


Burned by Putin



Like many other political analysts, Michael Romancov doubted that Vladimir Putin would follow through with annexing the Crimea. Romancov said yesterday in [E15](#), before Putin made his emotional speech to Parliament, that Putin had never said explicitly that he wanted to absorb the Crimea; he had always said he recognized the territorial integrity of Ukraine. By yesterday evening, Romancov was telling Czech Radio that Putin can't be believed. We also got burned. When we read the statement from his [foreign ministry](#), we understood the proposal to guarantee the "territorial integrity" of Ukraine to mean that Russia was willing to negotiate over the fate of the Crimea too, in exchange for Ukraine's neutrality. But the Kremlin apparently now intends to use the catchphrase "territorial integrity" to refer to mainland Ukraine without the Crimea. How cynical of Putin! The lesson for analysts: Once bitten, twice shy.

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