Thousands March Against War in Ukraine in Moscow Protest
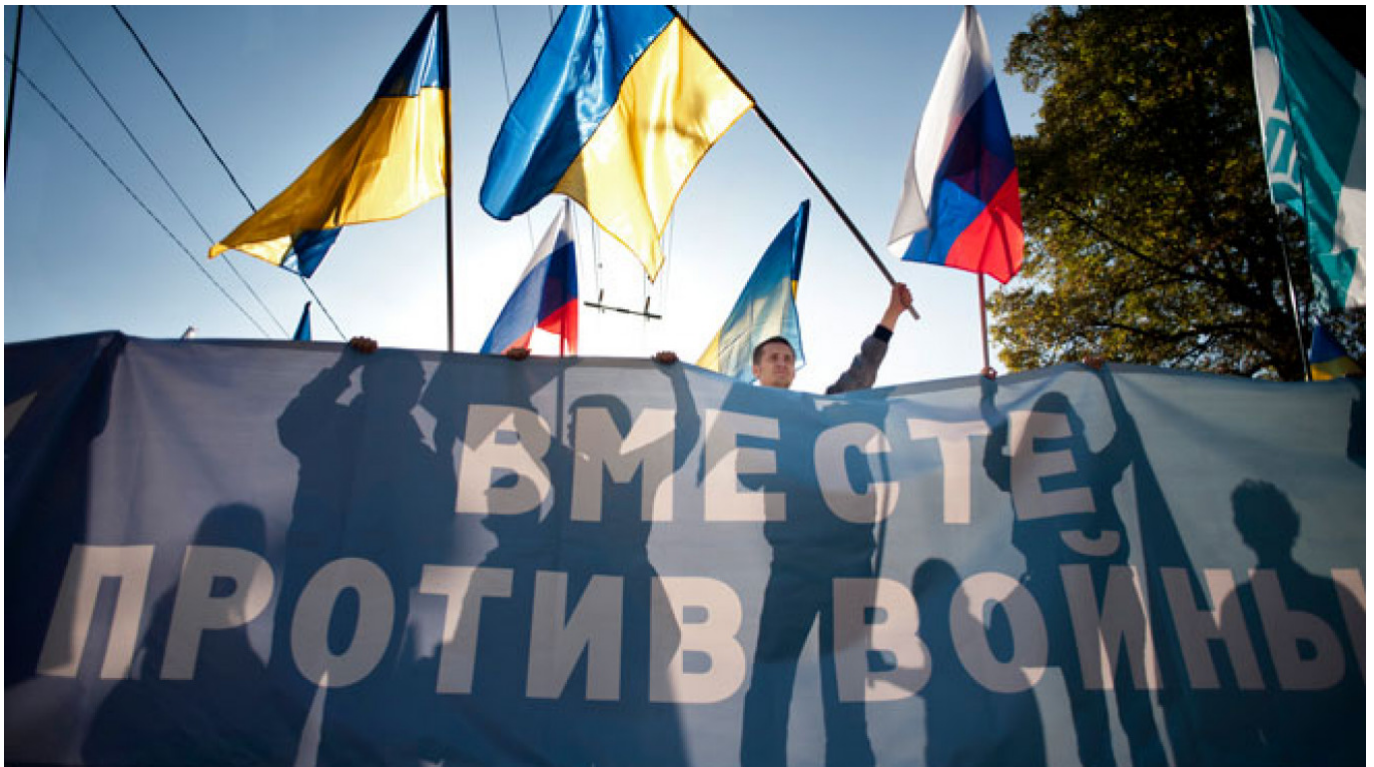
By Gabrielle Tetrault-Farber

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Thousands of Muscovites marched through the streets of the capital Sunday to protest what they see as Russia's role in fueling the Ukraine conflict.

As in Moscow's past protests, statistics of the event varied greatly among different sources. Moscow police estimated that some 5,000 protesters had taken part in the protest, while Russia's Union of Observers said that more than 26,000 people had in fact taken to the streets. Organizers had hoped up to 50,000 people would turn out to protest Russia's policies towards Ukraine, which they described as "irresponsible and aggressive."

Marching through the city center, demonstrators chanted slogans such as "no to war!" and "glory to Ukraine!" under the watchful eyes of hundreds of police officers. Others bellowed "Russia without Putin!," the mantra of the anti-Kremlin protests of 2011 and 2012. No violent incidents were reported during the protest.

Muscovites of all ages marched from Pushkin Square to Sakharov Avenue, parading in a sea

of Russian and Ukrainian flags. Members of opposition parties such as PRP-Parnas, Yabloko and blogger Alexey Navalny's Progress Party also waved banners featuring their parties' respective colors during the demonstration.

See the Photo Gallery: [Moscow's Mass March for 'Peace in Ukraine'](#)

The anti-war protesters were greeted by a striking banner unfurled on a building opposite Pushkin Square that read "March of Traitors" and depicted the faces of prominent figures of the protest movement, including those of opposition politician Boris Nemtsov, writer Lyudmila Ulitskaya and rock singer Andrei Makarevich.

Dozens of other demonstrators gathered in central Moscow to stage a counter-protest in support of Russia's stance on the Ukrainian crisis. Passersby flung wads of fake American dollar bills at the anti-war protestors, a gesture apparently meant to shift the blame for the Ukrainian crisis onto the West.

Sunday's event served as a continuation of the last Peace March held ahead of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March, according to its organizers.

Activists in more than 30 cities around the world, including Kiev, St. Petersburg, Paris and New York, also staged protests against the Russian government's approach to the crisis in Ukraine on Sunday, coinciding with the United Nations' International Day of Peace. Similar protests in the Russian cities of Saratov, Perm, Petrozavodsk, Syktyvkar, Barnaul and Yekaterinburg each attracted dozens of protesters, Gazeta.ru reported.

According to opposition politician Ilya Ponomaryov, the protest in his native city of Novosibirsk, which local authorities had not sanctioned, was promptly broken up by police.

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