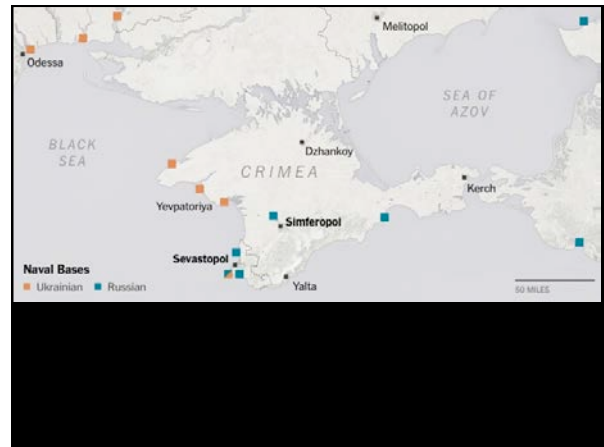




Russia and Central Asian Politics
October 11, 2017

A few notes about Crimea...

- Historically not a part of Ukraine: "gifted" to the Ukrainian SSR in the fifties by Khrushchev.
- Major naval basis: Black Sea Fleet
- Ethnicity:
 - Russian: 59%
 - Ukrainian: 24%
 - Tatar: 10%
- Languages:
 - Russian: 77%
 - Tatar: 11%
 - Ukrainian: 10%



2014 Timeline: Crimea

- February 23: pro-Russian demonstrations.
- February 27: Russian troops occupy.
- March 16: referendum on future of Crimea.
- March 18: annexation formally approved by Russia.



Svoboda
(Ukrainian
nationalist party)



2014-15 Timeline: Eastern Ukraine

- April 2014: Pro-Russian separatists occupy government buildings in several provinces.
- March: first sanctions by EU and US announced.
 - Sanctions increased incrementally from April to present.
- May 9: Building in Mariupol burned by Ukrainian security during conflict.

2014-15 Timeline: Eastern Ukraine

- Late spring-summer 2014: civil war breaks out.
- July 17: Malaysian Airlines #17 shot down.
- September 5: first Minsk Protocol (negotiated ceasefire).
- February 12, 2015: second Minsk Protocol (ditto).

Observations

- Among all five actors (Ukraine, separatists, Russia, EU, US): tendentious reporting, misrepresentation of events.
- News media has largely repeated dominant political discourses.
- HRW (Human Rights Watch) and UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees): both Ukrainian government and separatists likely have committed war crimes.

Returning to where we left off on Sept 27 (!)

1990s vs 2000-10s

1990s

- Pol and econ transition
- Economic decline
- Decentralization, separatism
- Oligarchs
- Organized crime
- Free/fair elections
- Social anomie
- Weak internationally

2000-10s

- Political stabilization
- Econ growth
- Re-centralization
- De-democratization
- Oligarchs tamed; crime down
- Electoral fraud
- Optimism
- Reemergence as regional (not global) power

Putinism

- Centralization (retraction of federalism)
- Weakening of democratic institutions
 - High threshold for дума elections
 - Elimination of election of governors (then reintroduction, elimination again, now partial reintroduction)
- Continuing weak party system with obstacles to party formation

Putinism

- State influence over media
 - State-owned channels
 - Channels owned by corporate interests close to the state
- "War" against oligarchs

Effects of Putinism

- Less danger of "state capture"
- Significantly less danger of disintegration (separatism)
- Economic stabilization
 - some credit goes to Yeltsin to: 1990s reforms finally show results in 2000s
- Control over inflation

Effects of Putinism

- Near complete marketization of economy
 - much accomplished under Yeltsin
 - still, some state penetration (see Shiraev)
- Reduction in crime
- Endemic corruption (especially state contracts)
- Campaign against opponents
- Election rigging