

## Putin Walks into a Trap

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

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The American-armed and trained Georgian army swarmed into South Ossetia last Thursday, killing an estimated 2,000 civilians, sending 40,000 South Ossetians fleeing over the Russian border, and destroying much of the capital, Tskhinvali. The attack was unprovoked and took place a full 24 hours before even ONE Russian soldier set foot in South Ossetia. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Americans still believe that the Russian army invaded Georgian territory first. The BBC, AP, NPR, the New York Times and the rest of the establishment media has consistently and deliberately misled its readers into believing that the violence in South Ossetia was initiated by the Kremlin. Let's be clear, it wasn't. In truth, there is NO dispute about the facts except among the people who rely the western press for their information. Despite its steady loss of credibility, the corporate media continues to operate as the propaganda-arm of the Pentagon.

Former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev gave a good summary of events in an op-ed in Monday's Washington Post:

"For some time, relative calm was maintained in South Ossetia. The peacekeeping force composed of Russians, Georgians and Ossetians fulfilled its mission, and ordinary Ossetians and Georgians, who live close to each other, found at least some common ground....What happened on the night of Aug. 7 is beyond comprehension. The Georgian military attacked the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali with multiple rocket launchers designed to devastate large areas....Mounting a military assault against innocents was a reckless decision whose tragic consequences, for thousands of people of different nationalities, are now clear. The Georgian leadership could do this only with the perceived support and encouragement of a much more powerful force. Georgian armed forces were trained by hundreds of U.S. instructors, and its sophisticated military equipment was bought in a number of countries. This, coupled with the promise of NATO membership, emboldened Georgian leaders into thinking that they could get away with a "blitzkrieg" in South Ossetia...Russia had to respond. To accuse it of aggression against "small, defenseless Georgia" is not just hypocritical but shows a lack of humanity." ("A Path to Peace in the Caucasus", Mikhail Gorbachev, Washington Post)

The question for Americans is whether they trust Mikhail Gorbachev more than the corporate media?

Russia deployed its tanks and troops to South Ossetia to save the lives of civilians and to reestablish the peace. Period. It has no interest in annexing the former-Soviet country or in expanding its present borders. Now that the Georgian army has been routed, Russian president Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin have expressed a willingness to settle the

dispute through normal diplomatic channels at the United Nations. Neither leader is under any illusions about Washington's involvement in the hostilities. They know that Georgian President Mikail Saakashvili is an American stooge who came to power in a CIA-backed coup, the so-called "Rose Revolution", and would never order a major military operation without explicit instructions from his White House puppetmasters. Most likely, the orders to invade came directly from the office of the Vice President, Dick Cheney.

The Georgian army had no chance of winning a war with Russia or any intention of occupying the territory they captured. The real aim was to lure the Russian army into a trap. US planners hope to do what they did so skillfully in Afghanistan; lure their Russian prey into a long and bloody Chechnya-type fiasco that will pit their Russia troops against guerrilla forces armed and trained by US military and intelligence agencies. The war will be waged in the name of liberating Georgia from Russian imperialism and stopping Putin from achieving his alleged ambition to control critical western-owned pipelines around the Caspian Basin. Much of this "think tank" generated narrative has already appeared in the mainstream media or been articulated by American political elites. Meanwhile, the fighting in the Caucasus has drawn attention away from the US carrier groups located in or around the Persian Gulf presumably awaiting orders for the long-anticipated confrontation with Iran. Was that the real motive behind the invasion in South Ossetia; to create a strategic diversion for a larger war in the Middle East?

In June, former foreign policy adviser to President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, presented the basic storyline that would be used against Russia two full months before the Georgian invasion of South Ossetia. The article appeared on the Kavkazcenter web site. Brzezinski said the United States witnessed "cases of possible threats by Russia, directed at Georgia with the intention of taking control over the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline".

Brzezinski: "Russia actively tends to isolate the Central Asian region from direct access to world economy, especially to energy supplies..If Georgia government is destabilized, western access to Baku, Caspian Sea and further will be limited".

