



JHU/APL Seminar Series
*Rethinking U.S. Enduring Strengths,
Challenges, and Opportunities*

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Prof. Paul Goble
The Institute of World Politics
*Russia, Ukraine and the West:
A New 9/11 for the US*

Notes:

1. Below are informal notes taken by a JHU/APL staff member at the Seminar.
2. Links to the video, audio, and presentation files for this and past seminars can be found on the [Rethinking Seminars](#) website and the [JHU/APL YouTube Playlist](#).
3. Professor Goble summarized his thoughts in a PowerPoint presentation, which is also available on the [Video Archives](#) page of the website.

Introduction

Professor Goble noted that he is living in rural Staunton, VA, but remains involved in Russian area studies making frequent trips to Washington. The local radio station, a country-western format, does provide some news of the world. Recently, the morning host reported that Putin had seized Crimea, and then stated “We hear Putin is now moving on to Transdnestr. We’ll bring you an update after we can find it on a map.” Six months ago most Americans could not find Crimea or Ukraine on the map, so recent events are helping them learn geography, even if it is hard for them to do so. For his talk, Professor Goble said that he would be explaining why what is going on in Crimea and Ukraine is not really about Crimea and Ukraine.

WHY CRIMEA AND WHY NOW?

As in the old connect-the-dots game, you sometimes need draw from outside the range of dots to make them connect.

- In the case of Russia and Crimea, the real issue is the South China Sea
- The crisis in Ukraine and Crimea may end, but the lessons others learn will have more impact on US foreign policy than anything Putin can do in the near term

Big problem: Incidents over the last 25 years have led Americans to the wrong conclusions about the nature of the world

- 1991: “The End of History” concept opined that all countries were becoming liberal democracies with free market economies and would be strategic partners of the US

- So Americans believed or assumed that:
 - The US could take time off from foreign affairs
 - Every country would be OK if it could only get its free markets in order
 - All countries had the same basic interests with an occasional bad apple
 - The world was generally a good place because things were going our way
- While these were not very serious or intellectually sound positions, they did inform Washington thinking at the time
- September 11th 2001: US got the wake-up call that there is evil in the world and some people did not like the US and would be willing to do bad things to the US
 - Came to the wrong conclusions again starting with those about Putin because he was the first to call President Bush after the attack
 - New assumptions:
 - Evil was coming from sub-state actors most of the time and nation states would line up with the US on strategy – same general idea as in 1991
 - Not that many countries would be problems – even got the number down to three at one time
 - US could get most countries to go along with it on major issues
 - There was no such thing as geo-politics or ideological competition or a fundamental threat to the interests and values of the US
- Now: Putin's seizure of Crimea and subversion in Ukraine shows that US conclusions have been wrong all along
 - There is evil in the world
 - That threats can come from the leaders of powerful states, even those with nuclear weapons, is a concept that is very uncomfortable for Americans to accept

If what Putin has done re Crimea is allowed to stand, the 3 key US-brokered settlements of the 20th century will be undermined, damaging the international stability structure

- Settlement 1: 1991 settlement on the inviolability of international borders
 - The US did not really want the break-up of the Soviet Union – as has been described in Ambassador Jack Matlock's publications
 - The US wanted a liberal democratic free market Soviet Union minus the Baltic States, which the US had never recognized as part of the USSR
 - Did not understand that a liberal democratic Soviet Union was a contradiction in terms
 - In Feb 1992 US stated it would not recognize any secession state from the former Soviet Union – borders must remain in place
 - Probably a mistake since borders are likely to change and will do so violently
 - Bottom line: If Putin gets away with it this time, this will not be the end
 - Crimea is not even the best candidate for Russian aggression in the area
 - There were no articles in the Moscow press about the oppression of ethnic Russians in Crimea until Feb 1, 2014
 - Crimea is a created issue based on how Putin read the US and his own tenuous political position
- Settlement 2: 1945 settlement involving the primacy of citizenship over ethnicity

