

Putin Agonistes: Missile Defense will not be Deployed

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It's been a lot of hard work, but Russian President Vladimir Putin has finally achieved his goal. He's cleaned up the mess left behind by Yeltsin, put together a strong and thriving economy, and restored Russia to a place of honor among the community of nations. His legacy has already been written. He's the man who rebuilt Russia. The last thing he wants now, is a pointless confrontation with the United States. But how can it be avoided? He understands Washington's long-range plans for Russia and he is taking necessary steps to preempt them. He is familiar with the heavyweights of US foreign policy, like Zbigniew Brzezinski, and has undoubtedly read his master-plan for Central Asia, "The Grand Chessboard". Brzezinski's recent article in Foreign Affairs, (A publication of the Council on Foreign Relations) "A Geostrategy for Eurasia" summarizes his views on America's future involvement in the region:

"America's emergence as the sole global superpower now makes an integrated and comprehensive strategy for Eurasia imperative.

Eurasia is home to most of the world's politically assertive and dynamic states. All the historical pretenders to global power originated in Eurasia. The world's most populous aspirants to regional hegemony, China and India, are in Eurasia, as are all the potential political or economic challengers to American primacy. ... Eurasia accounts for 75 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of its GNP, and 75 percent of its energy resources. Collectively, Eurasia's potential power overshadows even America's.

Eurasia is the world's axial supercontinent. A power that dominated Eurasia would exercise decisive influence over two of the world's three most economically productive regions, Western Europe and East Asia. A glance at the map also suggests that a country dominant in Eurasia would almost automatically control the Middle East and Africa. With Eurasia now serving as the decisive geopolitical chessboard, it no longer suffices to fashion one policy for Europe and another for Asia. What happens with the distribution of power on the Eurasian landmass will be of decisive importance to America's global primacy and historical legacy."

So, there it is. The US is moving into the neighborhood and has no intention of leaving. The war on terror is a fraud; it merely conceals the fact that Bush is sprinkling military bases

throughout Central Asia and surrounding Russia in the process. Brzezinski sees this as a “strategic imperative”. It doesn’t matter what Putin thinks. According to Brzezinski “NATO enlargement should move forward in deliberate stages” . The US must make sure “that no state or combination of states gains the ability to expel the United States or even diminish its decisive role”.

This isn’t new. Putin has known for some time what Bush is up to and he’s been as accommodating as possible. After all, his real passion is putting Russia back on its feet and improving the lives of its citizens. That will have to change now that Bush has decided to install a “Missile Defense” system in Eastern Europe. Putin will have to devote more time to blocking America’s plans. The new system will upset the basic balance of power between the nuclear rivals and force Putin to raise the stakes. A confrontation is brewing whether Putin wants it or not. The system cannot be deployed. Period. Putin must now do whatever he is necessary to remove a direct threat to Russia’s national security. That is the primary obligation of every leader and he will not shirk his responsibility.

Putin is an elusive character; neither boastful nor arrogant. It’s clear now that western pundits mistook his reserved, quiet manner as a sign of superficiality or lack of resolve. They were wrong. They underestimated the former-KGB Colonel. Putin is bright and tenacious and he has a vision for his country. He sees Russia as a key player in the new century; an energy powerhouse that can control its own destiny. He doesn’t plan to get bogged down in avoidable conflicts if possible. He’s focused on development not war; plowshares not swords. He’s also fiercely nationalistic; a Russian who puts Russia first.

But Putin is a realist and he knows that the US will not leave Eurasia without a fight. He’s read the US National Security Strategy and he understands the ideological foundation for America’s “unipolar” world model. The NSS is an unambiguous declaration of war against any nation that claims the right to to control its own resources or defend its own sovereignty against US interests. The NSS implies that nations’ are required to open their markets to western multinationals and follow directives from Washington or accept a place on Bush’s “enemies list”. There’s no middle ground. You are with us or with the terrorists. The NSS also entitles the United States to unilaterally wage aggressive warfare against any state or group that is perceived to be a potential threat to Washington’s imperial ambitions. These so-called “preemptive” wars are carried out under the rubric of the “war on terror” which provides the justification for torture, abduction, ethnic cleansing and massive civilian casualties.

US National Security Strategy articulates in black and white what many critics had been saying for years; the United States owns the world and everyone else is just a guest.

