

## America is the Greatest Purveyor of Violence in the World - Where Are the Calls for Boycotts and Sanctions?

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The United States is a military superpower in economic decline. Consequently, its foreign policy resembles that of the mafia extortionist who "offers protection when it is in fact the only threat in the neighborhood." Old bullies do not fade away; they must be confronted. "Who will insist on punishing the United States?" – by far the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world, today."

The United States continues to be the worst and most persistent aggressor on the planet in large part because it has paid no price for its crimes. Our government has acted with complete impunity even as it has ravaged countries as disparate as Iraq, Haiti, and Libya with military force and occupations. It has supported proxies to destabilize an elected government in Venezuela and thwart the will of the people in that country. It has ruined the Iranian economy with harsh sanctions and now seeks to do the same with Russia. America has no shame in asserting its right to intervene anywhere it chooses to on the planet, and to punish any other nation with a mistaken belief that it will be allowed to act in its best interests.

In 2003 the United States invaded Iraq under the pretext of bringing democracy and eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The charge that Saddam Hussein was in possession of WMDs was proven to be a bald faced lie and the intent to uphold democracy was an equally atrocious fabrication. Yet America suffered not at all for its deceit or its role in killing hundreds of thousands of people.

After America's interference overthrew an elected Ukrainian president, Russian president Vladimir Putin drew a red line around his country. Because he stood up to the bully, the United States has decreed that he must be punished. The G8 nations are now the G7 because the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy and France all submitted to America's demand that Putin be kicked out of their club house. The G8 meeting scheduled to be hosted by Putin in Sochi will now be held at the European Union headquarters in Belgium and will have no Russian presence for the first time since 1998.

The appalling arrogance and bullying of the United States is matched only by the obsequiousness of its allies, who never dare take America to task. They certainly could have used the same logic to toss the United States out of the G8 group after the invasion of Iraq, or the occupation of Haiti, or the destruction of Libya, or the ongoing destruction of Syria, but the big criminal goes untouched. They are both afraid of American power and also complicit in its crimes. Their hypocrisy is matched by their cowardice.

Unfortunately, the United States is the most powerful country in the world and it uses its power to crush anyone who dares to stand in its way and Vladimir Putin is the demon du jour. His government gave temporary asylum to another wanted man, Edward Snowden, who committed the crime of revealing the extent of the American security state. When Obama and other NATO leaders sought to intervene directly in Syria and make their "rebels" victorious it was Putin who stood in their way. When NATO subverted the democratically elected president of Ukraine, Russia's neighbor to the east, Putin told NATO in no uncertain terms that he was having none of it and that defiance made him persona non grata to the United States and its lackeys.

Who will insist on punishing the United States? Where are the calls for boycotts and sanctions? Of course the G7 nations are often partners in crime but they also know that a wounded predator is very dangerous. The U.S. faces the constant economic crises brought on by collapsing capitalism and uses its muscle to keep others in line. It can prevent other countries from dropping the dollar as a reserve currency or exercising their abilities to sell their resources but it isn't weak enough yet to be opposed without serious consequence.

In popular vernacular, it can be said that the United States is "gangsta." Like a mafia extortionist it offers protection when it is in fact the only threat in the neighborhood. Russia doesn't threaten any of the G7 countries. None of them have any reason to fear Putin but they do have reason to fear the orchestrator of the coups and the occupations unless they go along with the shake down.

Not only is Putin punished for stopping the criminality but America is rewarded for committing the crimes. Sanctions and isolation are meant to turn Russia into another Iran, an energy rich nation unable to <u>sell its energy</u> resources. The ultimate winner will be the United States which will have the dubious distinction of dispatching yet another competitor for influence in the world. It also has the distinction of bringing the world to the brink of catastrophic violence. Even in the cold war era the Soviet Union's prerogatives were accepted as pragmatic realpolitik. Those niceties are no longer respected and American meddling may bring about the conflict which was feared but not realized in the past.

**Margaret Kimberley**'s Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well as at <a href="http://freedomrider.blogspot.com">http://freedomrider.blogspot.com</a>.

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