- Much more serious issue, especially since there will be no region in the world that won't face increased instability
- A post-World War II settlement established the UN and based it on the concept that citizenship would have primacy over ethnicity
- Concept: governments would act as the representatives of citizens who were of their own ethnicity and those who were not
- If this settlement is reversed, then problems will arise with countries which have large numbers of co-ethnics overseas – largest of these is China
 - Number of Russians outside the Russian Federation is falling dramatically
 - 1991 about 25 million but now probably under 15 million
 - Partially due to the aging/dying of the population
 - Also due to the fact that Russian identity is so weak that many are changing their identities to Ukrainian or even Central Asian
 - Many others could also cause problems without this settlement in place
- Settlement 3: 1919 settlement involving the primacy of nation states over empires
 - The 1919 Versailles Settlement provided that nations and states were coterminous (having the same or coincident boundaries) and that empires were rejected
 - Important because if empires come back (as both Putin and his aids have said) then oppression becomes the norm
 - Empires are not liberal democratic states
 - They will implode but with a significant amount of oppression first – and that would not be in the best interest of the US
 - US must recognize that borders in Europe historically have changed a great deal
 - 1945-1989: longest period without significant European border changes
 - Americans today grew up believing the norm that borders do not change
 - If borders start changing, they are likely to do so violently and efforts to change borders will increase
 - Of great concern are the large numbers of Overseas Chinese
 - In 1965 at the time of the Indonesian coup d'état over 250,000 ethnic Chinese were killed but Beijing could do nothing about it
 - China had no navy and the US 7th Fleet was in the way anyway
 - If something similar happens again, then this time China will intervene even at a lower level of killings or threats
 - When China intervenes it will invoke Crimea as a precedent
- Bottom line: The US must recognize that the concept that democracy is inevitable and that everyone will be a friend is just not true

“War of a New Type”

- Based not on naked aggression but rather on deniable subversion
 - Already being discussed in Moscow
 - Does not involve sending identifiable troops across a border
- The willingness of some in the world to accept Putin's lies about what is going on in Ukraine is outrageous
 - Goble had said in interviews: “You can tell Putin is lying; he's moving his lips”
- People are learning lessons from what the US is doing in Ukraine

- US must learn lessons, too, or we will pay a big price

To Understand Crimea

First, we must understand what is happening in the Kremlin and the Russian Federation; otherwise we would incorrectly believe that Crimea was a one-time event

- Between 2000 and 2010 Putin made a bargain sometimes implicit, sometimes less so with the people of the Russian Federation
 - If they gave into his authoritarian tendencies, he would ensure they had a rapid rise in their living standards
 - However, the economic crisis of 2008-2010 collapsed that bargain
 - Russia has been in recession since then
 - Brought on capital flight of about \$150B in the last 12 months – higher even than 1988 when the ruble collapsed under Yeltsin’s devaluation
- In 2011-12 Putin faced opposition from protesters in Moscow and other cities
- Bottom line: Putin is doing what he is doing recently as a way to generate patriotism
 - Same way he energized population to power him into the presidency of the Russian Federation in 1999
 - Putin organized the blowing up of an apartment building killing over 300 of his own citizens
 - Wants to create an atmosphere in Moscow so that he will be deferred to
 - Also, raising his popularity and putting him in a position to act
 - Had the financial crisis not occurred and the bargain with the people not broken down, Putin would not be doing what he is doing now

Second, Putin is operating on how he views the world in general and the US in particular

- Putin was sure that the US would not respond to his moves in Ukraine
 - Even SecState Kerry said that Putin should not take personally whatever the US did in response to Russian actions in Crimea
 - But the man who made the decisions must take responses personally
- However, Putin may be proved very wrong
 - He has re-energized NATO
 - But security arrangements must be sufficiently funded and designed correctly for the area between the Baltic and the Black Sea
- Those close to Putin also report that he believes he is up against the weakest American president in a century and he has 30 months to act before a change might occur
 - Goble thinks he is wrong but this is what Putin is acting on
- Bottom line: This may bring on an early stage of an updated version of the Phony War from just before WWII
 - The 1939 agreement between Stalin and Hitler meant that even Hitler’s advances into Poland were not considered a threat to any other country
 - The Communists encouraged this idea among their fellow travelers and left-of-center supporters world wide
 - Hitler did not carry out any other attacks for 6 months supporting this concept
 - Russians who grew up during Soviet times never learned about the Phony War
 - If they had known, they would have seen what Moscow did to keep people from building defenses against Hitler

