

Moscow preparing to send Belarus the way of Crimea and the Donbas

Opinion

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“...Severin Kvyatkovsky says that ‘Russia in principle needs a weak and dependent Belarus’; not only in the event of a conflict with the West but in general: Moscow doesn’t want ‘strong independent neighbors. Therefore the Russian Federation will use any means and situations to achieve its goals.’”

By Paul Goble for “Window on Eurasia: Russian propaganda outlets are employing exactly the same thematics they did before Moscow intervened in Ukraine, insisting that Belarusians are being led by anti-Russian nationalists who represent the only game in town even though they would much prefer to be part of the Russian Federation, according to a survey by Vadim Dovnar. He quotes one Russian media outlet as saying ‘the real position of [Belarusians] is integrationist and pro-Russian but the forces capable of leading the protest in this context in Belarus are lacking. Therefore, people gritting their teeth follow the nationalists because it turns out there isn’t anyone else’; (apostrophe.ua/article/world/ex-ussr/2017-03-09/zachem-rossiyskaya-propaganda-povtoryaet-ukrainskiy-stsenariy-v-minske/10787). Denis Ivashin, editor of the Belarusian site InformNapalm, argues that this is part and parcel of a Russian effort to suggest that Belarus is now ‘a failed state’; and that Russians must be ready to take action to save the situation just as Moscow did in the case of Ukraine three years ago. Another Belarusian commentator, Severin Kvyatkovsky says that ‘Russia in principle needs a weak and dependent Belarus’; not only in the event of a conflict with the West but in general: Moscow doesn’t want ‘strong independent neighbors. Therefore the Russian Federation will use any means and situations to achieve its goals.’ And Viktor Martinovich, a Belarusian writer adds, that in his view, Moscow’s current propaganda effort has two audiences: The Belarusian which is being told that it must not move toward the West and the Russian which is being reminded that Moscow may have to take action to prevent that from happening. In a comment to Kseniya Kirillova of RFE/RL, Belarusian security analyst Andrey Savitsky puts the Russian propaganda effort in the context of the Gerasimov Doctrine, a reference to the ideas of General Valery Gerasimov about hybrid war. (On his doctrine, see ypk-news.ru/articles/14632; for Savitsky’s words, see ru.krymr.com/a/28357521.html.) According to Savitsky, Moscow is not only using propaganda but active measures to ‘expand its influence in various spheres in the first instance in the security services, bureaucratic apparatus and even among certain NGOs and opposition groups’; both directly and via false flag operations, something that further confuses the situation and makes it more explosive.

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The commentary above is from Paul Goble’s “Window on Eurasia” series and appears here with the author’s permission. Contact Goble at: paul.goble@gmail.com