Putin knows that there’s no way to reconcile this doctrine with his own aspirations for an independent Russia but, so far, a clash has been averted.

He also knows that Bush is flanked by a band of fanatics and militarists who plan to weaken Russia, install an American stooge (like Georgia and Afghanistan) and divide the country into four regions. This strategy is clearly presented in forward-planning documents that have been drawn up in Washington think tanks that chart the course for US world domination. Brzezinski is quite candid about this in his article in Foreign Affairs:

“Given (Russia’s) size and diversity, a decentralized political system and free-market

economics would be most likely to unleash the creative potential of the Russian people and Russia's vast natural resources. A loosely confederated Russia — composed of a European Russia, a Siberian Republic, and a Far Eastern Republic — would also find it easier to cultivate closer economic relations with its neighbors. Each of the confederated entities would be able to tap its local creative potential, stifled for centuries by Moscow's heavy bureaucratic hand. In turn, a decentralized Russia would be less susceptible to imperial mobilization." (Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostategy for Eurasia")

Partition is a common theme in imperial planning whether its called apartheid in Israel, federalizing in Iraq, "limited independence" in Kosovo, or "loose confederation" in Russia. It's all the same. Divide and rule; undermine nationalism by destroying the underlying culture and balkanizing the territory. This isn't new. What is amazing, is that Bush's plan is going forward despite 7 years of uninterrupted foreign policy failures. Hubris and self-delusion have a longer shelf-life than anyone could have imagined.

Putin is surrounded by ex-KGB hardliners who have warned him that America cannot be trusted. They have watched while the US has steadily moved into the former-Soviet satellites, pushed NATO to Russia's borders, and precipitated regime change via "color coded" revolutions. They point to Chechen war where US intelligence services trained Chechen insurgents through their ISI surrogates in Pakistan—teaching them how to conduct guerrilla operations in a critical region that provides Russia with access to the western shores of the resource-rich Caspian Basin.

1. Michel Chossudovsky has done some excellent research on this little-known period of Russian history. In his article "The Anglo-American Military Axis", he says:

"U.S. covert support to the two main Chechen rebel groups (through Pakistan's ISI) was known to the Russian government and military. However, it had previously never been made public or raised at the diplomatic level. In November 1999, the Russian Defense Minister, Igor Sergueyev, formally accused Washington of supporting the Chechen rebels. Following a meeting held behind closed doors with Russia's military high command, Sergueyev declared that:

'The national interests of the United States require that the military conflict in the Caucasus [Chechnya] be a fire, provoked as a result of outside forces", while adding that "the West's policy constitutes a challenge launched to Russia with the ultimate aim of weakening her international position and of excluding her from geo-strategic areas.'"

In the wake of the 1999 Chechen war, a new "National Security Doctrine" was formulated and signed into law by Acting President Vladimir Putin, in early 2000. Barely acknowledged by the international media, a critical shift in East-West relations had occurred. The document reasserted the building of a strong Russian State, the concurrent growth of the Military, as well as the reintroduction of State controls over foreign capital....The document carefully spelled out what it described as " fundamental threats" to Russia's national security and sovereignty. More specifically, it referred to "the strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances" [namely GUUAM], as well as to "NATO's eastward expansion" while underscoring "the possible emergence of foreign military bases and major military

presences in the immediate proximity of Russian borders.” (Michel Chossudovsky, “The Anglo-American Military Axis”, Global Research)

That’s right; there’s been a low-grade secret war going on between Russia and the US for over a decade although it is rarely discussed in diplomatic circles. The war in Chechnya is probably less about “succession” and independence, than it is about foreign intervention and imperial overreach.

The same rule applies to the controversy surrounding Kosovo. The Bush administration and its EU clients are trying to fragment Serbia by supporting an initiative for Kosovo “limited independence”.

But why “limited”?

It’s because Bush knows that the resolution has no chance of passing the UN Security Council, so the only way to circumvent international law is by issuing a unilateral edict that is promoted in the media as “independence”. By this same standard, Abraham Lincoln should have granted Jefferson Davis “limited independence” and avoided the Civil War altogether.

Author Irina Lebedeva reveals the real motives behind the administration’s actions on Kosovo in her article “USA-Russia: Hitting the same Gate, or playing the same game?”