- Goble believes that we may be entering into a new “Phony War” period
 - May hear people start saying that we may need to accept Russian actions in Crimea because we have bigger issues with Russia
 - Must remember that this is not about Crimea, but about something much deeper

A More Fundamental Issue: *Delayed Action Mines* (DAMs)

- Russians like to talk about DAMs – things that are developing under the surface that will come to a head at some point in the future
- These recent DAMs are very severe since because Putin has been successful changing one set of borders, he is likely to continue until the Russian state is destroyed
 - A former aid called Putin the Gravedigger of the Russian State
 - Actions that Putin is likely to take will be like adding wood to a grease fire
- By damaging the borders, Putin is leading Russia to an imperial collapse, such that Russia has a greater chance of falling apart now than at any point since 1993
 - Consequences have not been seriously looked at because they are so scary
 - Could update the statement by SecState Baker that he did not want to live in a world with a nuclear Yugoslavia
 - Spreading the problem rather than reducing it
- Bottom line: Expect to see Russia with smaller borders
 - Putin’s efforts in Crimea are equivalent to a dying star swelling up just before collapsing into a red dwarf
 - Advice: Don’t buy maps
 - Buy stock in companies that make maps since they will need to be changed and updated often
 - But, NDU still has a map with the USSR

The Russian Federation’s Problem: It is falling apart

- Russia really was a failed state in the 1990s
 - No one called it that because no one wanted to think about a failed state with nuclear weapons
 - Failed states can still have powerful institutions and actors even when they lacked a controlling center as Russia did under Yeltsin
- Putin has been pulling the country back together
- The Russian Federation (RF) is now a strong entity but...
 - It can best be described the way Voltaire described the Holy Roman Empire, which wasn’t holy, Roman, or an empire, but calling it that was not a bad idea
 - The Russian Federation is:
 - Not the Soviet Union
 - Not Russia
 - Not a Federation
- That the RF is not the Soviet Union has pluses and minuses
 - Positives
 - The population is more homogenous (About 72-74% nominally Russian up from about 51% in 1989)
 - It is easier to put together a mono-ethnic state, but less interesting

- Non-Russians inside it are less interested or able to pursue independence
 - The US has changed the rules about not changing borders
 - In 1992 if Chechnya had become independent there would now be no news about the Islamists regimes of the North Caucasus
 - Negatives (far greater than the positives of not being the Soviet Union)
 - There is an enormous sense of collapse
 - Going from SuperPower to not-SuperPower is a devastating status loss
 - Loss of domestic status can be seen in rapid demographic changes
 - Life expectancy of Russian men declined 12 years over the last 20
 - Biggest peacetime decline in history anywhere in the world
 - Not just low birthrates but super high adult male mortality rate, often driven by alcoholism,
 - 18-35 year old ethnic Russian men are more likely to die in Russia than the same age group men in Afghanistan or Iraq
 - Part of the problem and a sign of it is the decline in caloric intake
 - 1989 Russians on average consumed 3200 calories a day which then dropped to as low as 1800 calories a day
 - Now the rate is more like 2200 calories a day so it is rising, but it is hard to run a robust society with such figures
- Apparently, Soviet specialists in the US did not have children otherwise they would not have offered the policy they did that eliminated all forces of order in Russia
 - Little thought was given to what would happen in Russia once the restraints on the population were removed
 - As with teenagers, without forces of order, there is little inclination to obey laws just because it would be a good idea
 - Without the forces of order in place, Russia became a failed state and then Putin attempted to reconstitute order by using adventurous military techniques
- Underappreciated but fundamental to understanding the tragedy: Russia became an empire before the Russian people became a nation so it never did become a nation state
 - The Russian people have always been a state nation – enormous consequences
 - Leads to lack of acceptance of borders
 - Efforts to create a social compact have been very limited
 - Countries where the nation predates the state tend to have more problems
 - Nationalism becomes the response to threat or failure
 - Example: the number of neighborhood flags increased dramatically after September 11th but those numbers have dropped somewhat now
 - When there is a state before there is a nation, then identification goes in the same direction
 - When one is weak, the other is weak also
 - Support for Putin today is a reflection of this, but if there is failure then his support drops, too
 - Nationalism and state power track together, thereby causing more instability
 - Result: Once a leader starts down a path, changing it is nearly impossible

