

Beating Up on Russia

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

An earlier article called America a super-bully nation. It did so for good reason. It's no fit place to live in. Obama represents its dark side. He's waging war on humanity.

He's doing it belligerently, politically, economically and socially. He represents the worst of rogue leadership. So does bipartisan complicity.

Washington is a cesspool of lawlessness. It's worse than ever now. Lawmakers are ruthless. They're corrupt. They're self-serving. So are administration officials.

Government by diktat is policy. So is state terror. Rule of law principles don't matter. They're routinely violated. Anything goes defines things. Democracy exists in name only.

America tolerates none at home or abroad. It demands all nations bow to its will. Outliers are targeted for regime change.

Russia is a convenient punching bag. It's one of the few countries able to assert its independence. It's able to get away with it. At least so far.

Putin bashing is unrelenting. Instead of partnering for peace and stability, beating up on him renews Cold War tensions.

Mainstream media regurgitate what demands condemnation. They're complicit in hyperbolic/baseless accusations.

Mainstream misinformation calls him a strongman KGB thug. He's compared to Stalin, Hitler and Saddam. He's falsely accused of imperial ambitions.

Putinphobes claim he loves poking America in the eye. They bash his peace initiatives. Ritualistic demonization continues.

Doing so suggests reinventing the Evil Empire. It's back to the future. Where it's heading remains to be seen.

On January 17, the [Daily Beast](#) headlined "Congress Presses Obama on Russia sanctions."

Four senators called for doing so. They include John McCain (R. AZ), Bob Corker (R. TN), Robert Menendez (D. NY), and Ben Cardin (D. MD).

They want a provision of the so-called Magnitsky Act invoked. It lets lawmakers submit alleged human rights violator names for administration consideration.

Official accusations subject them to sanctions. They include visa bans and asset freezes.

Complicit senators wrote John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, saying:

“On December 20, 2013, we received the Department of State’s first annual report.”

“Disappointingly and contrary to repeated assurances and expectations, this report indicates that no persons have been added to the Magnitsky list since April 2013 and does not provide adequate details on the administration’s efforts to encourage other governments to impose similar targeted sanctions.”

“We look forward to your response to our request and hope you will also clarify when we can expect additional names to be added to the Magnitsky list as well as specific administration efforts to encourage other governments to adopt legislation similar to the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012.”

They stopped short of targeting Putin directly. They named Alexander Bastrykin. He’s former First Deputy Prosecutor General. He chaired the Committee of the Prosecutor General’s Office.

They want alleged Russian organized crime boss Dmitry Klyuev sanctioned. Maybe they have other names in mind.

Maybe they’ll include Putin. Maybe they and other congressional hardliners plan rupturing US-Russian relations entirely.

Maybe they plan on doing it. Maybe Obama won’t stop them.

On January 19, The [New York Times](#) headlined “Congressional Leaders Suggest Earlier Snowden Link to Russia.”

House and Senate Intelligence Committee chairs suggested it. Rep. Mike Rogers (R. MI) and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D. CA) offered no evidence whatever.

Baseless accusations began last June. They followed Snowden’s revelations. “(T)here has been much speculation that he was collaborating with a foreign spy service,” said The Times.

An unnamed FBI official said he likely acted alone. An Agency investigation continues.

“(D)ebate rages about whether he was a traitor, a whistle-blower or a violator of his oaths,” said The Times.

Some in Washington say he’s all three. Rogers accused him of knowingly or unknowingly being directed by a foreign intelligence agency.

“I believe there’s a reason he ended up in the hands, the loving hands, of an FSB (Federal Security Service) agent in Moscow,” he said. “I don’t think that’s a coincidence.”

He went “way beyond his technical capabilities,” claimed Rogers. “He had help. He stole things that had nothing to do with privacy.”

According to The Times:

“Intelligence officials say they have no doubt that Chinese and Russian intelligence have obtained whatever information Mr. Snowden was carrying with him digitally.”

He insists he gave nothing to other governments. Rogers accused him of stealing 1.7 million intelligence files.

He claimed billions of dollars are needed to undo his security breaches. He provided no evidence to prove it.

Snowden said nothing he revealed compromises national security. He exposed lawless NSA spying. He provided a public service. He began a much needed debate.

According to Rogers, his arrival in Moscow wasn't “gee-whiz luck.”

ACLU lawyer Ben Wizner advises Snowden. He called Rogers' accusation “false” and “silly.” He “exaggerated national security claims.”

His actions before seeking asylum were entirely inconsistent with foreign espionage. He sought asylum in 20 countries.

