

Putin's "peacekeepers" -- a ploy to legitimize the Donbas "republics"

Opinion

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No one in their right mind – particularly not the Ukrainians – are buying into Vladimir Putin's sudden interest in UN peacekeepers in Donbas. This transparent ploy is designed to make the current conflict border rather than the Ukrainian sovereign border the line to be protected and enforced. Look for Petro Poroshenko to loudly protest any serious consideration of this ruse for two reasons. First, Poroshenko knows how fraudulent the idea is as a way to promote peace and secondly, he knows that his acceptance of such a plan would assure his defeat in his re-election efforts.

Writing in Euromaidan Press, political analyst Vitaly Portnikov says: Vladimir Putin is not interested in having UN peacekeepers in the Donbas but in preventing Ukrainian proposals on the deployment of peacekeepers from becoming a topic of international discussion. The Russian mission at the UN delivered Moscow's proposal on the introduction of peacekeepers into the conflict zone in the Donbas to the UN General Secretary. This demonstrated once again that the statement of Russian President Vladimir Putin was not spontaneous and that Moscow had carefully prepared another propaganda campaign designed to demonstrate its interest in resolving the situation. But I would not place too much hope in a change in Putin's approach to events in the Donbas, nor would I support his initiative, as the German Minister for Foreign Affairs Sigmar Gabriel has already done. A careful analysis of Putin's statement suggests that the Russian president is not interested in having UN peacekeepers appear in the zone of conflict but rather in preventing Ukrainian proposals on the deployment of peacekeepers from becoming an important topic for international discussion. Putin says that peacekeepers in the Donbas may be deployed only after a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons. This is the first point of the Minsk agreements. This is a point Moscow could have implemented many times already, but for some reason is in no hurry to do so. It is in no hurry because the Kremlin is perfectly aware that the cessation of the bombardment of Ukraine would greatly limit the opportunities to destabilize the situation in our country. And this is clearly not in Russia's interests. Putin wants the peacekeepers to appear exclusively on the line of demarcation of the occupied territories. Simply put, this would mean transferring the Russian border. The point of having peacekeepers is precisely that they would be able to control the part of the border between Russia Ukraine that is now under Moscow's control. […]

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