

Official Washington's Delusions on Delusions

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The chasm between reality and the U.S. political/media elite continues to widen with Official Washington's actions toward Iran and Russia making "the world's sole remaining superpower" look either like a Banana Republic (on Iran) or an Orwellian Dystopia (regarding Russia).

On Iran and the international negotiations to rein in its nuclear program, the American people witnessed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu striding into the U.S. Congress – like some imperial proconsul – to deliver a faux State of the Union address that undermined the sitting U.S. president. Then, 47 Republican senators furthered Netanyahu's intent to denigrate President Barack Obama by sending an open letter to Iranian leaders designed to prevent a deal.



Yes, I know many Republicans and their overwhelmingly white "base" don't consider the African-American Obama the legitimate President despite his two election victories. But never in American history has a major political party as brazenly challenged the constitutional authority of a sitting president to conduct foreign policy.

The [letter](#) to the Iranian leaders warned that once Obama is out of office in 2017, "the next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time." In other words, the Republicans were telling Iran's leaders that whatever they plan to sign with Obama and five other world leaders isn't worth the paper that it's written on.

This stunning congressional intervention into U.S. diplomacy was signed not just by a few backbenchers but by the Senate's Republican leadership and several prospective GOP

presidential candidates, including Sen. Rand Paul, R-Kentucky, who had been viewed by some on the Left as well as the Right as a person who would not toe the Israeli line on Middle East issues.

This double whammy of Netanyahu's extreme rhetoric on Iran and the Republicans' extraordinary subversion of the Iranian nuclear talks left people around the world wondering whether the U.S. government had completely lost its bearings. Meanwhile, the U.S. news media continued veering off into its own Bermuda Triangle.

What is particularly striking about this current moment is how the madness that permeates the U.S. government equally pervades the mainstream U.S. media, which is now incapable of covering major international events except through the lens of State Department propaganda, a situation that has reached extreme levels in the reporting on the Ukraine crisis.

The only filter that the MSM can place on the events in Ukraine is one endlessly vilifying Russian President Vladimir Putin. Though this technique of personalizing foreign policy disputes has become standard operating procedure for the U.S. press corps – think of Daniel Ortega, Manuel Noriega, Saddam Hussein, Bashar al-Assad, Viktor Yanukovych, etc. – the U.S. media's "group think" on Russia may even surpass those earlier examples.

Plus, nothing from the Ukraine crisis can ever be blamed on the U.S. government, even though Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland helped orchestrate the violent coup that overthrew Ukraine's elected government in February 2014 and threw the nation of 45 million people into a bloody civil war.

Everything must be blamed on Putin and any alternative analysis, recognizing another side to the story, must be dismissed as "Russian propaganda." [See, for instance, Consortiumnews.com's "[NYT Still Pretends No Coup in Ukraine](#)."]

'Russian Propaganda'

On Monday, the Washington Post [delivered](#) what could become a textbook case of journalistic self-delusion – noting that the Russian people have developed an intensely negative view of the United States but only because the Russian media portrays the U.S. government in a hostile way.

The Post article by Michael Birnbaum blamed the collapse of U.S. popularity on "furious rhetoric [that] has been pumped across Russian airwaves ... a passionate, conspiracy-laden fascination with the methods that Washington is supposedly using to foment unrest in Ukraine and Russia."

Citing recent polling, the article noted that more than 80 percent of the Russian people hold negative views of the United States. But that couldn't be because of American behavior! No, it's impossible that anyone looking at the U.S. today could possibly find anything to criticize! It had to be Putin's fault, spreading spurious criticism of the U.S. via Russian media. Or as the Post put it:

"Fed by the powerful antagonism on Russian federal television channels, the main source of news for more than 90 percent of Russians, ordinary people started to feel more and more disillusioned [about the U.S.]. The anger seems

different from the fast-receding jolts of the past, observers say, having spread faster and wider.”

The article quoted Lev Gudkov, director of the polling firm Levada Center, explaining: “This anti-Western propaganda radically changed the atmosphere in the society. ... It has become militarist.”

Another voice cited by the Post was Maria Lipman, described as “an independent Moscow-based political analyst,” saying: “What the government knew was that it was very easy to cultivate anti-Western sentiments, and it was easy to consolidate Russian society around this propaganda.”

In other words, it wasn’t what the U.S. government has done around the world that has provoked this antipathy – from the endless boasting about America’s “indispensable” and “exceptional” qualities to its destructive behavior, including spreading bloody havoc via “regime change” schemes in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere.

And, it’s not that the U.S. government looks clownish when the majority party in Congress expresses doubts about global warming and other scientific judgments. Nor is it the continued examples of racism and the police shootings of unarmed blacks. Nor the global spying by the National Security Agency. Nor the national self-degradation when members of Congress behave like trained seals jumping up and down to applaud Israel’s Netanyahu.

No, the only reason that the Russian people look askance at the United States is that they are being deceived by the lying “propaganda” dictated by the evil Vladimir Putin. By contrast, the American people always get the straight story from their mainstream U.S. news media, the gold standard for the world!

Official Washington and the mainstream U.S. media have taken on the characteristics of a male stalker who can’t understand why his female target finds him repulsive. It must be because someone is poisoning her mind with negative comments about his sterling personality. We now live in a system of delusions built upon delusions.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, America’s Stolen Narrative, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes America’s Stolen Narrative. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

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