

WELCOME, TRAVELERS!

-An Editorial -

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Putin, Obama, Syria, and Removing Sanctions on Russia*

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Whoever is the next president should remove sanctions from Russia.

At the end of the day and no matter how much it's being said that sanctions are hurting Russia apparently they're not hurting it enough, because Czar Putin is doing what he does best: Play chess with an opponent who's playing checkers—not even Chinese Checkers. And the Czar is playing with an American foreign policy that continues to fail because it will not modernize and will not take into account intangibles.

This is not a question of my or anyone else's patriotism. It is not a question of patriotism period, because patriotism too many times has served as an operative excuse to get into wars and prolong wars because there is no exit strategy. Like life, the area of international relations is not always fair. It is a world where perception equals a quasi-truth, and the quasi-truth is that since Vietnam, the U.S. has acquired the label of 'loser'.

The Obama administration is now the latest embodiment of that label which still operates on a stagnant colonialist mindset that requires it not to think anything through; thus, no exit strategies.

Since Vietnam, presidents have gone so far to the right, thinking or semi-thinking that the Hawk is the answer while asserting "We are America" and that should be enough to make the enemy behave. Now this nation has a president so far to the left that he takes nil or no action seemingly thinking that all he has to do is charm and intellectualize his way out of a conflict. Either way the American military has been the entity most screwed, beginning with Vietnam to the present.

No matter how sophisticated the world is, when a nation treats its warriors like what rhymes with 'hit', that nation is further doomed to fail. VA hospitals have been put on such an inhumane level that perhaps PETA should be brought in as a consultant. And when a nation allows military families to starve to make ends meet then what else can be said?

Now I don't claim to know what the answers are concerning Russia, but I do know what the answer was 'not', which was putting sanctions on Russia to humiliate Russia because of Crimea. Never mind that when the anti-Russian forces asked for

weapons, they were ignored with President Obama giving them a gentle pat and a 'hang in there' pep talk.

The fact that Russia took Crimea is not a matter of right or wrong; moral or immoral in the world of international relations. This is how sovereign states historically have behaved and will continue to behave, especially if they view a piece of territory as being in their sphere of influence. The U.S. has long felt this way about Cuba. And speaking of Cuba, I am sure Putin continues to be pissed off about renewed relations between the U.S. and Cuba, seeing that the Czar had forgiven Cuba's debt and was more than likely counting on Cuba becoming that second 'C' in BRICS which consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. BRICS was founded mainly on Russia's leadership as an answer to the UN and other Western nations not letting in nations of color or those nations they deemed as Third World leftovers.

Exactly what was the point of this bold ass move for sanctions? This was about a naïve president and his equally naïve idealistic brat intellectual advisers wanting to show the world that they would be the ones to put Russia in its place. Yes, show the world that they dared to do the unthinkable to a former giant who once was on the other end of that scale of the Balance of Power. America's Commander-in-Chief made his move, but the thing is you don't send a professor to a street fight.

Russia is Russia, just as Great Britain is Great Britain. Never would the United States have put sanctions on Great Britain. Yes, during the Cuban crisis these two giants were on the brink of what could have been World War III, but it would have been both going toe to toe with each other. It's how giants fight. Like it or not, sanctions have been left for those itty bitty nations outside of the super power structure. Just as there are rules of engagement, there are unwritten rules of how super powers behave with each other. Obama broke this rule. Now he is reacting to the fact that Russia stepped up to the plate in the Middle East. So, sit there. I'll be back to this point.

I do know that Obama's predecessors did not do anything to further annihilate a Russia when its walls came tumbling down after the economic collapse of communism.

The 'intangible' of respecting a foe which still has nuclear clout was not lost on previous presidents. George W. Bush had his share of problems with Czar Putin who was driving Georgia back under Russian auspices. In his book "Duty," Bob Gates who served as both Bush and Obama's Secretary of Defense had a realistic view of Putin.