The Russian Federation is not Russian

- Every poll in the last few years shows that 50-75% of ethnic Russians believe the borders of the Russian Federation are wrong; should be those of the old USSR
- There is even some talk among politicians about getting back Poland, Finland and reopening discussions on treaties about Alaska, and northern California
- It is scary if a large country is unhappy with its borders, because it shows they have a problem
- Ethnic Russians have not shown any capability for forming a social compact to develop participatory democracy
- Whenever such a government gets in trouble it can gin up issues related to co-ethnics abroad and how they are being mistreated
 - Moves minds away from domestic problems
 - Yeltsin used the same tactic with Chechnya in 1994
 - Putin has done it before and will likely to do it again
- Bottom line: Cannot assume that Crimea is a one time behavior since it is a deep part of Russian political system
 - Putin is responding to the weakness he perceived abroad and his own political needs since he is in trouble at home
 - Polls this year say that the majority of Russians do not want Putin to be president after 2018, but he intends to stay in charge forever

The Russian Federation is not a Federation

- Even though it was assumed to be the only way to go when it was established
- However, there are fewer federations in the world than there are monarchies (23 to 26)
- Federations are rare because there must be constitution and legal agreement on who does what, but Russia has no such agreement resulting in:
 - Any attempt at centralization looks like going back to the Soviet model
 - Any attempt by a region to acquire more control is seen by the center as the first step to secession
- Russian Federation lacks the integuments to hold the country together
 - Has fewer miles of paved highway than the state of Virginia
 - There is only a two-lane highway between the two largest cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg
 - In 2008 Putin announced plans for the completion 7200 mile cross-country road from Vladivostok to St. Petersburg, which sounds good until you see the facts:
 - Begun in 1903 but Putin now wants to take credit for it
 - About 4,700 miles are not be paved
 - Fewer than 200 miles will have more than two lanes
 - About 2000 miles are not even graded, using stakes to identify the roads
 - 7 rivers east of the Urals have no bridges or ferries so that river crossings must wait until the rivers are frozen
- Bottom line: If Russia remains so hyper-centralized and it calls into questions the borders of its neighbors, then its own borders can be challenged
 - Few people in DC recognized that President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko was begging to be taken in by the West
 - He didn't recognize Crimea and said he would not join the Eurasian Union

- But the West likes to have the last dictator in Europe around just to be able to kick him around
- He even supported the effort to give Smolensk the opportunity to vote on whether it could leave Russia and rejoin Belarus
 - It had been part of Belarus before 1945
 - Only one example of such situations around the RF where areas want to rejoin neighboring countries or declare independence
 - Not happening in Moscow or even in Russia, so such situations are ignored

What We Can't Do – and What We Must

Not a new Cold War

- Nothing the US can do would create a new Cold War
 - Only the Moscow propagandists want a new Cold War declared
 - The Cold War presupposed two things that are not true now:
 - The equality of Russia/Soviet Union compared to everyone else
 - The Cold War was an ideological competition
- Now we are seeing an old-fashioned imperial land-grab that does not threaten the US
 - But Moscow is glad to have a Cold War discussed because they can expect some here to say “We must not do X or Y otherwise there will be a new Cold War”
- There is nothing the US or Putin could do to make a new Cold War
 - That would require some sort of attractive ideology
 - Plus, Russia is not the equal of the West or the US

