

US Bullying Canada to Pursue Anti-Russian Foreign Policy

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As the world is faced with numerous crises requiring cooperation between the US and Russia – Syria, Ukraine, and international terrorism to name just three – Washington just can't help its Russophobic ways.

Most recently, former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul [expressed](#) his extreme displeasure (dare I say revulsion) at the idea that the Canadian Government, and specifically its Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion, could possibly make the independent decision to not follow the diktats of Washington in adopting a Canadian version of the Magnitsky Act, a piece of proposed legislation which would have severe repercussions for the Russia-Canada relationship. McFaul, a staunch anti-Putin crusader whose time as ambassador was marred by countless failures and embarrassing public blunders, went so far as to cast doubt on the commitment to human rights of Mr. Dion and the Canadian Government.

In highly undiplomatic language, McFaul bluntly declared, “Do you stand for human rights or not? If this is an important value [sic] then this is something that should be done.” Leaving aside the condescension oozing from every word of that statement, it is quite clear that the US political establishment is not at all pleased with its usually pliant partners in the Great White North who, it seems, are attempting the unthinkable: conducting a foreign policy that is independent of the United States, at least on this issue. Indeed, despite the finger-wagging from McFaul, and the [ceaseless lobbying](#) and self-promotion of the vulture capitalist and [convicted criminal](#) Bill Browder, Canada is unwilling to sacrifice its increasingly friendly relations with Moscow simply to satisfy the anti-Putin obsession of interests based in Washington and London.

Indeed, Browder is undeniably the leading voice of the transnational lobbying effort to internationalize the Magnitsky Act – a US law passed in 2012 that places sanctions and restrictions on key figures in the Russian government ostensibly over alleged participation in the murder of whistleblower Sergei Magnitsky – and to try to isolate Russian President Putin and his closest advisers. Of course, embarrassingly for Browder, he was until a decade ago the leading pro-Putin voice in the western investing community in Russia, lauding Putin up and down as the savior of Russia.



For instance, in 2005 Browder [told the New York Times](#), when speaking about the jailing of the criminal oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, that “Putin cares about foreign investors; he just doesn't care about them enough to allow one oligarch to use his ill-gotten gains to hijack the state for his own economic purposes.” However, the warm and fuzzy feelings Browder once

had for Putin & Co. seem to have evaporated right around the time he was curtly shown the door out of Russia. As Pando's Mark Ames [wrote](#) in 2015:

And ever since his KGB pals decided they'd had enough of him and chased him out to London a very rich vulture capitalist, Browder has styled himself as the Mother Theresa of global vulture capitalism—and he's thrown untold millions into promoting that public relations/lobbying effort, whose goal is to use human rights abuses he once covered for and profited from as a cudgel to force the Kremlin to become investor-friendly to vulture capitalists like Bill Browder again.

So it seems that the Magnitsky Act itself, and Browder's crusade to make it holy writ around the world, is less a product of concern for human rights, and more the result of a personal vendetta against the Russian Government by a very rich and influential vulture capitalist nested comfortably in the City of London, hatching his various anti-Russian pressure campaigns.

Foreign Affairs Minister Dion has rightly pointed to Canada's invitation to join the International Syria Support Group in Vienna as an example of the fruit of the Russia-Canada relationship, implicitly arguing that it would be unwise to pass a Magnitsky-style bill solely to placate anti-Russian elements in Washington and London while alienating an important global power with considerable political, economic, and diplomatic influence.

Interestingly, in all the talk of human rights, and the chastising of Dion and the Canadian government for their shameful [sale of \\$15 billion of combat vehicles to Saudi Arabia](#), it is completely ignored that the US is the principal arms dealer to Saudi Arabia, and countless other autocratic regimes which routinely, and quite systematically, violate the human rights of their own people. So it would seem that for the US human rights is the convenient club with which to bash allies over the head, but which can be completely ignored when it suits Washington's political and geopolitical agenda.

Russia = bad. Russia = human rights violator. Russia must be punished.

Saudi Arabia = friend. Saudi Arabia = human rights violator but let's not talk about. Saudi Arabia must be rewarded with tens of billions of dollars of military equipment.

Got it? Good.

Ultimately, the issue is really about control. The US would like to be able to control the way in which Canada, and all the countries of the West, carry on their relations with Russia. Washington would like to cobble together a "united front" of sorts that will isolate Russia and, in the wildest pipe dreams of strategic planners, bring down Putin and his administration.

And the US believes that the combination of sanctions, depressed oil prices, Magnitsky-style legislation, and a number of other political, economic, and diplomatic weapons will bring those pesky old Russians to heel. How little Washington has learned.

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