Gates writes on this Georgian dilemma: "The Russians, Putin in particular, wanted to reassert Russia's traditional sphere of influence, including the Caucasus. I was asked by a reporter if I trusted Vladimir Putin 'anymore'? I responded, 'Anymore' is an interesting word. I have never believed that one should make national security policy on the basis of trust. I think you make national security policy based on interests and on realities'."

Like Gates, hate Gates, or feel like flinging him in a pool of 'Red' Jell-O, he at least understood what this administration has failed miserably at understanding, which is that national security is about reality. And I might add that 'reality' in the realm of international relations has the added dimension of being based on 'perception'.

International relations is not about theorizing in some pedagogic vacuum where you can flex your muscles and not have someone kick you in the ass after doing so.

Having to deal with these Obama idealists in Book Land (*a.k.a.* the White House) perhaps is the reason why Gates felt the need to get the hell out.

Now getting back to my point about Russia and sanctions: The president's decision to up the troop number in Afghanistan was no more than a knee jerk reaction to Czar Putin's decision to begin air strikes in Syria. This knee jerk reaction to expand the war was no more than Obama himself trying to save face. At this writing it seems now that the president even wants to put more boots on the ground in Iraq. Yet another knee jerk reaction to the Czar to save his own face for making these idealistic checkers moves while Putin makes chess moves. As I've written before at the risk of political heresy: Putin plays chess; Obama plays checkers. I have long been a Putin observer, and I again make the assertion that Putin moves on underestimation; he waltzes when acquiring territory.

Now where is the U.S. heading? Three war fronts? Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria? Maybe four, with a future Iran? (Of course, Iran marked the first time America paid billions for the enemy to keep American hostages. Great deal for the kidnappers! And we wonder why the U.S. is becoming the Rodney Dangerfield of foreign policy.)

When I saw Putin and Obama coming out of their UN meeting, I was watching hands, and I saw Obama once again grab the limp hand of Putin and was the first to shake hands.

I am still trying to wrap my head around how would President Obama not know that whatever meeting he had with Putin, Putin didn't care and would pull a fast one. Let's see now: Logic would follow emotions that: 'Hey, United States, you led NATO into putting sanctions on my country, you're starving my people, you're screwing over my economy...and now you think I'm going to sit here and actually think I'm going do what you say? Sure, let's all pretend here. Why not? Take some photos. Sure I'll let you shake my hand. We're all BFFs here.'

Just from his previous *modus operandi*, I knew the Czar would pull another fast one while he was on his UN public relations campaign via a speech to UN representatives. The speech, his meeting and photo ops with Obama served no more than a possum tactic to do what he had in mind anyway: Beef up the Assad regime and to position himself and Russia as the new savior in the Middle East. Brilliant move, Vladimir baby, especially when you're dealing with brat advisers who feel studying Cold War history is beneath them.

Now Putin puts Obama in the role of Pavlov's dog with the president's latest jerk reaction to send in more troops not only in Afghanistan but, to reiterate, to Iraq, to Syria.

Am I getting brutal? Well, let me get worse.

This 21st Century warfare is not your great granddaddy, or granddaddy or daddy's warfare. Flip that 21st Century over into a 12 and what you have is a war fighting soldiers with a 12th Century mindset with a sophisticated knowledge of 21st Century technology. This enemy believes in heads on the grounds and not boots on the ground. There are no rules of engagement. There are no safe zones for civilians. Hell! Even the Red Cross is not given a pass. Yet, this president has flung out open arms and says to Syrian refugees

with the same enthusiasm as Drew Carey on the “Price is Right”: “Come on down!” without realizing that ISIS can embed themselves among the authentic refugees and bring in homemade weapons of mass destruction or simply deploy a scavenger hunt here to get what is needed for chemical weaponry.

Both the Hawks and Doves need to face reality for this war on terror. America needs to restructure the military to include guerilla warfare as mandatory in basic training and whatever else the experts deem necessary for this new type of 12th Century warfare. This nation cannot afford to fight an unconventional war conventionally.

