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February 20, 2015: Bad News From Ukraine

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Title: Bad News From Ukraine

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2/20/2015--There is plenty of bad news in the world this week. Certainly ISIS. The economic situation in Greece. But the potentially dangerous news had to do with Ukraine. Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, is playing a deadly game. And no one knows what he wants--does he? This morning, Ukrainian military forces continued their retreat from Debaltseve, while British fighters scrambled to intercept Russian bombers near the British coast. We may assume that nothing is accidental. Putin is insisting on a free hand in Ukraine and is threatening--what? War with the West? Over what? A land bridge to Crimea? Incorporation of all Russian speakers into Russia? At some point, there will be a response from the West that will be harmful but insufficient to deter Putin, who has put all his eggs seemingly in the Ukrainian basket. He can't back down without real political pain at home. It is funny to see Putin participating in "cease fire" talks he has no intention of honoring. Putin controls the military situation in eastern Ukraine and there would be a cease-fire if he wanted one. Meanwhile, what happened to the Obama Administration and its talk of military assistance to Ukraine? Where are the missiles extended to Poland? Economic sanctions have worked. But they have not been dramatic enough. It's time for a different kind of response, mainly to remind Putin that he is playing with fire. Because he is and does not seem to realize it.