

Cold War Geopolitics in Sochi. Western Media “Bashes” Vladimir Putin

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

On February 6, the XXII Olympic Winter Games began. A geopolitically tense atmosphere prevails.

Security is extremely tight.

It's a virtual armed camp. Measures in place are unprecedented. Around \$2 billion was spent on security.

Ahead of February 6, around 23,000 personnel assured proper measures were in place as planned.

Tens of thousands of police officers are deployed. They're backed by helicopters, drones, gunboats, submarines, and 70,000 Russian troops.

Hundreds of Cossacks are involved. They'll check IDs. They'll detain suspects. Sochi's proximity to the North Caucasus raised concerns.

Islamist jihadists named it a target. They're US assets.

Russia raised concerns after December Volgograd bombings killed 34 people. Were Washington's dirty hands involved?

Is something similar planned for Sochi?

According to Sochi Organizing Committee chairman Dmitry Chernyshenko:

“Terrorism is a global threat, and for terrorism there is no boundaries, no territories, but here in Sochi from the very beginning of the construction phase the state authorities did their utmost to prepare special measures, starting from the screening of raw materials, checking all the venues and preparing far-reaching security measures to provide the safest ever environment here.”

A controlled zone was established. It covers 60 kilometers. It runs along the coast. It extends 25 kilometers inland.

It includes all venues. They're heavily guarded. The entire area is for authorized visitors only.

Western anti-Russian sentiment persists. Cold War politics continues. Putin bashing is featured. He's not about to roll over for Washington.

He's against meddling in the internal affairs of Russia, Syria, Ukraine and other nations. He stresses Moscow's "independent foreign policy." He affirms the "inalienable right to security for all states, the inadmissibility of excessive force, and unconditional observance of international law."

Disagreements between both countries play out in dueling agendas. Washington notoriously plays hardball. Putin protects Russia's national interests. They're too important to sacrifice.

On February 6, the [Financial Times](#) headlined "Putin gambles all on creation myth behind Sochi."

"I am particularly pleased to see what is happening here because I chose this place myself," he said.

"It must have been in 2001 or 2002," he added. "(W)e were driving around and arrived at this brook, and I said: 'Let's start from here.' That's how it all began."

Putin staked much on the games, said the FT. George Washington University's Sufian Zhemukhov said "(i)f all goes well, (he'll) be seen as the leader who resurrected Russia."

Failure perhaps won't be forgiven, he added. His forthrightness for peace "made him a force on the world stage," said the FT.

A January Levada Center poll showed he'd be elected today by a wide margin. At the same time, his overall support dropped.

Excluding undecided respondents, its "higher than ever."

He's taking no chances. He's going all out to make Sochi successful. FT comments were tame compared to America's media.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) headlined "The Putin Games." He wants them to "showcase...modern Russia."

"(H)e succeeded (but) not as he intended...What could go wrong?" Sochi is the most expensive Olympics in history.

Around \$50 billion was spent. It's five times the original estimate. It's double what Britain's 2012 summer games cost. It's a fourth more than China spent in 2008.

Much of Sochi's cost related to building vital infrastructure. It had to be done from scratch. Doing so added enormously to costs.

Major projects are expensive. According to Journal editors, "(t)he games are proving to be a case study in the Putin political and economic method."

They claim billions of dollars "lost to corruption." They provide no evidence proving it. They said "Russians call this Olympiad the Korimpiad."

More Putin bashing followed. It's standard scoundrel media practice. Journal editors feature it.

They claim he “made it impossible to hold his regime accountable through free elections or media.”

Fact check:

Russian elections shame America’s sham ones. They’re democratic. They are not rigged. Monied interests don’t control them.

Outcomes aren’t predetermined. Russian voters decide. US ones have no say.

Don’t expect Journal editors to explain. Or how Voice of Russia and RT (formerly Russia Today) shame America’s corporate media.

They feature news, information and opinion viewers most need to know. They do it forthrightly. They’re polar opposite America’s managed news misinformation.

Truth is systematically suppressed. Demagoguery, propaganda, scandal, sleaze, junk food news, and warmongering substitute.

Journal editors ignore truth and full disclosure. Bias permeates their opinions. They betray readers. They shame themselves doing so.

They claimed billions spent on Sochi left it unprepared. They cite “unfinished hotel rooms, incomplete road work and now the famous photographs of two toilets in a single stall.”

RT.com responded. On February 6, it [headlined](#) “Spread fear, toilet humor? MSM guide to ‘Worst. Olympics. EVAR!’ (Repeat: EVAR!)”

Even before the opening ceremony, the Western media drew conclusions “Sports? Not really,” said RT. At issue is malicious Putin bashing. It’s longstanding practice.

Imagine claiming something yet to occur the “worst Olympics ever.” They beat up on Beijing the same way.

They “never believed in Sochi,” said RT. They called its climate unfit for winter games. They cite corruption with no substantiating evidence.

They claim lax security despite unprecedented measures in place. They discuss possible terrorist threats. They leave unexplained what most worrisome – a possible disruptive US false flag attack.

It bears repeating. Perhaps Washington plans raining on Putin’s parade.

