

How Putin Blocked the U.S. Pivot to Asia

By [Mike Whitney](#)

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“The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the only constraint on Washington’s power to act unilaterally abroad.... Suddenly the United States found itself to be the Uni-power, the ‘world’s only superpower.’ Neoconservatives proclaimed ‘the end of history.’”

— Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Secretary of the US Treasury

“Don’t blame the mirror if your face is crooked.”

— Russian proverb

On February 10, 2007, Vladimir Putin delivered a speech at the 43rd Munich Security Conference that created a rift between Washington and Moscow that has only deepened over time. The Russian President’s blistering hour-long critique of US foreign policy provided a rational, point-by-point indictment of US interventions around the world and their devastating effect on global security. Putin probably didn’t realize the impact his candid observations would have on the assembly in Munich or the reaction of powerbrokers in the US who saw the presentation as a turning point in US-Russian relations. But, the fact is, Washington’s hostility towards Russia can be traced back to this particular incident, a speech in which Putin publicly committed himself to a multipolar global system, thus, repudiating the NWO pretensions of US elites. Here’s what he said:

“I am convinced that we have reached that decisive moment when we must seriously think about the architecture of global security. And we must proceed by searching for a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants in the international dialogue.”

With that one formulation, Putin rejected the United States assumed role as the world’s only superpower and steward of global security, a privileged position which Washington feels it earned by prevailing in the Cold War and which entitles the US to unilaterally intervene whenever it sees fit. Putin’s announcement ended years of bickering and deliberation among think tank analysts as to whether Russia could be integrated into the US-led system or not. Now they knew that Putin would never dance to Washington’s tune.

In the early years of his presidency, it was believed that Putin would learn to comply with western demands and accept a subordinate role in the Washington-centric system. But it hasn’t worked out that way. The speech in Munich merely underscored what many US hawks and Cold Warriors had been saying from the beginning, that Putin would not relinquish Russian sovereignty without a fight. The declaration challenging US aspirations to rule the world, left no doubt that Putin was going to be a problem that had to be dealt with by any means necessary including harsh economic sanctions, a State Department-led coup

in neighboring Ukraine, a conspiracy to crash oil prices, a speculative attack of the ruble, a proxy war in the Donbass using neo-Nazis as the empire's shock troops, and myriad false flag operations used to discredit Putin personally while driving a wedge between Moscow and its primary business partners in Europe. Now the Pentagon is planning to send 600 paratroopers to Ukraine ostensibly to "train the Ukrainian National Guard", a serious escalation that violates the spirit of Minsk 2 and which calls for a proportionate response from the Kremlin. Bottom line: The US is using all the weapons in its arsenal to prosecute its war on Putin.

Last week's gangland-style murder of Russian opposition leader, Boris Nemtsov, has to be considered in terms of the larger geopolitical game that is currently underway. While we may never know who perpetrated the crime, we can say with certainty that the lack of evidence hasn't deterred the media or US politicians from using the tragedy to advance an anti-Putin agenda aimed at destabilizing the government and triggering regime change in Moscow. Putin himself suggested that the killing may have been a set-up designed to put more pressure on the Kremlin. The World Socialist Web Site summed up the political implications like this:

"The assassination of Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov is a significant political event that arises out of the US-Russia confrontation and the intense struggle that is now underway within the highest levels of the Russian state. The Obama administration and the CIA are playing a major role in the escalation of this conflict, with the aim of producing an outcome that serves the global geo-political and financial interests of US imperialism...

It is all but obvious that the Obama administration is hoping a faction will emerge within the Russian elite, backed by elements in the military and secret police, capable of staging a "palace coup" and getting rid of Putin....

The United States is not seeking to trigger a widespread popular revolt. (But) are directed entirely at convincing a section of the oligarchy and emerging capitalist class that their business interests and personal wealth depend upon US support. That is why the Obama administration has used economic sanctions targeting individuals as a means of exerting pressure on the oligarchs as well as broader sections of the entrepreneurial elite...