He was stuck in Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport's transit area for weeks. It doesn't matter. House Homeland Security Committee chairman Michael McCaul (R. TX) said he was “cultivated by a foreign power.”

FBI as well as House and Senate intelligence committee investigations continue. They've been ongoing for months. They found nothing linking Snowden to foreign espionage.

It doesn't matter. Accusations continue. Russia is Washington's main target. US officials remain furious about Putin refusing America's extradition request.

Snowden's charged under the 1917 Espionage Act. It's a long ago outdated WW I relic. It has no current relevance.

It doesn't matter. Or that Snowden committed no crime. He acted under the provisions of the 1989 Whistleblower Protection Act.

It protects federal employees. Reporting government wrongdoing provides a public service. Federal agencies are prohibited from retaliating against those who do so.

Acting otherwise violates federal law. It spurns constitutional protections. Federal charges include:

- “Theft of Government Property
- Unauthorized Communication of National Defense Information (and)
- Willful Communication of Classified Intelligence Information to an Unauthorized Person.”

At the time, a Government Accountability Project statement said:

Snowden “disclosed information about a secret program that he reasonably believed to be

illegal, and his actions alone brought about the long-overdue national debate about the proper balance between privacy and civil liberties, on the one hand, and national security on the other.”

He was Obama’s 8th wrongfully charged victim under the Espionage Act. It’s more than all previous administrations combined.

It’s a damning indictment of US lawlessness. Beating up on Russia compounds it. Granting Snowden asylum had nothing to do with complicity. Nor refusing to extradite him.

Some in Washington want more than charges pressed. Snowden is public enemy number one.

An unnamed NSA analyst said:

“In a world where I would not be restricted from killing an American, I personally would go and kill him myself. A lot of people share this sentiment.”

An unnamed defense contractor official said Snowden’s “name is cursed every day over here. Most everyone I talk to says he needs to be tried and hung. Forget the trial. Just hang him.”

An unnamed Army intelligence officer said:

“I think if we had the chance, we would end it very quickly. Just casually walking on the streets of Moscow, coming back from buying his groceries.”

“Going back to his flat and he is casually poked by a passerby. He thinks nothing of it at the time starts to feel a little woozy and thinks it’s a parasite from the local water. He goes home very innocently and next thing you know he dies in the shower.”

An unnamed Pentagon official/former special forces officer said:

“I would love to put a bullet in his head. I do not take pleasure in taking another human life, having to do it in uniform, but he is single-handedly the greatest traitor in American history.”

Others would nominate Pentagon commanders for that “distinction.” It’s a killing machine. It’s responsible for millions of lost lives. It routinely commits other high crimes.

So do many others infesting Washington. No nation causes more harm to more people globally than America. None are more out-of-control.

None are more sanctimonious. None more claim a divine right. None more abusively violate rule of law principles.

None more outrageously call naked aggression humanitarian intervention. None more gravely threaten humanity.

None have more apologists. None have more serial liars. None more disgracefully champion wrong over right.

America is in a class by itself. It’s on a fast track toward full-blown tyranny. Some argue it

already arrived.

Thousands of innocent people languish in gulag hell. Police state laws provide cover. Torture is official policy. So is diktat power over constitutional law.

High-level public and private wrongdoing is endemic. It's out-of-control. Permanent wars wage. America's only enemies are ones it creates.

Countries are ravaged one at a time or in multiples. No one is safe at home. Freedom is fast disappearing. Dissent is considered criminal. So is challenging government wrongdoing.

Exposing it is essential. Whistleblowers perform a public service. They deserve praise, not prosecution. Not in America. It's beautiful for its privileged alone. It's pure hell for most others. Change is nowhere in sight.

A Final Comment

On January 19, the [Wall Street Journal](#) headlined "Documents Show NSA Phone Program Provided 1,000 Terror Tips A Year to FBI."

Obama and NSA head General Keith Alexander lied claiming mass surveillance prevented 50 terrorist threats.

Domestic and foreign spying discovered none. It foiled none. Innocent victims are wrongfully charged. They languish unjustly in America's gulag.

The Journal said "newly declassified (DNI) documents" claim NSA's phone program provides about three potential terror tips daily.

Whether true, exaggerated or false, their quality or reliability isn't explained. According to the Journal:

"A recent presidentially appointed review of the program found the NSA phone surveillance program had not been essential to preventing attacks."

"The program's defenders argue it has been an important counterterrorism tool."

America's only terror threats are ones it invents. NSA spying has nothing to do with national security.

It's for control, political advantage and espionage. It doesn't keep America safe. It's unconstitutional. It continues unrestrained.

It does so more intrusively as technology improves. So-called Obama reforms assure business as usual.

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Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network.

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