Summary of two interviews given to BBC World Service and to BBC Radio 5live via Skype by Professor Serhiy Komisarenko,

First Ukrainian Ambassador to the Court of Saint James’s in the morning

on March 21st, 2014 (the questions are not presented)

The **statement** the Kremlin made on March 2, after Putin spoke on the phone with U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was: “Vladimir Putin noted that in case of any escalation of violence against the Russian-speaking population of the eastern regions of Ukraine and Crimea, Russia would not be able to stay away and would resort to whatever measures are necessary in compliance with international law.”

I have to note that during almost 23 years of Independence Ukraine never had any problems on the language the people were speaking or on the people in Ukraine who were speaking Russian. As Ukrainian language was heavily suppressed during Soviet time (almost no schools teaching Ukrainian at that time) most of the population still speaks Russian though most of them are Ukrainian patriots and are for Ukrainian Independence and integrity.

For example, in the Institute in Kyiv where I work all official meetings and seminars are going on in Ukrainian or sometimes in English but while speaking to each other almost everybody speaks Russian. But almost everybody in the institute are Ukrainian patriots and were visiting “Maidan” all the time, especially young people, providing medicines, money, food and warm clothes.
Moreover - every state from the former USSR, including Baltic countries, has a large Russian-speaking population. Does it mean that Russia reserves the right to invade if they feel or wish to feel that Russian-speaking population is threatened? In this case, these states, like Ukraine, will look for guarantees for their security and, perhaps, would wish closer alliance with NATO and the European Union. And Russia doesn’t like it and tries to interfere and prevent.

It is evident that Ukraine’s new government, which was elected by constitutional majority, will move ahead now with integration into the E.U. and, perhaps NATO, in due time.

Also very important is that Ukraine has deep historical, cultural and religious ties to Russia though the Ukrainians are generally quite different from the Russians in mentality and attitude towards human values and rights, liberty and personal freedom. And “Maidan” became a very good example of this when plain people, especially young ones, revolted against dictatorship and corruption of the former President Yanukovitch and his surrounding and the people have won.

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power rightly pointed that Crimea crisis had never been about protecting the rights of ethnic Russians as Moscow claims, but about redrawing Russia’s borders to include Crimea.

Invasion into Crimea was a very well planned special operation, with preliminary, unprecedented, unfair and distorted propaganda by Russia's media targeted at Crimean and South-Eastern population of Ukraine as well as at Russians in Russia. The same time it is worthwhile to note that during all Ukrainian Referendum in 1991 more than 57% of Sebastopol population (where Russians are the majority) voted for the Ukrainian Independence! Brainwashing anti-Ukrainian propaganda and misinformation by Russian media (TV in particular) about what was happening in Ukraine was in the worst practices of the former Soviet Union. For example, most popular wording was as follows, I quote: “So called “Maidan” is the product and the example of the US and Western Europe involvement in Ukraine supported by radical (pro-nazi) “elements” from Western Ukraine. They wish to come and to create chaos in Crimea now. Only Russia can save you”, unquote.

The invasion start was well planned much time in advance and was just waiting for an instability in Ukraine, which happened recently and which, again, was heavily provoked by Russia. Compliments to their secret services - heirs to the KGB! They did it very professionally as they were doing during Soviet time. They did perfectly well in penetrating and ruining our
army, our secret services to name just a few with the aid of Yanukovitch and his corrupted Government. Here I am coming to the main point.

Crimea is just the beginning, the test. He (you know who) looks like dangerous sociopath who has no fear like an animal with rabies. He will act without limits and without any fear having overwhelming support in his country and knowing that USA and EU won't go to the nuclear third WW because of Ukraine and/or even because of Poland and Baltic countries. Therefore, his closest aim is all Ukraine. After that, he will decide on another target - Moldova? Baltic countries, Poland, Turkey? Why not if not stopped. Therefore, the economic sanctions against Russia have to be really decisive and overwhelming. Otherwise, it won't work. Wide and effective sanctions even if they will be with evident loss to the US and EU own economy. It is worthwhile today. Tomorrow it will be much more expensive or even too late.

With the dissipation of the Soviet Union, Ukraine inherited third largest arsenal of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons (after USA and Russia), having more nucs than UK and France. When the historic decision was made to get rid of the nuc weapons, three countries (US, UK and Russia) have signed in Budapest a Memorandum on providing Ukraine guarantees of its safety and integrity.

Where are these guarantees now? Needless to say that in exchange to the nuc weapons Ukraine didn't get any substantial economic aid, which could be something similar to the Marshall plan for Germany after Second WW. Without needed support from the West, with constant pressure from Russia it didn't take long for Ukraine to find itself unstable and economically at risk. The West, not wanting to challenge Russia, especially once Putin took control, let Ukraine spiral out of democracy and into greater dependence.

Watching the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon visit to Russia and Ukraine I read the report of “The Voice of Russia” Radio, that in Moscow (I quote): “Addressing reporters after talks with Russian President Putin, Ban Ki-Moon said that he had told Putin that he shared his legitimate concerns over violations of the rights of the Russian minorities in Ukraine and emphasized the need to observe and protect those rights. That he was also deeply concerned about the recent events, when Ukrainian military bases were seized and it is necessary to establish open and constructive dialog between Moscow and Kiev." Ban Ki-Moon also said that it is at moments like this in history that a small incident can quickly lead to a situation out of anyone’s control. I could not understand what violations of the Russian minorities he found in Ukraine? And nothing was said in the report about military intervention and aggressive seizure of Crimea. Is this a “small incident" when Russia has annexed part of a sovereign, independent country using military force?!