

Those Scary and Dangerous Russkies

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It was always inevitable that the Pentagon's and the CIA's "war on terrorism" would begin fizzling out, especially as the number of foreigners they were killing significantly diminished. When U.S. forces got booted out of Afghanistan and began killing significantly less people in Iraq, the rage that motivates terrorists to strike began going down.

That's undoubtedly why the Pentagon hedged its bets and began expanding NATO eastward after the ostensible end of the Cold War, moving inexorably closer to Russia's border. Pentagon officials figured that if their "war on terrorism" began fizzling out, they could still gin up their old Cold War racket, one that had proven to be highly lucrative for the national-security establishment and its army of voracious "defense" contractors who depend on feeding at the public trough.

With its interventionist antics, the Pentagon succeeded in provoking Russia into invading Ukraine, which has turned into an enormous bonanza for the Pentagon, the CIA, and the NSA, one comparable to the one that came after the 9/11 attacks. The Pentagon's interventionist strategy got a large number of Americans imbued with a ferocious anti-Russia mentality, one that has been supportive of whatever quantity of tax-funded largess that Congress has been willing to heap onto the national-security establishment.

An unintended consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, however, has been the destruction of the Pentagon's and CIA's portrayal of the Russians as an all-powerful military nation that was coming to get us here in the United States. Prior to the invasion, Pentagon and CIA officials were saying that it was clear that Russia planned to reconstitute the Soviet Union, invade and conquer Eastern and Western Europe, cross the English Channel and take England, and then cross the Atlantic Ocean and conquer the United States. They were using that fear to justify the continuation and expansion of their tax-funded largess.

Really? Why, Russia hasn't even been able to conquer Ukraine! If it can't conquer Ukraine,

how is it suppose to conquer the world? So much for that scary Russian boogeyman who was coming to get us.

It was really no different during the Cold War racket. At the end of World War II, U.S. officials imbued the American people with a deep fear that the commies were coming to get them. The notion was that there was an international communist conspiracy that was based in Moscow whose aim was to invade and conquer Europe, Latin America, the United States, and the rest of the world.

The irony is that the Soviets had been America's partner and ally during the war. But those who were advocating that the federal government be converted to a national-security state knew that America would need a new official enemy to justify the conversion. Enter the Reds. As someone told President Truman, who was the president who presided over the conversion, he needed to scare the hell out of the American people so that they wouldn't object to the conversion.

Truman did that. "The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!" There was even an American movie with that title. Everyone was scared to death that the Reds were going to take control of America and teach Marxism in America's public (i.e., government) schools.

The biggest fear-mongers were American conservatives. They lived in deep fear of the Reds during the entire 45 years of the Cold War racket. In fact, they were convinced that the communist invasion had already started. That's why they went after Martin Luther King. They were convinced that he was a Red agent. The same holds true for leftists working in Hollywood. They went after them with a vengeance. Some right-wingers even believed that President Eisenhower was an agent of the Reds as well.

There was actually a humorous dimension to this deep right-wing fear. Throughout the Cold War, conservatives argued that socialism was doomed to fail. It was an inherently defective economic system, they pointed out. Socialism would inevitably impoverish countries that embraced this philosophy, such as Russia. Right-wingers would quote free-market economists like Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Milton Friedman to make their case.

Yet, despite that insight about socialism, conservatives continued to maintain that Russia was an all-powerful nation that was going to take down America. To this day, I don't think right-wingers are able to recognize their internal contradiction.

The worst mistake America has ever made was to convert the federal government from a limited-government republic to a national-security state, which is a type of governmental system in which officials wield omnipotent powers. Genuine advocates of liberty fight communism and socialism with freedom and free markets, not with communism and socialism. With their deeply seated fear of the Reds, conservatives led our nation in a very bad direction, one that, for sure, has enriched and empowered the national-security establishment but, at the same time, has led to the destruction of our rights, liberties, security, and well-being here at home.

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