It is in the context of this international power struggle that one must evaluate Nemtsov's murder. Of course, it is possible that his death was the outcome of his private dealings. But it is more likely that he was killed for political reasons. Certainly, the timing of the killing—on the eve of the opposition's anti-Putin demonstration in Moscow—strongly indicates that the killing was a political assassination, not a private settling of accounts." ([Murder in Moscow: Why was Boris Nemtsov assassinated?](#), David North, World Socialist Web Site)

Just hours after Nemtsov was gunned down in Moscow, the western media swung into action releasing a barrage of articles suggesting Kremlin involvement without a shred of evidence to support their claims. The campaign of innuendo has steadily gained momentum as more Russia "experts" and politicians offer their opinions about who might be responsible. Naturally, none of the interviewees veer from the official storyline that someone in Putin's charge must have carried out the attack. An article in the Washington Post is a good example of the tactics used in the latest PR campaign to discredit Putin. According to Vladimir Gel'man, Political Scientists European University at St. Petersburg and the University of Helsinki:

“Boris Nemtsov, one of the leaders of political opposition, was shot dead nearby the Kremlin. In my opinion, it has all the hallmarks of a political assassination provoked by an aggressive Kremlin-induced campaign against the “fifth column of national traitors”, who opposed the annexation of Crimea, war with the West over Ukraine, and further decline of political and civil freedoms in the country. We may never know whether the Kremlin ordered this killing, but given the fact that Nemtsov was one of the most consistent critics not only of the Russian regime as such but also of Putin in person, his dissenting voice will never upset Putin and his inner circle anymore.” ([What does Boris Nemtsov’s murder mean for Russia?](#), Washington Post)

The article in the Washington Post is fairly typical of others published in the MSM. The coverage is invariably long on finger-pointing and insinuation and short on facts. Traditional journalistic standards of objectivity and fact-gathering have been jettisoned to advance a political agenda that reflects the objectives of ownership. The Nemtsov assassination is just the latest illustration of the abysmal state of western media.

The idea that Putin’s agents would “whack” an opposition candidate just a stone’s throw from the Kremlin is far fetched to say the least. As one commenter at the Moon of Alabama blog noted:

“Isn’t the image of a dead political opponent lying on a bridge overlooked by the Kremlin a bit rich? I mean, short of a dagger lodged between his shoulder blades with the inscription “if found, please return to Mr Putin”, I can’t think of a more over-egged attempt at trying to implicate the Government. And on the night before an opposition rally Nemtsov hoped to lead. I mean, come on.”

While there’s no denying that Moscow could be involved, it seems unlikely. The more probable explanation is that the incident is part of a larger regime change scheme to ignite social unrest and destabilize the government. The US has used these tactics so many times before in various color-coded revolutions, that we won’t reiterate the details here. Even so, it’s worth noting that the US has no red lines when it comes to achieving its strategic goals. It will do whatever it feels is necessary to prevail in its clash with Putin.

The question is why? Why is Washington so determined to remove Putin?

Putin answered this question himself recently at a celebration of Russia’s diplomatic workers’ day. He said Russia would pursue an independent foreign policy despite pressure in what he called “today’s challenging international environment.”

“No matter how much pressure is put on us, the Russian Federation will continue to pursue an independent foreign policy, to support the fundamental interests of our people and in line with global security and stability.” (Reuters)

This is Putin’s unforgivable crime, the same crime as Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Syria and countless other nations that refuse to march in lockstep to Washington’s directives.

Putin has also resisted NATO encirclement and attempts by the US to loot Russia’s vast natural resources. And while Putin has made every effort to avoid a direct confrontation with the US, he has not backed down on issues that are vital to Russia’s national security, in fact, he has pointed out numerous times not only the threat that encroaching NATO poses to

Moscow, but also the lies that preceded its eastward expansion. Here's Putin at Munich again:

"I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr. Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: "the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee...."

Where are these guarantees?"

Where, indeed. Apparently, they were all lies. As political analyst Pat Buchanan said in his article "Doesn't Putin Have a Point?":

"Though the Red Army had picked up and gone home from Eastern Europe voluntarily, and Moscow felt it had an understanding we would not move NATO eastward, we exploited our moment. Not only did we bring Poland into NATO, we brought in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and virtually the whole Warsaw Pact, planting NATO right on Mother Russia's front porch. Now, there is a scheme afoot to bring in Ukraine and Georgia in the Caucasus, the birthplace of Stalin...."