Expect: There will see other similar situations

- We will always have a problem because we always seem to be fighting the last war
- The best thing for the Baltic countries who want the West on their side would be to see Russian troops cross their borders
 - NATO would know how to respond to that
 - NATO does not know how to respond to the subversion that has been and will be going on
- Subversion is cheaper and deniable, plus no one seems to be looking at how to respond
 - A recent article listed 15 US responses, all of which would be appropriate for fighting an old war, not a *War of a New Type*

Recognize: There is nothing that the US can do to force Russia to withdraw from Crimea quickly

- If Russia withdraws:
 - Putin would be ousted immediately and probably dead within days according to Moscow bureaucrats who say that Putin bet his career on this
 - Russia would do the same sort of thing elsewhere and there a many potential candidates
- Russia knows that the US no longer has the resource base it could use to respond
 - The \$1B pledged to beef up security in Eastern Europe is really a pittance compared to what is needed

- Churchill's 1944 observation that "Americans can always be counted on to do the right thing after they've tried everything else" is no longer an option
 - Back then the US had enough resources to try things and fail until they found the right thing to do
 - At that time the US had 50% of the world's GDP
 - Now it is about 20% and will be dropping to 10% shortly
 - Bottom line: The US can no longer take on the same tasks
- Elements of American culture work against responding because Americans like to believe:
 - Geography is irrelevant
 - We don't teach it or study it so we can't find things on world maps
 - Throw around the term geo-politics but ignore the geography part
 - The Cold War was perfect for the US – a zero-sum game and geography was irrelevant
 - History doesn't matter
 - Americans always assume that they can just move someplace else and start new lives
 - Most people in the world cannot do that
 - All problems have solutions
 - If there is no solution, then it is not a problem
 - And increasingly, Americans want any problem solved by the third commercial – otherwise they will be bored
 - When Goble talks in Europe the first question afterward is always: "How much worse can it get?"
 - In the US the first question is: "What are the solutions?"
 - Problem: There are no solutions
 - Some people believe that if you just get to people early enough with enough resources you can solve the problem
 - Bottom line: This is a new type of war which does not respond well to old solutions

What We Must Do

- Design a new non-recognition policy for Crimea
 - Worked well on Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, however it did take 51 years
 - It had teeth and the one for Crimea or anywhere else must also
 - Must be careful not to make little mistakes about what areas are in what countries
- Create a Russian-language television broadcasting to Russian speakers in the Baltic countries and former Soviet republics to counter Moscow television
 - If Hitler had had Moscow TV he probably would not have lost
 - Example: August 1998 when the ruble collapsed Russians stood in line to spend their existing rubles before they became worthless
 - So did the Estonians even though their monetary system was fine
 - Estonians had been watching only Moscow TV
 - Moscow TV can be bad even when telling the truth, which is a rare event
- Understand that for this new type of war we need a different type of preparation
 - These will be deniable wars of subversion

- Need to rethink how to identify these wars and how to stop them
 - If not, then there will be some success somewhere
 - Lots of opportunities for where these wars could take place such as in Latvia (which is a member of NATO)
 - 40% of the officer corps quit recently because of poor pay
 - 45% of draftees are Russian-speaking and only watch Moscow TV

Conclusion

Professor Goble summed up his talk using his favorite Winston Churchill quote, which came from Churchill's *The Aftermath (The World Crisis: 1918-1928.)* In 1929 Churchill attempted to come to terms with how the world had responded to the 1918 defeat of the Central Powers. He concluded that:

- Germany was so soundly beaten that there seemed no need for further public action
- The war of the giants was over but the quarrels of the pygmies had begun

Hitler, who became chancellor four years later, was committed to the overthrow of the same three principles that Putin wants to overthrow now. The US must recognize how dangerous this threat is and put to work hard power and, more importantly, the tremendous soft power advantage it has. However, Professor Goble is pessimistic given that his copy of *The Aftermath* was a discard from the State Department Library and has not been replaced.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Re: The Phony War

