Odessa pro-Kiev gangs started a fire which left more than 40 militiamen dead.

Moscow's reaction Saturday came directly from Putin's office. His spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "Neither Russia, nor any other country, can any longer influence citizens of Ukraine's southeast. It will be impossible now to talk them into laying down their weapons when their lives are threatened by radicals, nationalists and armed forces that obey criminal orders and murder their own people."

It was also made clear that the May 25 election was off, as far as the Kremlin was concerned.

Those comments followed the German chancellor's failure to make any headway on Ukraine in her White House interview with Obama, say debkafile's Moscow sources.

That the Merkel-Obama talks did not go well was evident in both their remarks. The chancellor started by saying "We have a few difficulties to overcome between security and protecting privacy." She was not only referring to the simmering scandal following last year's revelation that the US National Security Agency was eavesdropping on her private cell phone calls; she also had in mind another intelligence issue between the two governments: future collaboration between the US and German agencies in Ukraine.

President Obama answered her with a piece of friendly advice: Germans following the Ukraine story from Russia's perspective should "stay focused on the facts and what's happening on the ground," he said, and keep in mind that "there just has not been the kind of honesty and credibility about the situation" from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Obama urged broader sanctions as the only way to make the Russian president see the light.

It was obvious that Obama and Merkel were far from being in accord on Ukraine and on how Putin should be handled. Neither Merkel nor the German BND spy agency subscribes to Obama's unquestioning backing for the interim government in Kiev.

And on Friday, they deeply resented the fact that on the day of Merkel's Washington visit, the Kiev regime was allowed to launch its most serious military offensive against pro-Russian militias to date, starting in Slavyansk and spiraling Saturday into heavy fighting 15 kilometers away in the eastern town of Kramatorsk and other places.

Moscow responded by declaring "no longer viable" the Geneva accords for de-escalating the crisis reached in Geneva two weeks ago by the US, Russia, the EU and Ukraine.

The German chancellor for her part viewed the timing of the Kiev offensive as an American attempt to dictate to Berlin and Europe its policy of harsh, unequivocal confrontation with President Putin - when she had come to Washington to urge Obama to start listening to the Russian president instead of turning a deaf ear.

The wide gap between them came into hard focus when a German reporter at the press conference put a (possibly planted) question to Obama: Why instead of those long, fruitless phone conversations with Putin, doesn't he try to meet him face to face and talk the Ukraine issue over instead of telling him what to do.

The US president ignored the question.

Before deciding whether to continue to try her hand at mediating the quarrel between the two presidents, Merkel faces t

two tough decisions:

1. Whether or not to line up behind Obama's policy of broadening sanctions against Russia until the Kremlin falls in behind Washington on Ukraine.

The answer to this question is negative. At home, the industrial giants that are the engines of Germany's economic prosperity have lined up against this course. Before she went to Washington, she faced a powerful lobby of the chemical giant BASF SE, engineering group Siemens AG, Volkswagen AG, Adidas AG and Deutsche Bank AG, urging her to stand up to the US president against broader sanctions against Russia.

She can't ignore them. Germany's external trade is heavily weighted in favor of ties with Russia and China rather than America and a third of its gas comes from Russia. Furthermore, two former German chancellors Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schroeder are partners in Moscow's state energy concerns.

2. Merkel must also determine whether the BND will join US agents to guarantee the May 25 election. At Friday's news conference in Washington, she noted that not much time is left to that date, a hint that a postponement may be useful for developing dialogue with the Russian ruler and action to cool the hotheads leading the civil violence.

But Obama ignored her comment. Clearly, after giving the Kiev government its head for a military offensive that morning, he was not prepared to give up the prospect of the Ukraine military forcing its will on the dozens of towns held by the pro-Russian militias and making them take part in the vote.

Saturday morning, when it was not quiet clear where the US-Russian-German dance over Ukraine was headed, the pro-Russian militia of Slavyansk without prior notice suddenly released 12 military observers, seven Europeans and 5 Ukrainian officers, a week after seizing them. Among them were four Germans.

Word of their release came from Vladimir Lukin, an envoy sent by Putin to negotiate the release. It was accompanied by a comment from Moscow that it would be "absurd" to try and hold an election amidst a civil war. The Russian president appeared to be signaling he was amenable to certain concessions in return for postponing or calling off Ukraine's elections.

But when no positive reaction came from Washington, Putin took the step of disowning responsibility for the violence spiraling in Ukraine.

After entering Kramatorsk, Ukrainian "anti-terrorism center" official Vasyl Krutov told reporters Saturday afternoon: "What we are facing in the Donetsk region and in the eastern regions is not just some kind of short-lived uprising, it is in fact war."

Re: Ukraine slides into civil war - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/5/4 12:37

Greetings Neil

Thank you for this post. I am praying. I just wanted to thank you for sharing your insights here with us. I know your heart for JESUS and am thankful for your thoughts in all of this.

God bless and keep you brother
mj