

# Ukrainian troops reject orders from US puppet regime in Kiev

By Patrick Martin  
17 April 2014

Ukrainian troops sent to the eastern part of the country have refused orders to suppress opposition to the right-wing imperialist-backed government in Kiev and instead handed over their weapons, including armored cars and tanks, to the popular movement there.

According to detailed accounts from British reporters in eastern Ukraine—carried by Reuters News Agency, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the *Guardian* newspaper—two armored columns of Ukrainian troops were confronted by hundreds of local residents.

The *Guardian* described at least three separate incidents:

- A crowd of locals was able to stop a column of armor outside Kramatorsk on Tuesday.

- In another video uploaded on Monday, angry locals stopped a Ukrainian tank outside Slavyansk. After they chastised the soldiers inside, the soldiers stopped the engine.

- The troop carriers seized by the militia on Wednesday had apparently arrived by train, possibly from the neighboring region of Dnipropetrovsk. They were taken without a shootout, suggesting that the troops who had arrived with them had at least to some extent joined protesters.

The reporter, Alec Luhn, described women who “recognized one of the masked fighters and drew him in for a quick hug. At least some of these pro-Russian militia men are local, it seems.” He noted that the men wore a variety of camouflage and carried an assortment of weapons, another indication that they were not Russian troops, as claimed by Kiev.

He concluded, “the bulk of them appeared to be from the ranks of the same armed militia that has seized government buildings around the region in recent days. Others were reportedly Ukrainian paratroopers from the neighbouring Dnipropetrovsk region who had

joined the rebels on Wednesday.”

Reuters reported from Kramatorsk that government troops had driven armored personnel carriers into the town in the early morning hours of Wednesday, only to go over to pro-Russian protesters.

A soldier guarding one of the six vehicles identified himself as a member of Ukraine’s 25th paratrooper division from Dnipropetrovsk and told Reuters: “All the soldiers and the officers are here. We are all boys who won’t shoot our own people.” He said the soldiers had gone without food for four days until local residents fed them.

One anti-Kiev protester who gave his name as Olexander told Reuters, “I think Donbass should be an independent country allied with Russia. My homeland is the Soviet Union.”

The BBC reported heated political discussions between Kramatorsk residents and the Ukrainian soldiers sent in by Kiev: “Why did you come to our land?” asked one man. “Why are you driving over our fields? We are peaceful people! And we just want our demands to be respected!”

The BBC report continued: “BBC journalists witnessed civilians, at least some of whom appeared to be local people, challenging soldiers, who were also blocked by a crowd a few kilometers outside the town. One officer said he had not ‘come to fight’ and would never obey orders to shoot his ‘own people.’”

The American press also reported the incidents at Kramatorsk and Slavyansk. The *New York Times* acknowledged, “A highly publicized Ukrainian Army operation to retake control of Slovyansk and other eastern cities from pro-Russia insurgents appeared to falter badly on Wednesday, with one column of armored vehicles abandoned to militant separatists and another ground to a halt by unarmed protesters

blocking its path.”

The *Times* reported on videos from Kramatorsk showing Ukrainian soldiers handing over their armored cars to anti-Kiev protesters, saying it was not possible to determine whether they had been compelled by force or were in “collusion” with the population, drawing the remarkable conclusion: “Either possibility, however, would signal an escalation by Russian-backed militants in eastern Ukraine.”

How Ukrainian soldiers rebelling against orders from Kiev to massacre protesters would constitute “escalation by Russian-backed militants” the newspaper did not bother to explain.

That the Kiev regime wanted a bloodbath cannot be doubted, given the statements from government and military leaders there. The commander of the pro-regime forces who moved into eastern Ukraine Monday, General Vasily Krutov, said of the anti-government activists, “They must be warned; if they do not lay down their arms, they will be destroyed.”

Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov announced Tuesday that the “antiterrorist operation to take back control” of roughly ten cities in the eastern region of Donetsk had begun.

Arseny Yatsenyuk, prime minister of the coup regime, accused Russia of “exporting terrorism” to Ukraine in the form of the armed groups that seized police headquarters and city halls in several eastern cities. “The Russian government must immediately call off its intelligence-diversionary groups, condemn the terrorists and demand that they free the buildings,” he declared.

To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>