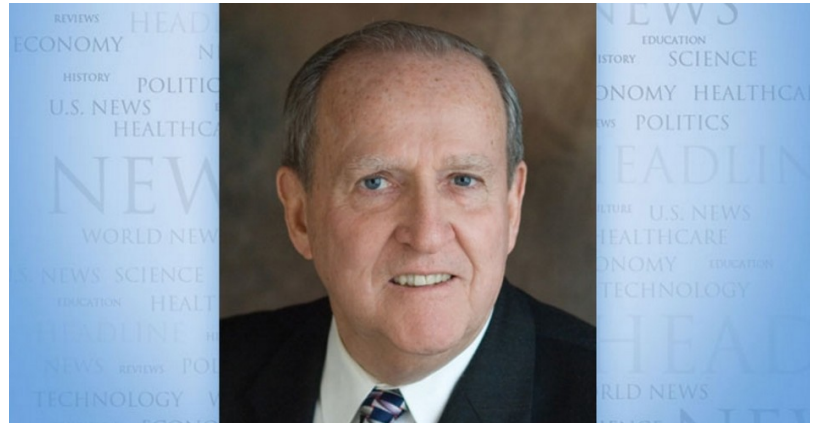




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on August 5, 2014

Is Putin Abandoning Ukraine's Russian Separatists?

The population of Eastern Ukraine bordering Russia is ethnically Russian. The same could be said of the Crimean peninsula in southeast Ukraine, the region absorbed by Russia earlier in 2014. After Russia's successful (to date) absorption of Crimea, large Russian-speaking enclaves in other portions of the beleaguered country wanted the same absorption to occur for them.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin certainly gave the go-ahead for his forces to take Crimea, but he now seems to be backing away after initially supplying support in the bloody conflict being conducted by separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine. The Associated Press cites a pro-Russian separatist fighter in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk who wonders why expected help isn't arriving: "What is Putin waiting for? We had hoped for help from Russia but we have been abandoned. Our strength is nearing an end and the Ukrainian army is advancing."

Donetsk has seen 20 percent of its population of one million flee from fighting that has raged for several weeks. The ethnically Russian separatist forces have lately taken to confiscating vehicles, food, and any other useful resources from the people. But Putin seems now to have decided to ignore any more cries for help from the separatists he originally encouraged.

Without doubt, the Russian leader fomented the trouble engulfing the area. [He took action after pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted by Ukrainian nationalists earlier this year.](#) New Ukrainian leadership opposes separation of more of the country's territory, and newly elected President Petro Poroshenko even hinted at wanting to ally with Western Europe and the European Union, and even affiliate with NATO. Fancying himself as the equal of all of his opposition to the West, Putin sought to demonstrate a self-deluding major player stature with his moves against Ukraine. He instead brought a series of economic sanctions on his country that seem to have gotten his attention.

What the immediate future will bring to Ukraine is unknown. After debacles in Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan, the American people have grown intensely disinclined to have our government get militarily involved in any more frays. We can only agree with that sentiment. America's chosen role as policeman of the world has got to stop.

John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This



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