

“Preemptive Aggression”: Cold War Politics Reinvented

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Following Soviet Russia’s dissolution, everything changed but stayed the same. US aims remained hard-wired. Today it’s back to the future.

Cold War politics were reinvented. Russia’s again the Evil Empire. Today’s stakes are much greater. World peace is threatened.

Preemptive aggression is official US policy. America’s duopoly power wages permanent wars. Israeli Lobby and Christian Right extremists support them. The fuse is lit for trouble.

Beating up on Russia is relentless. Putin is fast emerging as public enemy number one. Intense propaganda vilifies him. His opposition to America’s imperial agenda draws rebukes.

At Mexico’s G20 summit, he reiterated his position against foreign intervention to oust Assad. Syrian sovereignty is inviolable. Its people alone should decide who’ll lead them.

The same holds for all countries. International law prohibits nations from interfering in the internal affairs of other states, except in self-defense if attacked.

Syria threatens no one. Crisis conditions there should be resolved constitutionally.

“No one is entitled to decide for other nations who will be brought to power and who will be removed,” Putin stressed.

“A change of power, if it occurs – and it could only occur by constitutional means – should result in peace and stop the bloodshed.”

“In order to achieve that goal, we need to work well, to make all parties to the armed conflict stop the bloodshed, sit down to the negotiating table and agree on how they will jointly live in a common country and how the interests and security of people involved in the conflict will be ensured.”

“This should be done beforehand, and not like in some North African countries, where bloodsheds continue despite regime changes.”

Rebukes follow these type comments. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UN envoy

Susan Rice repeat spurious accusations. Media scoundrels regurgitate them. No holds barred propaganda war is waged. Truth and full disclosure don't have a chance.

"Punish the Russian abusers," headlined a Washington Post editorial.

Obama's "hopes of forging a partnership with (Putin) appear to be fading fast."

"Russia is rebuffing U.S. appeals for cooperation in stopping the massacres in Syria, while continuing to supply the regime of Bashar al-Assad with weapons."

"Meanwhile the Kremlin is cracking down on Russians seeking democratic reform or fighting corruption."

"Partnership" and "cooperation" are code terms for surrender.

Putin isn't about to roll over for Washington. As a result, he's public enemy number one.

People, nations, or editorial writers who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. US corruption is rife. Grand theft is official policy. So is stealing from the poor for the rich.

Dissent is an endangered species. Whistleblowers and courageous journalists are targeted. So are nonviolent protesters and anyone challenging US hegemony.

America is the land of the free only in political rhetoric and patriotic songs. Hard facts reveal a nation heading fast for full blown tyranny.

"Congress (must) send Mr. Putin and his cadres the message that their lawless behavior will have consequences. "

Congress and administration officials spurn international, constitutional, and US statute laws. Corruption is a way of life. So is war on humanity.

Fingers pointing the right way explain what's vital to expose to the clear light of day.

Scoundrel media suppress what's most crucial to disclose.

An earlier Post editorial headlined "US must maintain way to press Putin regime on human rights," saying:

He campaigned "on a platform of anti-Americanism. " As president, he's "inaugurating an era of unrest in a nation whose rising middle class rejects him."

His agenda features "autocratic domestic policies.... "

"(D)emocratic reform" is needed.

Putin lacks "political legitimacy."

In fact, with 64.7% support, he won reelection by a landslide. His closest rival finished

a distant second with 17%. Putin is Russia's most popular leader.

Times editorial writers claim his popularity is "waning." He'll have to find new ways "to guarantee his legitimacy."

His electoral majority topped every US president since James Monroe. In 1820, he ran virtually unopposed.

Franklin Roosevelt's most impressive win was 60.8% (1936). Lyndon Johnson got 61.1% (1964). Richard Nixon managed 60% (1972). Ronald Reagan's best was 58.8% (1984).

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln won an electoral college victory with 39.8% of the popular vote. His nearest rival got 14.3%.

In 1864, he repeated with a 55% majority.

Putin's victory stands all the more impressive. Nonetheless, Times commentaries call Russia's political system "hermetic." It "parad(ies) democracy."

Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. Washington spurns democratic values and rule of law principles. Hardline governance is policy.

US Elections are scripted theater. Secrecy and back room deals substitute for a free, fair and open process. Candidates are pre-selected. Big money owns them. Key outcomes are predetermined.