<http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2008/06/13/9798.shtml>

Nonsense. Neither Putin nor newly-elected president Dmitry Medvedev have any such intention. It is absurd to think that Russia, having extracted itself from two pointless wars in Chechnya and Afghanistan, and after years of grinding poverty and social unrest following the fall of the Soviet state, would choose to wage an energy war with the nuclear-armed US military. That would be complete madness. Brzezinski's speculation is part of broader narrative that's been crafted for the western media to provide a rationale for upcoming aggression against Russia. Brzezinski is not only the architect of the mujahadin-led campaign against Russia in Afghanistan in the 1980s, but also, the author of "The Grand Chessboard-American Primacy and it's Geostrategic Imperatives", the operating theory behind the war on terror which involves massive US intervention in Central Asia to control vital resources, fragment Russia, and surround manufacturing giant, China.

"The Grand Chessboard" it is the 21st century's version of the Great Game. The book begins with this revealing statement:

"Ever since the continents started interacting politically, some five hundred years ago, Eurasia has been the center of world power.....The key to controlling Eurasia, says Brzezinski, is controlling the Central Asian Republics."

This is the heart-and-soul of the war on terror. The real braintrust behind “neverending conflict” was actually focussed on Central Asia. It was the pro-Israeli crowd in the Republican Party that pulled the old switcheroo and refocussed on the Middle East rather than Eurasia. Now, powerful members of the US foreign policy establishment (Brzezinski, Albright, Holbrooke) have regrouped behind the populist “cardboard” presidential candidate Barak Obama and are preparing to redirect America’s war efforts to the Asian theater. Obama offers voters a choice of wars not a choice against war.

On Sunday, Brzezinski accused Russia of imperial ambitions comparing Putin to “Stalin and Hitler” in an interview with Nathan Gardels.

Gardels: What is the world to make of Russia’s invasion of Georgia?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Fundamentally at stake is what kind of role Russia will play in the new international system.(aka: New World Order) Unfortunately, Putin is putting Russia on a course that is ominously similar to Stalin’s and Hitler’s in the late 1930s. Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt has correctly drawn an analogy between Putin’s “justification” for dismembering Georgia — because of the Russians in South Ossetia — to Hitler’s tactics vis a vis Czechoslovakia to “free” the Sudeten Deutsch. Even more ominous is the analogy of what Putin is doing vis-a-vis Georgia to what Stalin did vis-a-vis Finland: subverting by use of force the sovereignty of a small democratic neighbor. In effect, morally and strategically, Georgia is the Finland of our day.

The question the international community now confronts is how to respond to a Russia that engages in the blatant use of force with larger imperial designs in mind: to reintegrate the former Soviet space under the Kremlin’s control and to cut Western access to the Caspian Sea and Central Asia by gaining control over the Baku/Ceyhan pipeline that runs through Georgia.

In brief, the stakes are very significant. At stake is access to oil as that resource grows ever more scarce and expensive and how a major power conducts itself in our newly interdependent world, conduct that should be based on accommodation and consensus, not on brute force.

If Georgia is subverted, not only will the West be cut off from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. We can logically anticipate that Putin, if not resisted, will use the same tactics toward the Ukraine. Putin has already made public threats against Ukraine.” (“Brzezinski: Russia’s invasion of Georgia is Reminiscent of Stalin’s attack on Finland”; Huffington Post)

Brzezinski takes great pride in being a disciplined and rational spokesman for US imperial projects. It is unlike him to use such hysterical rhetoric. Perhaps, the present situation is more tenuous than we know. Could it be that the financial system is closer to meltdown-phase than anyone realizes?

It should be clear by Brzezinski’s comments that Georgia’s invasion of South Ossetia was not another incoherent exercise in neocon chest-thumping, but part of a larger strategy to drag Russia into an endless conflict that will sap its resources, decrease its prestige on the

global stage, weaken its grip on regional power, strengthen frayed alliances between Europe and America, and divert attention from a larger campaign in the Gulf. It is particularly worrisome that Brzezinski appears to be involved in the planning. Brzezinski, Holbrooke and Albright form the “Imperialist A-Team”; these are not the bungling “Keystone Cops” neocons like Feith and Rumsfeld who trip over themselves getting out of bed in the morning. These are cold-blooded Machiavellian imperialists who know how to work the media and the diplomatic channels to conceal their genocidal operations behind a smokescreen of humanitarian mumbo-jumbo. They know what they are doing and they are good at it. They’re not fools. They have aligned themselves with the Obama camp and are preparing for the next big outbreak of global trouble-making. This should serve as a sobering wake-up call for voters who still think Obama represents “Change We Can Believe In”.

