



Crimea will vote to break away, join Russia, expert predicts

By Chad Groening
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A foreign policy expert says the upcoming referendum in Crimea will likely result in a split of the territory from Ukraine.

The situation in Crimea is being called "Europe's worst crisis of the 21st century."

On March 16, Crimeans will be given the option of either becoming part of Russia or declaring their territory an independent state that's still formally part of Ukraine.

Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the [Cato Institute](#), says Crimea "showed up" in 1945 as an intra-Soviet transfer.

"It went from Russia to Ukraine under Nikita Khrushchev, who was then General Secretary and Ukrainian," Bandow explained at a teleconference sponsored by Tea Party Unity. "But it didn't mean anything because nobody ever imagined the place would break up."

Bandow has a prediction on the referendum: if it's done honestly, he predicts there's a "pretty good chance" the people will vote to separate.

"It's historically Russian. So that's kind of where we're at," he said. "It's a mess."

Bandow also said during the teleconference that there's a good argument for allowing Crimea to "do whatever it wants," including becoming part of Russia.

"On the other hand," he adds, "Putin's a nasty guy. He shouldn't have done this."

If Putin had waited until after the referendum to move in Russian troops he could very well be viewed as a the great liberator of the Crimea, Bandow observed.