Before the start of WWII Communists in the West actively pushed the idea that Hitler was not a problem because he was a friend of the Soviet Union and Stalin

- Also was popular concept among those who were not closely aligned with Moscow
- Caused some western governments to do less than they might have in response to Hitler's actions
- Example: They called the situation with Poland just an internal problem, so no need to worry about Hitler

Why it is important that people in Moscow don't know about the Phony War: To talk about it would mean discussing Moscow's culpability in the lack of response to German aggression

- Other, more important reason, is that this shows that Putin understands how to play the West
 - If he shows any flexibility or stops doing something aggressive, there will op-eds and speeches about how he is a wonderful guy
 - He no longer invading so isn't he great
 - The motif will be the same as that of Western Soviet sympathizers in 1939-1941
- Prediction: Expect to see the same thing again with the Russians someplace else
 - This issue is not about Crimea or Ukraine
 - All about how Putin sees the world and his domestic problems and what he expects the US to do in response
 - Expect him to do nothing for months and hear the same usual suspects say that there is no problem here
 - But Putin is being driven by something deeper than the problems of Crimea's ethnic Russians or Ukraine – merely using it as an occasion to push forward

- Bottom line: Putin wants to rule forever, which is pretty obvious
 - He thinks he can given how he sees the world and his challenges
- US also finds it difficult to think about the Phony War
 - Inconvenient to remember that the war in Europe was caused by a Soviet-Nazi pact – so it has been whitewashed
 - Putin supporters have even praised Hitler saying that he only went wrong when he went beyond the Sudetenland
 - And why was Putin at the recent Normandy Invasion commemoration?
 - Someone with his views should not have been there
 - Goble was glad he felt uncomfortable and was sorry he was there
- Bottom line: Putin is a very dangerous man
 - Good news: Putin's country is deteriorating out from underneath him
 - Bad news: Putin is trying to stop the deterioration in ways that will only accelerate the process
 - Will cause more problems for us both in that region and elsewhere
 - Other people are learning from Putin's actions, too
 - Beijing is closely following what he gets away with in Crimea
 - Even more worrisome than the events in Crimea and Ukraine

Re: Russia and China

- Current geo-political situation
 - Putin has recently given unbelievable concessions to China about extra territorial status
 - The Chinese are happy to exploit Russian resources in Siberia and the Far East without the social problems that would come with occupying it
 - 95% of the Russian population east of the Urals live within about 200-250 km of the Chinese border
- Bottom line: the Chinese do not want to invade the north
 - China, because it takes a long view, knows that someday it will take over that territory
 - China is doing things to make that takeover more likely
- More serious problem is that of the ethnic Chinese
 - There are about 1 million Chinese residents in the region
 - Another 5 million cross back and forth across the border on a daily basis
- Water shortage problems for the Chinese another issue
 - Central Asia has a surplus and is already providing the Chinese with some water from Lake Baikal, and China says they want more from the region
 - Nationalism at the end of the Soviet Union caused people to believe that it was wrong to allow water to be exported
 - Russians are concerned that the Chinese have already taken their lumber, they are getting their gas, and now they want Russian water
- Borders change eventually
 - China takes the long view
 - Russia thinks longer than does the US
 - China can take its time and just wait until things drop in their hands

- Putin would like to talk about China's aggression going north to raise Russian nationalism
 - Russia's racism against the Chinese rivals that against the Muslims
- Bottom line: don't expect the Chinese to march north into the Arctic
 - Expect China to get what it wants from southern Siberia
 - Expect that by 2030 Vladivostok will have a Chinese name
- Another Ukraine/China related problem:
 - From 1898-1914 the Russian government moved huge numbers of ethnic Ukrainians out to the Far East
 - Today 60% of the Russians in occupied Kuril Islands are Ukrainian
 - 80% of the 5 million people in the region near Vladivostok and Khabarovsk are of Ukrainian descent
 - US actually broadcast in Ukrainian to that region from 1985-86 but unfortunately stopped because nothing happened
 - Bottom line: China and Ukraine have common interests
 - Why would China bother attacking if it could get what they wanted other ways?
 - Problem: Exporting water especially from Lake Baikal to China is a hot button issue
 - Being done for profit by Russian oligarchs who are Putin's friends
 - Putin may have another problem on his hands because he has been cozying up to China