Richard Holbrooke appeared on Tuesday’s Jim Lerher News Hour with resident neocon Margaret Warner. Typical of Warner’s “even-handed” approach, both of the interviewees were ultra-conservatives from right-wing think tanks: Richard Holbrooke, from the Council on Foreign Relations and Dmitri Simes from the Nixon Center.

According to Holbrooke, “The Russians deliberately provoked (the fighting in South Ossetia) and timed it for the Olympics. This is a long-standing Russian effort to get rid of President Saakashvili.”

Right. Is that why Putin was so shocked when he heard the news (while he was in Beijing) that he quickly boarded a plane and headed for Moscow? (after shaking his finger angrily at Bush!)

Holbrooke: “And I want to stress, I’m not a warmonger, and I don’t want a new Cold War any more than Dimitri does....The Russians wish to re-establish a historic area of hegemony that includes Ukraine. And it is no accident that the other former Soviet republics are watching this and extraordinarily upset, as Putin progresses with an attempt to re-create a kind of a hegemonic space.”

It is impossible to go over all of Holbrooke’s distortions, half-truths and lies in one article but, what is important is to recognize that a false narrative is being constructed to demonize Putin and to justify future hostilities against Russia. Holbrooke’s bogus assertions are identical to Brzezinski’s, and yet, these same lies are already appearing in the mainstream media. The propaganda “bullet points” have already been determined; “Putin is a menace”, “Putin wants to rebuild the Soviet empire”, “Putin is an autocrat”. (Unlike our “freedom loving” allies in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt!?!). In truth, Putin is simply enjoying Russia’s newly acquired energy-wealth and would like to be left alone. But it is impossible to be left alone when the US spends 24 hours a day pestering people. The world deserves a break from an extremely irritating USA.

So why are Brzezinski and his backers in the foreign policy establishment demonizing Putin and threatening Russia with “ostracism, isolation and economic penalties?” What is Putin’s crime?

Putin’s problems can be traced back to a speech he made in Munich nearly two years ago when he declared unequivocally that he rejected the basic tenets of the Bush Doctrine and

US global hegemony. His speech amounted to a Russian Declaration of Independence. That's when western elites, particularly at the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Enterprise Institute put Putin on their "enemies list" along with Ahmadinejad, Chavez, Castro, Morales, Mugabe and anyone else who refuses to take orders from the Washington Mafia.

Here's what Putin said in Munich:

"The unipolar world refers to a world in which there is one master, one sovereign— one center of authority, one center of force, one center of decision-making. At the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within.... What is even more important is that the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilization."

"Unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions have not resolved any problems. Moreover, they have caused new human tragedies and created new centers of tension. Judge for yourselves—wars as well as local and regional conflicts have not diminished. More are dying than before. Significantly more, significantly more!

Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper-use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts.

We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations. Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?

In international relations we increasingly see the desire to resolve a given question according to so-called issues of political expediency, based on the current political climate. And of course this is extremely dangerous. It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasize this – no one feels safe! Because no one can feel that international law is like a stone wall that will protect them. Of course such a policy stimulates an arms race.

I am convinced that we have reached that decisive moment when we must seriously think about the architecture of global security."

Every word Putin spoke was true which is why it was not reprinted in the western media.

"Unilateral and illegitimate military actions", the "uncontained hyper-use of force", the "disdain for the basic principles of international law", and most importantly; "No one feels safe!"

Putin's claims are all indisputable, that is why he has entered the neocons crosshairs. He poses a direct challenge to—what Brzezinski calls—the "international system", which is shorthand for the corporate/banking cartel that is controlled by the western oligarchy of racketeers.

South Ossetia was a trap and Putin took the bait. Unfortunately for Bush, the wily Russian prime minister is considerably brighter than anyone in the current administration. Bush's plan will undoubtedly backfire and disrupt the geopolitical balance of power. The world might get that breather from the US after all.

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