Yeah, yeah, we know President Obama inherited this war from President Bush, just as Johnson inherited the Vietnam War from Kennedy. When you sign up to become president you inherit crap, and he is not the first president and won’t be the last to find himself on latrine duty.

I watched both the Obama and the Putin interviews on CBS’ “60 Minutes”. In his interview with Charlie Rose, Putin made a mockery of both the interview and President Obama, even inserting “Ferguson” in answering one of Rose’s questions in the spirit of that old adage of the ‘pot calling the kettle black’ (no pun intended).

Then there was Steve Kroft’s raw interview with President Obama. No matter how much Obama tried to spin his post UN meeting with Putin which culminated in Russian air strikes over Syria, the president managed to live up to another adage of : “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” But if you ‘fool me three, four, five times, then I’m the damn fool’. (And we’ve all been damn fools at one time or another... moving on), but the shame should not culminate in American troops being spread out with no training for this type of warfare and where conscription can be readily reintroduced once the boots run out, because this Alice-in-Wonderland president made the decision to go down the rabbit’s hole to greet the queen who’s yelling ‘off with their heads.’

Czar Putin has fooled this rabbit too many times, and it’s always after some meeting or some telephone call where Obama stands up smiling as if all is well on the ‘Western Front’.

To reiterate, what American foreign policy LEGO builders have failed to take into account are intangibles such as the ‘natives’ fighting you back with brick, sticks, and stones and on sheer will (and now it is with their own brand of Internet propaganda and technological sophistication) until they run off the super power because said super power came in with an attitude that it can stay in a place forever and only has to say ‘boo!’

Yes, Putin made a smart move when he decided to beef up the Assad regime, the enemy of his enemy. I didn’t say it was a ‘good’ move, but a smart move. And don’t kid yourselves, members of the NATO alliance behind closed doors are probably jumping up with joy because they realistically know that they do not want ISIS on their front steps, and if that means dealing with Russia to help rid ISIS, then it is in their interest to want it. And whether one likes Russia or not becomes irrelevant, because by the very fact that Russia stepped in, Russia is viewed now as THE lone power player. And the ‘perception’ that the Czar pulled off all this with the same precision as the ‘Godfather’s’ Michael Corleone who was at a christening acting all innocent while his enemies were being wiped off the map, makes the Czar seem even more brilliant. At this point Obama

became a joke in the realm of international relations because the Czar not only executed Syrian air strikes while at the ‘christening’, but was bold enough to order the U.S. to stay out of the way as a point of saying to Obama, ‘you can kiss my Russian ‘A’. Yes, Russia has pulled off all of this while under that ‘S’ word – sanctions.

In short: Putin will back Assad, rid Assad of his regime’s enemies, and then Putin will rid Syria and the Middle East of Assad.

I would even venture to surmise that Putin has already cut a deal or three with one of Assad’s generals to aid and abet him to get rid of Assad, and for that general to be Syria’s future new leader.

Assad has to go; it’s the only way for Putin to checkmate his NATO rivals and get the credit.

Yes, it will take a new U.S. president to remove sanctions and begin anew in some form or fashion a relationship with Russia. Obama cannot do it; he will look weaker than he already does.

And as time marches on, the lesson these 12th Century soldiers will learn with the same consternation as Russia, France, Great Britain and other Old World kingdoms is that ‘the people’ (citizens, peasants, migrants, tribes, have-nots, what-nots) will turn on them, because even these nouveau terrorists will come to their own headstone where they cannot blame the United States for every ill in their impoverished society. In other words, these nouveau terrorists will succumb to the natural order of politics (revolution) and morph into Third World plutocrats. Thus, another revolution begins ‘again’.

And to you, next American president, you needn’t feel too elated after the inaugural balls. The glass slipper would have cracked as America escalates into another war with boots on the ground not realizing that pretty soon you run out of boots and ground all because there is no exit strategy.

Welcome, to the rabbit hole.

End

*The above is on the Editorial, Op Ed, and Black Paper lanes on The Mid-South Tribune and the Black Information Highway at www.blackinformationhighway.com. *Welcome, Travelers!*