



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 7, 2014

Would Crimea Secession From Ukraine Threaten U.S. Security?

Hillary Clinton is wrong, though hardly for the first time. The crisis *du jour* in the Ukraine does not tell us that we are back in 1938 or '39 with [another Hitler](#) invading neighboring countries. It tells us we're back in America's 1861 and the threat is from secessionists.

The pro-Russia regional Parliament in Crimea voted to hold a referendum on whether to secede from Ukraine and become a part of Russia. Ever since the American Civil War (1861-65) was fought over secession, that "late unpleasantness" seems to have become the lens through which the United States views all secession movements.



According to the [report](#) in Friday's *New York Times*, the pro-Russia Crimean Parliament "crossed another line set by the United States and Europe by voting to hold a referendum on whether to secede from Ukraine and become a part of Russia." The vote has been scheduled for March 16, but authorities in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev have denounced the move and the Kiev authorities are backed by the United States and Europe in that opposition.

Anyone looking for a rhyme or reason for that position by the Western powers will have to overlook a great deal of rhetoric about the West being in favor of "democracy" and "self-determination."

Assuming the referendum will be fairly administered, what is wrong with letting the people in Crimea — most of whom are Russian-speaking and of Russian descent — decide their own future peacefully by ballot?

A great many Americans still living are veterans of one or more wars we fought allegedly for the purpose of allowing a country we were defending to have the right of self-determination. Certainly that was the line used to justify the war in Vietnam. The war in Iraq, though ostensibly about eliminating "weapons of mass destruction" that weren't there, was called Operation Iraqi Freedom, as invading forces deposed Saddam Hussein, who had been president since John McCain was a young man, and engineered purple-thumbed elections so people could choose their own leaders. It was to be the beginning of what President George W. Bush called a "global democratic revolution."



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Yet a decision to hold a referendum in Crimea is apparently a cause for something approaching panic, as Western diplomats, to quote the *Times* again, “raced from meeting to meeting” and “European leaders signaled they might join American sanctions and Moscow threatened countermeasures as an already jittery situation was made edgier by the opening of new Russian military drills.”

This is typical *New York Times*-speak, in which dueling adjectives and other descriptive words are lined up against one another, with subtle and not so subtle hints as to which side the sages of 42nd Street are on. It is the sort of thing we’ve grown accustomed to seeing when we read about Marxist “leaders” and right-wing “dictators.” Or when the oppressors in any country are the “conservatives.” In this case, we find that European leaders, reasonable people no doubt, “signal” their openness to “joining” U.S. sanctions against Russian leaders. (Welcome to our sanctions, enlightened European allies. Please make yourselves at home.) The Russian bear, meanwhile, is growling, as Moscow has “threatened” countermeasures and made the world edgier by having military drills in Crimea.

The United States holds military drills all over the world, including those in the Persian Gulf in the face of an already-hostile Iran, which is made “edgier” by the military exercises. People tend to get edgy when their economy has been devastated by U.S.-led sanctions over a nuclear program that all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies have said more than once has shown no evidence of being weaponized.

U.S. military forces are in a number of countries, and not always by invitation. And our forces often do more than simply stage military drills. They often shoot people in real wars, with real bullets. We send in troops usually to “stabilize” a situation in the country we are invading or to preserve stabilization in the region surrounding it. When other countries send troops across borders, our government nearly always regards that as “destabilizing.” They must be using the wrong guns. Ours are stabilizers; theirs are destabilizers.

Now the secession of the Southern states was destabilizing to the United States in 1861. To suggest, however, that a decision by the Crimea Parliament to permit the people of Crimea to vote on separation from Ukraine is a threat to U.S. or European security is quite a stretch of rhetoric and reason. On the other hand, the “ins” and “outs” of the schemes of the masters and manipulators of America’s old Cold War rival the Soviet Union may conceal a great deal of intrigue beneath the fur of the Russian bear. For more on that, see the recent report at thenewamerican.com by William F. Jasper.

Meanwhile, we might ponder why — in response to what is shaping up as a peaceful revolution in the Ukraine, with a plan to let voters decide the future of their own land and people — the United States is sending warships.

It must be to bring “stability” to the region.



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