

Putin “Shoots Himself in the Head”? Dr. Paul Craig Roberts

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Putin’s latest speech is one that should never have been made. With his [ill-considered speech](#) — Putin has lent his weight to US neoconservative propaganda that he is in a weakened and challenged position and that the US can win in Ukraine:

“I emphasize that from the very beginning of the events, all necessary decisions were immediately taken to neutralize the threat that arose, to protect the constitutional order, the life and security of our citizens.” — President Vladimir Putin

With the Ukrainian forces essentially defeated, the fake news “mutiny” is precisely what the neoconservatives needed to keep the conflict alive, which is why Scott Ritter thinks Victoria Nuland might have instigated the “coup.”

Even if what Putin said was true –and it is not– he should never have said it. He has verified the US neoconservatives’ propaganda. The consequence will be more provocations against Russia. The danger from these provocations make it ever more important that Russia use sufficient force to end the conflict before the neoconservatives spin it out of control.

Clearly, Putin has third-rate advisors. Instead of verifying neoconservative propaganda about Putin weakened by internal dissent, Putin should have said that Prigozhin’s protest got his attention to the bad relationship between the boots-on-the-ground and the military brass in Moscow and to the desire of the troops doing the fighting for the Kremlin to use sufficient force to end the conflict. The Wagner troops are tired of dying for a war that doesn’t go anywhere or have an end in prospect.

But this would imply Putin’s mistake, not Prigozhin’s, and thinking they were shielding Putin his advisers actually put him at risk by verifying the neoconservatives’ portrait of Putin as weak and internally opposed.

The Russian military brass have been trying to get rid of Prigozhin, because he refused to put his Wagner Group under their command. The military brass have been paying him back with ammunition shortages and in other ways. It is possible that they did hit one of his camps with a missile in order to light his fuse. Whatever happened, the military brass succeeded in getting rid of him, just as the Democrats and the CIA got rid of President Trump's National Security Advisor, General Flynn.

Possibly, Prigozhin succeeded in getting Putin's attention, but that Putin found the "armed rebellion," "mutiny" story too set in stone to escape it. If Putin actually regards the events of last Saturday as high treason, why did he give a pass to Prigozhin and the Wagner soldiers?

Would a leader threatened by Wagner troops incorporate them into the military or would he disband and prosecute them?

I have already explained why [it was not a coup](#).

Yevgeny Prigozhin is a long-time close ally of Putin. He formed the Wagner Group at Putin's request. The Group, as formed, is separate from the Russian Military but was equipped by the Ministry of Defense and used Russian military bases for training. There is speculation that Putin wanted the Group so that he can conduct military operations with plausible deniability. This makes little sense as the Wagner Group is a Russian paid military force that operates for Russia. There is no possibility of denying that.

I don't know why Putin had Prigozhin form the Wagner Group. I think of the Wagner Group like the French Foreign Legion and as a substitute for a draft.

We will find out if Prigozhin succeeded in getting Putin's attention if there are changes in the upper ranks of the military and if, finally, Putin authorizes the force to bring the conflict to a conclusion. If Putin does not bring the conflict to a close, nuclear war will be the likely consequence.

Col. Douglas Macgregor sees the situation as I do except I am unsure he appreciates the damage Putin has done to himself in the West by proclaiming that Russia was on the verge of civil war and a major internal armed conflict, and in Russia by his denunciation of the Wagner commander and his troops as traitors who wanted Russians to kill one another. The video below is valuable not only for Col Macgregor's explanations, but also for video clips showing the enthusiasm and high regard shown by the Russian population of Rostov to Prigozhin and his soldiers on their arrival in the city last Saturday. Russians are proud of the Wagner troops and to hear them denounced by Putin has probably damaged Putin more than it has damaged Prigozhin.

The video also has clips of Secretary of State Blinken claiming that Putin is being rejected by his own people and clips of a Biden Navy admiral promising ever more weapons for Ukraine. Clearly, Washington's response to the false news "coup" is as I described. So sad Putin was so naive as to jump into the trap.

It is not only Prigozhin and his soldiers who want the war brought to a quick end. It is what the Russian people want. Victory is important to them as a statement of their sovereignty and prowess. There is no excuse for Putin's go-no-where-war that makes Russia look ineffectual. All Putin has achieved is a great widening of the conflict with NATO and US involvement. Russians are dying for no progress. The deaths are pointless.

Remember, the Russian winter offensive did not happen. The excuse was it never got cold enough to freeze the ground so tanks, artillery, and troop convoys wouldn't get stuck in the mud. Now it is almost July and still no summer offensive. If Putin continues to sit out his war, the US and NATO will have time to create another Ukrainian army, maybe with Polish troops, perhaps with one of the CIA's jihad armies.

Putin is also harming combat effectiveness by giving in to the military brass and breaking up the Wagner Group into sections and integrating them into Russian Army groups. The Russian soldiers will be envious because they have not had the Wagner troops' successes. The Wagner troops are older and hardened men and will not tolerate snide remarks. It might not work well, and the fighting prowess of the Wagner troops might suffer from the loss of cohesion. In effect, the Wagner Group is an army-sized special forces unit. Its demise would be a large victory for the West.

It is very easy to understand the Wagner Group's frustrations that erupted in a protest. It is the duty of a commander in chief to bring a war to a quick and victorious conclusion. Putin has failed his responsibility.

I attribute the fake news "armed rebellion" to Putin's failures.

He failed to address the smoldering dispute between Prigozhin and the generals, and he presented the soldiers and the country with an endless war that demoralized the Russian people

If Russia cannot defeat pitiful Ukraine, how can Russia stand up to the West?

The fact that the Russian media and the Western media agree on a fake news narrative, now set in stone, further removes the conflict from a truthful understanding, thus maximizing the chances for an explosion that adversely affects the entire world.

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