Power brokers control everything. Voters get the best democracy money can buy.

Popular majorities reject both major parties. They're in lockstep on all issues mattering most.

Ravaging humanity is policy. Public welfare is a quaint artifact. So are human and civil rights. No nation spurns them more than America. No media more aggressively support the worst of all possible worlds.

New York Times editorials and op-eds accuse Putin of mocking democratic rights. "There can be no illusions about who Mr. Putin really is," they say. He "bullies his own citizens (and) neighbors."

Other commentaries call him "a strongman." US relations under him "chill(ed)."

Challenging US hegemony draws harsh political and scoundrel media responses. They haven't deterred Putin from saying what few other leaders dare.

A Final Comment

Congressional action on two issues are pending. They include whether or not to repeal Jackson-Vanik (JV). It's a Cold War relic.

Section 401, Title IV of the 1974 Trade Act affects commercial relations with communist and former communist countries.

It targets nations accused of restricting emigration and human rights. Following unanimous congressional approval, Gerald Ford signed it on January 3, 1975. It still influences trade relations with some states. Repealing it is long overdue.

Congressional action approaches. Passage remains uncertain. Obama and Senate Democrats want it. Hardline House and Senate Republicans object.

Eight Senate Finance Committee Republicans issued a joint statement, saying:

“Many aspects of the U.S.-Russia relationship are troubling.”

They cited the “flawed election and illegitimate regime of Vladimir Putin.”

Hardline House Foreign Affairs Committee chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R. FL) said:

“....concessions to Moscow must stop, including the latest effort to repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment to give Russia preferential trade benefits.”

At issue is linking JV with so-called House and Senate Magnitsky legislation.

On May 19, 2011, S. 1039: Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2011 was introduced. No further action was taken.

On April 19, 2012, HR 4405: Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 was introduced. It awaits full House consideration.

Both Houses plan linking JV with Magnitsky. Doing so damages US/Russian relations.

Sergei Magnitsky was a Russian attorney. His 2009 death in police custody drew international media attention.

Employed by Firestone Duncan, he specialized in civil law. He did anti-corruption work. He represented Hermitage Capital. He uncovered evidence of tax fraud. He implicated the police, judiciary figures, tax officials, bankers, and Russia’s mafia.

He was called “the ‘go to guy’ in Moscow on courts, taxes, fines, and anything to do with civil law.”

In November 2008, he was arrested, imprisoned, and treated abusively. Held for 11 months, he was denied family visits. He developed serious health problems, but got inadequate treatment.

On November 16, 2009, he died for reasons attributed officially to a “rupture to the abdominal membrane” and subsequent heart attack. If trial proceedings didn’t begin, he was due to be released eight days later.

At the time, RIA Novosti said his death “caused public outrage and sparked discussion of the need to improve prison healthcare and to reduce the number of inmates awaiting trial in detention prisons.”

In December 2009, an independent Moscow Public Oversight Commission said he was subjected to “psychological and physical pressure.... “

One of its members first blamed his death on medical negligence. She later believed he was murdered. In November 2009, then President Dmitry Medvedev ordered an official investigation. In July 2011, it blamed his death on medical neglect.

House and Senate Magnitsky legislation imposes visa bans, asset freezes, and other sanctions on Russian nationals accused of committing human rights abuses. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calls the measure “anti-Russian. “

He’s right. It’s more about targeting Russia and Vladimir Putin than individual human rights abusers.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned Moscow will introduce tough countermeasures if Magnitsky passes.

“If this outrageous move takes place, Moscow’s reaction will be complex, multidimensional and really tough,” he said. He urged Congress to reconsider. Otherwise, “negative consequences for the whole complex of Russian-US relations” would follow.

He called Magnitsky “inadmissible” extraterritorial legislation.

The US National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) opposes the bill. It urged House and Senate members reject it. Passage will harm US/Russian trade. It’ll also cause political damage.

In July 2011, the State Department issued visa bans on several dozen Russian officials accused of involvement in Magnitsky’s death. Moscow retaliated in kind.

Linking Magnitsky legislation to lifting JV imposes a major stumbling block on US/Russian relations. It’s also about beating up on Putin.

Congressional hardliners apparently have that those objectives in mind. So do supportive media scoundrels.

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