“The North Atlantic alliance (The US and its EU allies) documents indicate that the bloc aims at the “Balkanization” of the post-Soviet space by way of overtaking influence in the territories of the currently frozen conflicts and their follow-up internalization along the Yugoslavian lines are set down in black and white. For example, a special report titled “The New North Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region”, prepared by the German Marshall Fund of the United States on the occasion of the NATO summit, already refers to Black Sea and South Caucasus (Transcaucasia) as a “new Euro-Atlantic borderland plagued by Soviet-legacy conflicts.” And the “region of frozen conflicts is evolving into a functional aggregate on the new border of an enlarging West.” Azerbaijan and Georgia in tandem, the report notes, provide a unique transit corridor for Caspian energy to Europe, as well as an irreplaceable corridor for American-led and NATO to bases and operation theatres in Central Asia and the Greater Middle East.”

Once again, divide and rule; this time writ large for an entire region that is being arbitrarily redrawn to meet the needs of mega-corporations that want to secure “transit corridors for Caspian energy to Europe”. The new Great Game. Brzezinski has called this area a critical “land-bridge” to Eurasia. Others refer to it as a “new Euro-Atlantic borderland”. Whatever one calls it; it is a good illustration of how bloodthirsty Washington mandarins carve up the world to suit their own geopolitical objectives.

Putin has seen enough and he’s now moving swiftly to counter US incursions in the region. He’s not going to wait until the neocon fantasists affix a bullseye to his back and take aim. In the last few weeks he has withdrawn Russia from the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) and is threatening to redeploy his troops and heavy weaponry to Russia’s western-most borders. The move does nothing to enhance Russian security, but it will arouse public concern in Europe and perhaps ignite a backlash against Bush’s Missile Defense system.

Russian Navy Admiral Vladimir Masorin also announced this week that Russia will move part of its fleet to Syrian ports where “it will maintain a permanent presence in the Mediterranean. Israeli leaders are in a panic over the announcement claiming that the move will disrupt their “electronic surveillance and air defense centers” thus threatening their national security. Putin intends to go ahead with the plan regardless. Dredging has already begun in the port of Tartus and a dock is being built in the Syrian port of Latakia.

Also, Russian officials are investigating the possibility of building military bases in Serbia and have been invited to discuss the issue with leaders in the Serbian Nationalist Radical Party (SRS) The prospective dialogue is clearly designed to dissuade the US from pursuing its present policy towards Kosovo.

Russia also delivered its first shipment of nuclear fuel to Iran this week which means that the controversial 1,000 watt nuclear plant at Bushehr could be fully operational within three months. Adding insult to injury, Iranian officials announced on Monday their plans to build a second plant in defiance of US orders to halt its nuclear activities.

Also, on Monday, “Russia test-launched a new intercontinental ballistic missile part of a system that can outperform any anti-missile system likely to be deployed” according to Reuters. “The missile was launched from the Tula nuclear-powered submarine in the Barents Sea in the Arctic.”

“The military hardware now on our weapons, and those that will appear in the next few years, will enable our missiles to outperform any anti-missile system, including future systems,” Col.-Gen Nikolai Solovtsov was quoted as telling journalists.” (Reuters)

Bush’s Missile Defense system has restarted the nuclear arms race. Welcome to the new Cold War.

Finally, Russia Chief of Staff, General Yuri Balyevsky warned:

“A possible launch of a US interceptor missile from Central Europe may provoke a counterattack from intercontinental ballistic missiles....If we suppose that Iran wants to strike the United States , then interceptor missiles which would be launched from Poland will fly towards Russia and the shape and flight trajectory are very similar to ICBMs” (Novosti Russian News Agency)

Balyevsky’s scenario of an “accidental” World War 3 is more likely than ever now that Bush is pressing ahead with his plans for Missile Defense. Russia’s automated missile warning systems can be triggered automatically when foreign missiles enter Russian air space. Its a dangerous game and potentially fatal every living thing on the planet.

To great extent, the American people have no idea of the reckless policy that is being carried out in their name. The gravity of the proposed Missile Defense system has been virtually ignored by the media and Russia’s protests have been dismissed as trivial. But hostilities are steadily growing, military forces and weaponry are being put into place, and the stage is set for a major conflagration. This is every bit as serious as the Cuban Missile Crisis, only this time Russia cannot afford to stand down.

Putin will not allow the system to be deployed even if he has to remove it through force of arms. It is a direct threat to Russia’s national security. We would expect no different from

our own leaders.

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