Re: Russian Psychology and View of the World

Russia's view of the world hasn't changed in 500 years

- Their view is determined by their location and their lack of secure borders
- They are also still playing out concepts related to, when in the 15th century, the Muscovy Mongol horde overran Novgorod government
 - Novgorod did show some possibility of a potentially democratic Russia

Russian imperialism

- Russia has no serious claim on Crimea
 - Not Russian territory from time immemorial as Putin has been claimed
 - Putin said "Well, the Greeks were there before you"
 - But no people are where they started out
- Russia did not take Crimea before 1783
 - Not a large number of Russians there then either
 - Russia did kill and deport large numbers of people
- Dirty little secrets:
 - Russian national identity is vastly weaker than other national identities
 - In Ukraine since 1991 more people re-identified themselves as Ukrainian
 - Before that under the USSR it was better to identify as Russian
 - Russian national identity is fluid and flexible
 - If Ukraine had been destroying Russian churches or oppressing ethnic Russians for years, why wasn't there anything in the RF press?
 - First indications came on Feb 1st this year because someone wanted to make it an issue

- Current Russian claim that Khrushchev gave away Crimea in 1954
 - Actually was well thought out plan begun under Stalin
 - Stalin was an ethno-political genius – and extremely evil
- Talk of a missing 3 million ethnic Russians has been appearing even in US press reports as a sign of Ukrainian oppression, but...
 - In 1991 there were over 5,000 Russian language schools in Ukraine
 - In Soviet times ethnic Russian were always given their own schools no matter where they were
 - At the same time there were 3-5 million ethnic Ukrainians in the RF areas but there were no Ukrainian schools
 - Neither the US or any outsiders complained about this at the time
 - Now they do complain when Ukraine closes a Russian-language school
- Whole narrative based on:
 - Bald face lying by the Russians
 - Willingness of western specialists on the city of Moscow to accept these lies
 - They don't understand that Russia is a country and it is not just Moscow
 - A country that is dying and Putin is accelerating the process
 - Putin is trying to slow it down so that he can be president for life
- When see that Russians' approval rating of Putin is about 88%, they are saying something about themselves and the nation-state relationship
 - Not about approval of Putin
 - If ask people what they think about specific policies, they are against them
 - People want to feel good about themselves so they support Putin
 - Support for Putin is so thin that it will snap
- Putin needs a new Phony War to get out of the hole he is in
 - Too many people here are trying to reduce this to just a Ukraine/Crimea issue
 - Americans think of these type of problems as just in small, far away countries that we know nothing about
 - Thinking this way can have dangerous consequences
- At the recent meeting about Crimea in Geneva the US had to insist that Ukraine come, too
 - In 1938 Chamberlain did not insist that the Czechoslovaks send officials to Munich to sign off on the dismemberment of their country
 - Such things have consequences and others are watching if this sort of thing goes unpunished
 - Can't change things quickly but can be done over time
- Non-recognition policy in the Baltics was one of the best policies the US ever had
 - The policy said that the Soviet Union was ultimately an illegitimate entity
 - The Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians remember this policy very well
 - They also remember that the US was the 37th country to recognize their recovered independence
 - Bottom line: Such moves do have an impact on how others see the US

