

Bush to Putin, “Get out now!”. Putin to Bush, “Nyet!”

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When Vladimir Putin heard President Bush demand that Russian troops “leave Georgia territory immediately”, he did what any sensible leader of a great nation would do; he yawned, scratched his belly and ambled over to the Kremlin frig to see if there were any left-overs from last night’s imperial banquet with the French dignitaries. He may have even smiled wistfully to himself as he peered over the Chicken Kiev and the Siberian cutlets, thinking, “Nyet, George; South Ossetia’s future is no longer negotiable”.

The illusion created by the western media, is that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin are hanging on every word that emerges from the White House and gaging their strategy accordingly. Wrong. In fact, they’re not even listening; they can’t be bothered. Whatever Bush says is irrelevant. Who cares? Not Putin, that’s for sure. Moscow is working out the details of its so-called “withdrawal plans” with the United Nations, not Washington. Bush isn’t even a part of the process; he has no say-so at all. None. His fulminations might add a few toxins to the jet stream, but other than that, they make no difference at all. Putin is in the driver’s seat now.

Americans are convinced that their activities in the world still matter. That’s because Americans are marinated in a culture of narcissism. In truth, “American exceptionalism” is just a misunderstanding of one’s own basic insignificance. The dust-up in South Ossetia will help dispel some of those illusions and clarify what little influence the US really has. Bush demagoguery and foot-stomping won’t change a thing; he’s wasting his time. This is Russia’s backyard. They’ll decide the outcome. Bush should stop his jabbering and mind his own business.

And, no; there won’t be a war with Russia; that’s all just more handwringing speculation from liberal pundits. It’s pure rubbish. The Bush administration will do what US policymakers always do when faced with a well-armed adversary; thrust their sabers into the air and rattle them ferociously while beating a hasty retreat. “Cut and run” is not a neocon bullet-point; it’s a summary of 60 years of foreign policy. In fact, the US and its good friend, Israel, sing from the same hymnal; they love blasting-away at defenseless women and children in Gaza or Falluja, but steer-clear of the guys with guns and rocket-launchers. Israel lost a mere 118 men in its 34 Day war with Hezbollah before they decided to pack it in and go home. Putin knows that; that’s why he’s been sending anti-aircraft weaponry to Iran hoping it will dissuade Israel from doing something foolish, like blowing up what’s left of the Middle East. And, it’s a good plan, too. Bush and Olmert have already shown that moral considerations don’t make a bit of difference; what matters is weapons and men who know how to use them.

Now that the Russian army is in South Ossetia, Bush, Cheney, Rice have been getting madder and more frustrated by the day. "Get out now or face the consequences", they growl. But, Putin, with obvious disdain, just shrugs his shoulders and says, "Make me".

Everyone in the world knows what's going on. They can see that Putin has drawn a line in the sand and is openly challenging American credibility. This is the perfect opportunity for Bush to prove that he's really the War President he says he is and not just a cardboard-cutout fraudster. He can show those smug Ruskis who's really the boss. After all, he has Putin's address, doesn't he? He can order his war machine to turn north and head for Georgia, guns blazing. What's stopping him?

South Ossetia is a tipping point; the culmination of 8 years of persistent violence and aggression. It is the moment of truth. Now we'll see what the real 'governing principle' of the administration's foreign policy is: is it the Bush Doctrine or the Wimp Doctrine? Many of the pundits and analysts are convinced that Bush and his clatter of gangsters will lead us into WW3, but it won't happen. It's just more hot air. There are more chickens in the Bush White House than there are at a KFC Poultry Farm. They're only too eager to send some other mother's sons to fight their wars, but they'd never risk losing anything themselves. Go ahead George; you're the war president, President. Show the world those aren't Lima beans hanging between your legs. Let's see what you got?

