

EU Agreement Turns Ukraine Into a Concubine

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Ukraine has the right to join any association it wants. At the same time, however, Russia has the right to defend its own interests.

From the very outset, the Association Agreement that Ukraine is slated to sign with the European Union was intended to come at Russia's expense in several ways. First, EU member countries hope to profit by using Ukraine as a primary gateway for their goods to penetrate the Russian consumer market. When the Kremlin expressed the firm intention to halt these plans, it naturally angered those for whom it would cause a loss of income.

The Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine is meant to weaken

Russia.

Second, the Association Agreement breaks the tightly interlinked technological and industrial ties between the Russian and Ukrainian economies and makes it impossible to expand the overall market of the Eurasian Union with Ukraine.

Third, the Association Agreement will obstruct the unity of Russia and Ukraine as part of a larger Russian Orthodox civilization. For 1,000 years, the ancestors of present-day Ukrainians called themselves Russians, and Kiev was the first capital of Rus, the "mother of all Russian cities." The authors of the Association Agreement, which include die-hard opponents of Russia, are hoping to torpedo any chance of Ukrainian-Russian unity as a means of preventing Russia from ever restoring its superpower status. These people sincerely believe the principle enunciated by former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski: "Russia with Ukraine is always an empire, but Russia without Ukraine is always a weak country." The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU is determined to keep Russia weak.

Poland is actually the main beneficiary of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU. The ruling elite in Warsaw pine for the days when Poland was a great European power controlling Ukraine. Thanks to the agreement, Polish goods, which enjoy subsidies and protection from the EU, will be able to gain a strong market share in Ukraine. By relying on the mandate and influence of the EU, Poland hopes to become the de facto protector of Ukraine and dictate conditions to Ukraine's elite. In this way, Poland will be able to fulfill its dream of becoming an equal power with Germany and France. It is no coincidence that the main initiators behind the project are former Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and EU Ambassador to Ukraine Jan Tombinski. We got a small glimpse of these Polish imperial ambitions during Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski's recent meeting with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. Sikorski acted as if he were a superior delivering an ultimatum to a subordinate and afterwards, suggested to Ukrainian journalists that they listen to his speech in Polish without translation.

If Ukraine joined the EU, it would not be for love, but for money — like an attractive young woman might marry an aging oligarch. But the Association Agreement the EU is offering Ukraine is more like an oligarch taking not a wife but a concubine whom he can exploit at his pleasure. Concubines who fall in these difficult circumstances need protection, not sympathy. In fact, the disadvantageous deal would damage Ukraine's economy by opening it up to the EU without providing anything in return. In this arrangement, Ukraine would only gain access to EU markets for which it has nothing to offer, while a burdensome 2 percent quota would be imposed in those markets for which Ukraine does produce competitive goods. Of course, the EU does not intend to grant Ukraine full membership or a visa-free relationship, particularly since EU citizens have been calling for a halt to immigration. The EU will not admit Ukraine into the union for the same reasons it has always rejected Turkey: it is considered too large, poor and different from countries in Western European civilization.

The agreement with the EU is being forced upon Ukrainians through propaganda and false statements about the positive impact it will have on the economy. The agreement will deliver a serious blow to the Ukrainian mining and chemical sectors, particularly in the Russian-

speaking south and east. Ukraine's agriculture industry will also have difficulty competing with its EU counterparts, which enjoy the protection of heavy EU subsidies and quotas.

The Association Agreement will only benefit a handful of Ukrainian oligarchs and their close associates, particularly in the mining industry because it will enable them to integrate their production with the EU. The oligarchs will also use the agreement to legalize assets they had originally obtained through illicit means. In fact, the agreement reflects the ideology of Ukraine's oligarchical regime: Everything for the oligarchs, table scraps for the people and a steady decline for the country.

The agreement not only places Ukraine on unequal footing with the EU but puts it in a semi-colonial relationship because it obligates Kiev to comply with EU regulations without granting it the right to influence the formulation of those rules. Obviously, it is in the EU's interests to surround itself with not only friendly states but also countries that agree to give up significant parts of their sovereignty to Brussels. But once the negative consequences of the agreement become evident, the Ukrainian people will try to shake off that colonial yoke. After all, if the Ukrainian authorities use lies to deprive citizens of a future and make them poorer, the people will eventually protest. This protest will be directed not only at Brussels but at Poland as well, Ukraine's historical colonizers.

Because Ukrainians will protest what is essentially a colonial arrangement, the Association Agreement will become a strategic liability for the EU. The agreement also reflects Washington's intention to drive a wedge between Russia and Ukraine and block a closer alliance between the EU and Russia. Moscow's struggle with Brussels over Ukraine will effectively end all plans for Russia's increased cooperation with the EU, and that is one more reason why this country opposes the agreement. Russia would like to achieve the maximum possible cooperation with the EU, not compete with it.

Russia is offering Ukraine the chance at its own version of the European Union, called the Eurasian Union. It would be formed according to the same principles as the EU, and Ukraine could take part in its creation on an equal basis with Kazakhstan and Belarus. Of course, it is clear that the main objective of the Association Agreement is to prevent Ukraine from joining the Eurasian Union and to undermine a closer alliance with Russia.

After the vote on the Association Agreement at the EU summit in Vilnius on Nov. 28 to 29, nobody will punish Ukraine. A close, fraternal relationship exists between Russians and Ukrainians, and they cannot be held responsible for a colonial treaty that was forced upon them. Russia would like to see this historical choice made by the Ukrainian people, not by foreign powers or a group of corrupt Ukrainian oligarchs.

Moscow understands that Ukrainians favor good relations with the EU but not at the cost of its 1,000-year fraternal bond with Russia. The will of the Ukrainian people should determine their country's official policy.

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