Re: Russians Upset over Victoria Nuland's Undiplomatic Phone Call

- It doesn't matter whether Putin was upset about the content of the phone call, best known for some of the language used to describe the EU
 - According to Russian officials there had been a US/German plan in place since 2006 to replace the Ukrainian government
 - This plan was a regular contingency plan like others that military officers make about most any possible situation
 - The idea is that they will have a plan ready when they need it
- Would be best to ban daily press briefings at the State Department
 - Would free people up to do real foreign affairs work
 - Should teach us that the US does not have to have a position on every matter and that there is no need to talk about everything
- US officials all too often say things they should not say
- Goble's personal biases includes:
 - Likes small countries and thinks there should be more
 - Delighted that the Soviet Union is gone
 - Believes the Russian Federation should be significantly smaller, otherwise it will never be liberal or democratic
- Goble's beliefs on the Ukraine/Crimea issue:
 - The US did not organize any uprising in Ukraine
 - Doesn't have enough Ukrainian-speakers to do so
 - This may be another example of the US opposing something until it happens and then tries to take credit for it as
 - In this case, the Ukrainian people instigated the protests
 - Even if there had been US actions in Kiev, there was no basis for Russia to occupy the territory of that country
- Problem: Some of the things that the US has done have come back to bite us
 - See this more and more
 - There has been too much:
 - Belief in tectonic power
 - Confidence in referenda
 - May look back at the first decade of the 21st century and find that the biggest issues were:
 - The rise of Putin
 - The partition of Sudan – another huge mistake
 - Mistake: that way the Soviet Union's countries came apart
 - Since the Baltics were occupied, the agreement did not apply to them
 - This 1991 agreement was based on the 1974 Helsinki Agreement
 - It is unfortunate that the US is in bed politically with a number of very ugly governments
 - No one in the non-Russian areas are nearly as bad as Putin is
 - Likely to be played back against us
- Good that there is a plan to revamp international broadcasting – needs to be done
 - “We win by telling the truth”
 - That the Watergate Hearings were broadcast on VOA was extremely effective since they sent a message to the world

- Showed that the US could drive from office someone who tapped phones
 - Still well remembered around the world
 - Any time we are a little bit confident we should broadcast it
- But there is also a need to keep mouths closed at some times
 - Used to be said that the worst things for diplomacy were jets and phones
 - Now have Tweets to worry about
 - Tweets of the American ambassador to Moscow were embarrassing
- When Goble worked at State Department the rules were:
 - Give your boss options between doing nothing and blowing up the world
 - Don't just do something, stand there – meaning don't talk so much
 - Current generation seems to confuse action with talk
 - Now at a time when people seem to think that talk is all there is
 - Trouble occurs when talk becomes disconnected from action
 - Some people seem to think that if you say things you create reality
 - Sometimes true, sometimes not
- First rule of D.C.: When a second person knows a secret, it is not a secret any more
 - Americans talk too much and we will pay for it
- The US did very little in Ukraine because it did not have the capacity or interest to do so even if it wanted the credit for being involved
 - Anecdote: The last place the Soviet flag officially flew was at the US State Department because President Bush promised Gorbachev that it would
 - Bad things happen when diplomacy is about words, not actions, and about personal relationships
- Even if it were true that the US had a hand in Ukraine's protests, it could not justify Russian annexation
 - In 2008 Putin did not think he could do it
 - Putin was prepared to let two small areas with frozen conflicts (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) go independent
 - Did not change the status much because Georgia really did not control them then or now
 - Putin still has a problem with Abkhazia and would be the angriest if all NATO countries decided to put embassies there
- US could have played this back at Russia just as they should have flipped Lukashenko in Belarus because Belarus is the most important geo-strategic area in Eastern Europe
 - Maps show: to go from Moscow to Berlin you go through Belarus, not Ukraine
 - US/EU did not accept Lukashenko's pleas because we like to beat up on the last dictator in Europe
- Hard to believe what Putin is doing now
 - An environmental activist before the Sochi Olympics was sentenced to 3 years in the camps
 - The penal system is now mobilizing ordinary decent camp prisoners to mistreat him
 - Really ugly behavior like this comes from the time of Stalin
 - This is happening in Putin's Russia, not Lukashenko's Belarus
 - Lukashenko's brave effort to not accept the annexation of Crimea was hardly acknowledged over here