



Written by [James Heiser](#) on August 28, 2014

Invading Russian Soldiers Caught by Ukrainian Authorities

After months of threats and feints and military aid to rebels in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the evidence of an active Russian invasion of Ukraine is coming to light. [According to the New York Times](#), the “prime minister” of the rump Donetsk People’s Republic claims that as many as 4,000 Russian troops — many of them active duty — have now entered Ukraine to fight against the Ukrainian government. In addition, the [BBC is now reporting](#) that a variant of the Russian T-72 tank (the T-72BM) which the Russians have never exported has now been seen and photographed in Ukraine in areas controlled by the Russian-backed rebels.



At the same time that Russian troops and tanks are overtly invading his country, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko met with Putin in Minsk, Belarus, [attempting to get the Russian ruler to commit to ceasefire in Ukraine](#). However, Putin denied any involvement in the Ukrainian crisis and rebuffed Poroshenko: “We didn’t substantively discuss that [a ceasefire], and we, [Russia](#), can’t substantively discuss conditions of a ceasefire, of agreements between Kiev, Donetsk and Luhansk. That’s not our business, it’s up to [Ukraine](#) itself.” Following the two-hour meeting, the Ukrainian government released video footage of captured Russian paratroopers and [accused the Russian government](#) of having overtly sent troops into Ukraine under orders to support the Moscow-backed rebellion. Ukrainian military spokesman Andriy Lysenko [told reporters](#): “If elite troops do not know topography and do not know their locality, I can say nothing about that. The armed forces, the generals sent people to the east of Ukraine. We believe that was not a mistake.”

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Some commentators have compared Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 to their present activities in Ukraine. However, one marked contrast has been the gradualism which Putin has utilized in the current invasion. [As one observer has noted](#), Russian President Vladimir Putin has learned a lesson from Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad:

That lesson is this: the Western world can set all the red lines it wants — don’t use chemical weapons, don’t invade sovereign countries — but if you cross that red line just a little bit at a time, inching across over weeks and months, rather than crossing it all at once, then Western publics and politicians will get red-line fatigue and lose interest by the time you’re across.

Incrementalism worked for Putin in Russia’s illegal occupation of Crimea and it may very well work in his efforts to seize several regions of eastern Ukraine.

In essence, a sudden invasion by 20,000 soldiers and hundreds of tanks might lead to a stronger



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worldwide reaction. But a series of invasions a few hundred soldiers at a time, as well as training and logistical support for ostensibly ‘Ukrainian’ rebels — [including allegedly providing the BUK missile launcher which destroyed a Malaysian Airlines passenger jet](#) — has arguably not led to the same degree of reaction a more overt invasion might have elicited.

Furthermore, the incremental Russian invasion of Ukraine has allowed those who stand to profit from continued good relations with Russia to downplay the significance of Russian interventionism. Thus, for example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel recently undermined Ukrainian independence by signaling that her nation had no problem with Ukraine being drawn into the [Eurasian Union](#) — Vladimir Putin’s new version of the old Soviet Union.

Mere days before Poroshenko and Putin would meet in Minsk, [Merkel told German public broadcaster ARD](#): “if Ukraine says we are going to the Eurasian Union now, the European Union would never make a big conflict out of it, but would insist on a voluntary decision.” She further declared:

I want to find a way, as many others do, which does not damage Russia. We [Germany] want to have good trade relations with Russia as well. We want reasonable relations with Russia. We are depending on one another and there are so many other conflicts in the world where we should work together, so I hope we can make progress.

In the assessment of some analysts, Merkel’s caveat on Ukrainian membership in the Eurasian Union — that it be a “voluntary decision” — lacks credibility: How could such a decision be “voluntary” when faced with invasion by Russia? Furthermore, Merkel — a former propaganda commissar for the East German Young Communists — is no stranger to the process of manufactured “public opinion.” The restoration of Russian power through the new Eurasian Union poses a substantial longterm threat to European security. [Aleksandr Dugin, the father of Putin’s Eurasianist doctrine](#), has emphasized that the Eurasian Union should eventually incorporate all the territory from “[Dublin to Vladivostok](#).” Thus far, when the Eurasian Union comes into formal existence in January 2015, it will consist of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Analysts believe that Putin needs Ukraine to be incorporated into the Eurasian Union if it is to have a realistic chance of becoming a significant geopolitical force.

The meeting this week between Putin and Poroshenko took place during an official summit of the “Customs Union” — the organization which will become the Eurasian Union next year. Merkel’s comments prior to the summit, and her presence at that summit, appear to signal her government’s willingness to see Ukraine incorporated into Putin’s Eurasian Union — regardless of the consequences for Ukraine — as long as Russia is ‘not damaged.’ At the same time, Poroshenko continues to express Ukraine’s commitment to closer economic relations with the European Union — despite efforts by Merkel, the leader of the most powerful state in the European Union, to push Ukraine to the arms of a union created to oppose the European Union.

As noted in [a July 3 article for Breitbart.com](#), Merkel’s Communist past — and possible ties to Vladimir Putin during his days as an agent in East Germany — continue to raise questions:

One Washington foreign policy expert, who did not wish to be named, this week described Merkel to Breitbart London as “a former member of the East German Communist Party who functioned as a mid-level propaganda commissar for the Free German Youth, that is, the young Communists.”

“She and the then-KGB operative Putin, who is fluent in German, were active in East Germany at the same time. Whether they met or worked together, I don’t know, but they were both in the same line of work.”



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With Merkel willing to see Ukraine in the Eurasian Union to avoiding “damaging” Russia, some observers are left wondering whether they are *still* “in the same line of work.” As M.E. Synon wrote for Breitbart: “Americans frustrated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s reluctance to meet demands for stronger sanctions against Russia have now begun to ask if there is a good reason the German leader has been targeted by US spies.”

Photo of smoke rising after shelling in the town of Novoazovsk, eastern Ukraine, Aug. 26, 2014: AP Images



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