Bush isn't going to send American troops in South Ossetia. No way. This is a man who won't peep his head out of the White House without 8,000 armed guards shadowing his every move and a small squadron of Apache Helicopters flying overhead. A guy like that isn't about to take on the Russian army. Forget about it. Bush will do all his fighting from the safety of the Executive Media Center where he can duck behind the Presidential podium if a car backfires on Pennsylvania Ave. That's his kind of fighting.

NOTES FROM LIBERATED SOUTH OSSETIA

Was the War in the Caucasus was the work of the Neocons?

Some people think so; and they could be right. Putin may have just been playing a role that was written in Washington. Does that sound crazy?

A few months ago, Putin rejected Bush's unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence. Serbia is a traditional ally of Russia's and Putin has no intention of allowing it to be split up by Washington. Bush's proclamation was a violation of the UN Charter. No one has the right to simply ignore national sovereignty and carve up another country as they see fit. The UN never approved the initiative, but Bush went ahead anyway to satisfy the global ambitions of his neocon base.

So Putin did what any reasonable leader would do; he convened a meeting of his foreign policy team—many of them Soviet-era hardliners who warned him that the US could not be trusted—and decided on a plan to annex South Ossetia. (which he said he would do if Bush declared Kosovo independent) As it turns out, Israeli advisers in Georgia, wanted to strike a deal with Putin over the high-tech weapons systems that Russia had been selling to Iran. So (I believe) Putin made a deal with Israel to suspend arms-sales to Iran if Israel would trick the dim-witted Saakashvili into invading South Ossetia. That would set the stage for a Russian counter-attack and de facto annexation. Good plan, eh?

The question is; would friends of the neocons agree to pull the wool over Saakashvili's eyes to stop Putin's weapons shipments to Iran? No one knows for sure, but the degree of Russian preparedness before the counter-attack suggests that they had been tipped-off by people close to Saakashvili. Who would that be? Maybe someone who had something to gain, right?

Consider this excerpt from George Friedman's article for Stratfor, "The Russo-Georgian War and the Balance of Power":

"The United States maintained about 130 military advisers in Georgia, along with civilian advisers, contractors involved in all aspects of the Georgian government and people doing business in Georgia. It is inconceivable that the Americans were unaware of Georgia's mobilization and intentions. It is also inconceivable that the Americans were unaware that the Russians had deployed substantial forces on the South Ossetian frontier. U.S. technical intelligence, from satellite imagery and signals intelligence to unmanned aerial vehicles, could not miss the fact that thousands of Russian troops were moving to forward positions. The Russians clearly knew the Georgians were ready to move. How could the United States not be aware of the Russians? Indeed, given the posture of Russian troops, how could intelligence analysts have missed the possibility that the Russians had laid a trap, hoping for a Georgian invasion to justify its own counterattack?"

For the United States, the Middle East is far more important than the Caucasus, and Iran is particularly important. The United States wants the Russians to participate in sanctions against Iran. Even more importantly, they do not want the Russians to sell weapons to Iran, particularly the highly effective S-300 air defense system. Georgia is a marginal issue to the United States; Iran is a central issue. The Russians are in a position to pose serious problems for the United States not only in Iran, but also with weapons sales to other countries, like Syria." (George Friedman, "The Russo-Georgian War and the Balance of Power", Stratfor)

Friedman's summary makes the "neocon theory" seem all the more plausible. A quid pro quo with Putin would have been the only way to guarantee that Iran would not get its hands on critical defensive weaponry. Certainly, the neocons must have taken that into consideration. All they had to do was hoodwink Saakashvili and Putin would do the rest. No problemo. The outcome, however, has created a few unintended consequences. The Bush administration's chances of securing access to the oil-rich Caspian Basin or of gaining NATO membership for Georgia are now nil. America's gambit in Central Asia just made an unexpected crash landing.

Of course, there's no way to verify this theory without someone stepping forward and corroborating the details. But wherever there's trouble, there's bound to be a few neocon fingerprints somewhere.

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