



RIANOVOSTI

Former US Official Says MH17 Crash No Trigger for US-Russia Standoff

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MH17 catastrophe can't be considered as a ground for deeper US involvement in the Ukrainian crisis, claims Doug Bandow, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and a former Special Assistant to Ronald Reagan.

"The MH17 incident, while outrageous, actually is no trigger for anything. Errant attacks on civilians, while always tragic, are not unusual." writes Doug Bandow in his article "America Cannot Save Ukraine: Why MH17 Changes Nothing" for the National Interest.

According to the author, none of the numerous airliner shootdown incidents has ever been considered a substantial reason to declare a war. "Not once did much of anything happen," Doug Bandow notes.

Mr. Bandow points out that immediately after the MH17 crash the American hawks began beating the war drum, urging Washington to provide Kiev with "some defensive weapons." The expert expresses skepticism regarding neocons' enthusiasm, asking rhetorically, "who knows what the end [of such policy] would be." "The better answer, however, remains to do largely nothing," suggests the former Special Assistant to Ronald Reagan.

Steven Pifer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a former US ambassador to Ukraine shares Mr. Bandow's stance. He believes that governments should remain coolheaded and pragmatic, despite public moral outrage bolstered by crash controversy. "Outrage is not a policy," writes Mr. Pifer in his Op-Ed in the National Interest, "The question is what comes next."

Patrick Joseph Buchanan, the American prominent political commentator and author, also warns Washington against driving the "cold war" with Russia into its "hot" phase. "We could have a mini-Cuban missile crisis in Eastern Europe," Mr. Buchanan underlines in his article "A GOP Ultimatum to Vlad." He mocks neocons' bill S. 2277, the "Russian Aggression Prevention Act of 2014," introduced by Senators Bob Corker and John McCain on May 1: "A small, weak country might accept this dictation from a

superpower. But Russia, where <...> the Russian people support Putin's actions in Ukraine, would want him to tell the Americans just what to do with their ultimatum."

Although Russia is still considered the American geopolitical competitor in the Eurasian region, it can't be compared to the USSR, as it "represents no ideological threat and controls no military alliance," writes Doug Bandow. Moscow poses no substantial threat to Ukraine and, obviously, has no interest in "swallowing" it. "The likelihood of aggression further west is even less likely," he adds.

On the other hand, the Ukrainian internal strife is not of strategic importance for the United States. Thus, deems Mr. Bandow, US leadership has no security reason to plunge deeper into the Ukrainian turmoil and involve in a military standoff with Russia. The Ukrainian economic and political instability is Brussels' "headache," not Washington's.

The United States should stop bolstering an international media campaign against Moscow, notes the former official. It would be a mistake to rupture relations with the geopolitical player, that can help the US to achieve its strategic goals in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and North Korea, stresses Doug Bandow.