... though Putin gave us a green light to use bases in the old Soviet republics for the liberation of Afghanistan, we now seem hell-bent on making those bases in Central Asia permanent.

... through the National Endowment for Democracy, its GOP and Democratic auxiliaries, and tax-exempt think tanks, foundations, and "human rights" institutes such as Freedom House,... we have been fomenting regime change in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet republics, and Russia herself....

These are Putin's grievances. Does he not have a small point?" "(Doesn't Putin Have a Point?", Pat Buchanan, antiwar.com)

Now the US wants to deploy its missile defense system to Eastern Europe, a system which-according to Putin

"will work automatically with and be an integral part of the US nuclear capability. For the first time in history, and I want to emphasize this, there are elements of the US nuclear capability on the European continent. It simply changes the whole configuration of international security.....Of course, we have to respond to that."

How can Putin allow this to happen? How can he allow the US to situate nuclear weapons in a location that would increase its first-strike capability and undermine the balance of deterrents allowing the US to force Russia to follow its orders or face certain annihilation. Putin has no choice but to resist this outcome, just as has no choice but to oppose the principle upon which US expansion is based, the notion that the Cold War was won by the US, therefore the US has the right to reshape the world in a way that best suits its own economic and geopolitical interests. Here's Putin again:

"What is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, it refers to a type of situation where there is one center of authority, one center of force,

one center of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. 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...

I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world.... the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilization..." (Munich, 2007)

What sort of man talks like this? What sort of man talks about "the moral foundations for modern civilization" or invokes FDR in his address?

Putin:

"'Security for one is security for all'. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said during the first few days that the Second World War was breaking out: 'When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger.' These words remain topical today."

I urge everyone to watch at least the first 10 minutes of Putin's speech and decide for themselves whether they think the characterization (and demonization) of Putin in the media is fair or not. And pay special attention to Minute 6 where Putin says this:

"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?" ([Vladimir Putin's legendary speech at Munich Security Conference](#))

While Putin is making this statement, the camera pans to John McCain and Joe Lieberman who are sitting stone-faced in the front row seething at every word uttered by the Russian president. If you look close enough, you can see the steam emerging from McCain's ears.

This is why Washington wants regime change in Moscow. It's because Putin refuses to be pushed around by the United States. It's because he wants a world that is governed by international laws that are impartially administered by the United Nations. It's because he rejects a "unipolar" world order where one nation dictates policy to everyone else and where military confrontation becomes the preferred way for the powerful to impose their will on the weak.

Putin:

"Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts...The United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way....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." [Vladimir Putin, Munich 2007](#)

Putin isn't a perfect man. He has his shortcomings and flaws like everyone else. But

he appears to be a decent person who has made great strides in restoring Russia's economy after it was looted by agents of the US following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He has lifted living standards, increased pensions, reduced poverty, and improved education and health care which is why his public approval ratings are currently hovering at an eye-watering 86 percent. Even so, Putin is most admired for standing up to the United States and blocking its strategy to pivot to Asia. The proxy war in Ukraine is actually a struggle to thwart Washington's plan to break up the Russian Federation, encircle China, control the flow of resources from Asia to Europe, and rule the world. Vladimir Putin is at the forefront of that conflagration which is why he has gained the respect and admiration of people around the world.

As for "democracy", Putin said it best himself:

"Am I a 'pure democrat'? (laughs) Of course I am. Absolutely. The problem is that I'm all alone, the only one of my kind in the whole world. Just look at what's happening in America, it's terrible—torture, homeless people, Guantanamo, people detained without trial or investigation. And look at Europe—harsh treatment of demonstrators, rubber bullets and tear gas used in one capital after another, demonstrators killed on the streets..... I have no one to talk to since Gandhi died."

Well said, Vladimir.

Mike Whitney lives in Washington state. He is a contributor to [Hopeless: Barack Obama and the Politics of Illusion](#) (AK Press). *Hopeless* is also available in a [Kindle edition](#). He can be reached at fergiwhitney@msn.com.

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