On August 7, 2008, hours before Beijing’s summer Olympics’ opening ceremony, Georgia’s Mikheil Saakashvili invaded South Ossetia. He did so at Washington’s behest. Attacking was strategically timed.

After Soviet Russia’s 1991 dissolution, South Ossetia broke away from Georgia. It declared independence. It’s home to many Russian nationals.

Moscow responded responsibly. Conflict continued for days. Then President Medvedev was on vacation. Then Prime Minister Putin was in Beijing.

In half a day before Russia intervened, 1,700 people were killed. Included were 12 Russian peacekeepers.

Moscow was blamed for Georgian aggression.

Washington's disturbing history gives Russia good reason for concern.

Preparations in Sochi aren't perfect, said RT. "(F)laws and problems" exist. "But what makes the Sochi Olympics 'the worst' so far is...accommodation for the global media elite."

"See it, slam it," said RT. "Intrepid Olympic reporters, we thought, would get behind the scenes, unravel the PR."

"Nope. Not this time. Of global importance were rooms (if they were available), toilets, floors, and shower curtains."

"Oh - and a request to not flush toilet paper (it's rarely done in public toilets) had the press pack throwing up."

Washington Post reporter Kathy Lally was upset about "a tiny, tiny (hotel room) sink."

It "sits atop an exposed white plastic pipe, stuck to the wall and surrounded by an unruly gob of caulk," she said.

"The single room has two lamps - which don't have light bulbs, but that's okay because they aren't near any unused outlets."

Other journalists reported missing shower curtains, lamps, chairs, inadequate heat and hot water, and whatever else they wanted to cite to bash Putin.

Fox News called conditions "laughably bad." It warned about event coverage being just as dreadful.

MSM scoundrels feature daily "hotel horror stories." They regurgitate similar tweets to each other. They find new reasons to complain.

BBC journalist Steve Rosenberg tweeted about two sit-down toilets shown side-by-side with no partition. It went viral.

RT calls it a "must have" for every Sochi story. Imagine toilet humor substituting for real journalism. It gets worse.

Whatever is happening in Russia multiple time zones away gets reported. A Moscow school shooting creates Sochi shudders.

So does a derailed gas-laden freight train exploding. It happened 500 miles northeast of Moscow. It made Sochi headlines.

CNN connected Sochi to the September 2004 Beslan school siege. Its February 5 report said:

"Amid the shrill noise of militant threats ahead of the Sochi Olympic Winter Games, the gym in Beslan is now steeped in silence, a monument to the dead, untouched almost."

CNN and other US cable news networks report increasing to fewer viewers. Maybe one day they'll all tune out.

RT called Sochi the "biggest construction site in the world over the past seven years."

"Everything there – most of the hotels, sport venues, high-speed rail links, highways, 50 bridges, even the Olympic village itself – was built from scratch."

It's an extraordinary achievement in a short time. It's almost like building an entirely new city in record time. Sochi deserves praise, not criticism.

Toronto Star reporter Rosie Dimanno wrote:

"Mounds of debris, parts of roads unpaved, mesh hoarding to hide the eyesore bits, lots of trash, unreliable power – nothing upsets journalists more than an internet that goes up and down – these have all featured in Olympics over the past three decades, as the Games have grown too big, too gaudy and too complicated."

"The Olympics are no (place) for old sissies," she added. "So I'll take my own advice: Just chill."

WSJ editors called Sochi "a shrine to authoritarianism." They bashed Putin relentlessly. One bald-faced lie followed others.

"(T)he underbelly of Mr. Putin's regime (was) exposed," they claimed.

New York Times editors were just as bad. They headlined "A Spotlight on Mr. Putin's Russia," saying:

"(T)he reality of (his) Russia...conflicts starkly with Olympic ideals and fundamental human rights."

"There is no way to ignore the dark side – the soul-crushing repression, the cruel new anti-gay and blasphemy laws, and the corrupt legal system in which political dissidents are sentenced to lengthy terms on false charges."

Fact check

NYT editors have a longstanding disturbing history. They one-sidedly support wealth, power and privilege. Whenever Washington wages imperial wars or plans them, they march in lockstep.

They invented anti-gay law controversy. Russian gay propaganda law has nothing to do with persecuting people for their sexual orientation.

Everyone's rights are respected. Russia wants its children protected from malicious anti-gay propaganda, illicit drugs, alcohol abuse and whatever else harms them.

Responsible governance demands it. America leaves millions of children unprotected. Cutting food stamps alone denies them vital nutrition.

Don't expect Times editors to explain. Or about thousands of political prisoners languishing

in America's gulag.

About torture being official US policy. About rigged US elections. About impoverishing neoliberal harshness.

About destroying social America. About eliminating America's middle class. About waging war on freedom.

About unprecedented levels of public and private corruption. About kleptocracy masquerading as democracy.

About out-of-control corporate empowerment. About Washington being corporate occupied territory. About crushing organized labor.

About commodifying public education. About ignoring international, constitutional and US statute laws.

About violating fundamental human and civil rights. About Obama's war on humanity.

Bashing Putin takes precedence.

Sochi games run through February 23. Expect lots more Putin bashing ahead.

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