

Aux Barricades Mes Enfants! The Insanity of US Foreign Policy. The Danger of War

Time for the sans-culottes to rise up against Washington's insanity

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On October 21st there will be a [Women's March on the Pentagon](#) hosted by the Global Women's Peace Action. My wife and many of our friends will be going and even I will tag along in support in spite of my gender. We participate with some reservations as we have only demonstrated publicly twice since 9/11, once opposing the then about to start Iraq War and once against the annual meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

All too often demonstrations morph into progressive exercises in flagellation of what are now referred to as "deplorable" values with little being accomplished either before, during or afterwards, apart from the piles of debris left behind to be cleaned up by the Park Service. And such events are rarely even covered by the media in Washington, where the Post generally adheres closely to a neocon foreign policy tactic, which means that if you ignore something distasteful it will eventually go away.

Hopefully on this occasion it will be different because the time for talking politics is rapidly being rendered irrelevant by the speed of and Americans of all political persuasions must begin to take to the streets to object to what their government is doing in their name. I am mildly optimistic that change is coming as I find it difficult to imagine that in spite of the relentless flood of mainstream media propaganda there is even a plurality of Americans that supports with any actual conviction what the United States is doing in Syria and what it intends to do in Iran. And apart from a desire to make voting in America safer and insofar as possible interference free, I also believe that most think that Russiagate is a load of hoey and would prefer to be friends with Moscow.

Why now? "Now" is a whole new ballgame, as the expression goes, because the utter insanity coming out of Washington could easily wind up killing most of us here in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. Specifically, in a press conference on Tuesday, Kay Bailey Hutchison, a former Senator from Texas who is currently the United States' ambassador to NATO, [declared that Washington was prepared](#) to launch a preemptive attack on Russian military installations as a response to alleged treaty violations on the part of Moscow. Note particularly what Hutchison actually said:

"At that point, we would be looking at the capability to take out a missile that could hit any of our countries. Counter measures would be to take out the missiles that are in development by Russia in violation of the treaty. They are on notice."

And note further what she was implying, namely that Washington, acting on its own authority, has the right to attack a nuclear armed and powerful foreign country based on what are presumably negotiable definitions of what are acceptable weapons to base on one's own soil. It would be an attack on a neighbor or competitor with whom one is not at war and which does not necessarily pose any active threat. By that standard, any country with a military capability can be described as threatening and one can attack anyone else based purely on one's own assessment of what is acceptable or not.

It is quite remarkable how many countries in the world are now "on notice" for punishment when they do things that the United States objects to. United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley [has warned](#) that she will be "taking names" of those United Nations members that criticize U.S. policies in the Middle East. As increasing discomfort with U.S. initiatives there and elsewhere is a worldwide phenomenon, with only Israel, the Philippines, Nigeria and Kenya [having a favorable view](#) of Washington, Haley's list is inevitably a long one. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor John Bolton, when they are not fabricating intelligence and inflating threats, have likewise warned specific countries that they are being judged by Washington and will be punished at a level proportionate to their transgressions.

Hutchison is not known as a deep thinker, so one has to suspect that her expressed views were fed to her by someone in Washington. Her specific grievance against Russia relates to Moscow's reported deployment of new land-based missiles that have a claimed range of more than 5,000 kilometers, which is enough to hit most targets in Europe. If true, the development would be in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987 and would definitely pose a potential threat to the Europeans, but the more serious question has to be the rationale behind threatening a nuclear war through preemptive action over an issue that might be subject to renewed multilateral negotiation.

Hutchison and the State Department inevitably went into double-speak mode [when concerns were expressed](#) about possible preemption against Russia. She clarified her earlier comments with an almost incomprehensible "My point: Russia needs to return to INF Treaty compliance or we will need to match its capabilities to protect U.S. & NATO interests. The current situation, with Russia in blatant violation, is untenable."

Spokesman Heather Nauert at State [then chimed in](#)

"What Ambassador Hutchison was talking about was improving overall defense and deterrence posture. The United States is committed to upholding its arms control obligations and expects Russia to do the very same thing."

Both disclaimers were needed, even if lacking in clarity, but they did not dispel the ugly taste of the initial comment regarding starting a war of preemption. Russia took note of the back and forth, with a Foreign Ministry spokesman drily observing

"It seems that people who make such statements do not realize the level of their responsibility and the danger of aggressive rhetoric."

Hutchison and Nauert also do not seem aware of the fact that Russia's frequently stated defense doctrine is to use nuclear weapons if and when it is attacked by a superior force,

which might well be Moscow's assessment of the threat posed by U.S. led NATO.

The disconnect between the White House's often expressed desire to improve relations with Russia and the bureaucracy's tendency to send the opposite message is typical of what has been referred to as Trump's "[dual-track presidency](#)". Gareth Porter has [recently observed](#) how President Trump, for all his faults in so many ways, is indeed desirous of military disengagement in some areas but he is repeatedly being overruled or outmaneuvered by the permanent bureaucracies in government, most notably the Pentagon and intelligence services. Hutchison, Haley, Pompeo and Bolton speak and act for that constituency even when they appear to be agreeing with the president.

So given the danger of war based on what Washington itself says about the state of the world and America's presumed role in it, it is time to take the gloves off and march. That a high-level official can even stand up and speak about preventive war with a major nuclear power is disgraceful. She should be fired immediately. That she has not been fired means that someone somewhere high up in the bureaucracy agrees with what she said. Nuclear war is not an option. It is an end of all options.

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