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Subject: note from Steve Clemons/confidential
Date: March 1, 2014 at 10:27 AM
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SC

Dear Close Friends -- I am sending this to a few of you regarding my thoughts on what President Obama's course on Ukraine should be. Someone close to the President asked for it -- and I scribbled it out. Please excuse the abbreviated nature of this and any typos. I thought some of you close to the national security scene should see -- and I would greatly benefit from reactions, corrections, tweaks, and your own assessments. All best, Steve

hey xxxx -- let me answer your note as seriously as i can but suffice to say that this is a real nightmare, and I have given the President a ton of credit for continuing to frame the challenge in and around Ukraine as one in which the Ukrainians cannot be expected by any parties to 'choose between' Russia and the West. Obama has been saying that zero sum choice would be deadly and deeply divide Ukraine. Obama is right. So he needs to maintain that rhetoric more loudly than ever - and communicate to Putin and Russia that we don't want Ukraine to divorce itself from Russia, and will encourage the Ukrainian legislature to understand that....

Secondly, Obama needs to consult with leaders in both chambers of Congress privately -- in the WH -- and underscore how serious Russia's moves are, that they threaten to bring back a Cold War-like division of interests. To do nothing would be mistake, but so too would only responding militarily. What Obama needs to show as a demonstration of strength is a willingness to quickly marshal US and European economic aid and loan guarantees to Ukraine -- to tether ourselves to them. Russia was going to provide \$15 billion in support and has now withdrawn it. We should step up to the plate, with Europe, and invite Russia to be part of the pkg. If Russia won't then proceed alone (but to put in scale, our aid proposals to Egypt were about \$1 bill in cash and \$1 bill in loan guarantees; so this would be large -- and Obama needs Congressional leaders to understand that this is really important).

Third, Obama needs to be seen preparing for 'the possibility' of a new global standoff with Russia -- and thus responding only on Ukraine/Crimea is a mistake. he needs to simultaneously elevate a proposal to deal with the Russians in a China-like US-Russia Strategic & Economic Dialogue and be seen to be prepared to tighten the screws on Russia in G8 meetings, in NATO meetings in which it has observer status. It needs to expedite deployment of ballistic missile defense systems in Eastern Europe. Obama when he is in Europe (going to Brussels and The Hague) should make a pivot to Warsaw and meet with leaders on the frontier there. We should be coordinating a lot with Germany, Poland and France.

Then, we need to privately ponder a roster of escalation points including a range of sanctions against Russian interests -- and we need to make clear Putin knows that he can be held accountable for his command authority over any deaths that come from his deployment of troops in Ukraine. He could be held accountable internationally -- and would be on the run for the rest of his life if he left Russia (I'd share that privately of course)

Hagel's people tell me that they will send me some steps that are being considered this afternoon -- probably suspension of military cooperation in some areas if they proceed and some form of veiled military threat (but I think we have to be enormously careful in drawing red lines again -- as Putin wants to show he has forced us to step down). I'll send you what i get