

What Foreign Threats?

The biggest threats to America come from its "friends"

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One of the local Washington television stations was doing a typical early morning honoring our soldiers schtick just before Thanksgiving. In it soldiers stationed far from home were treated to videolinks so they could talk to their families and everyone could nod happily and wish themselves a wonderful holiday. Not really listening, I became interested when I half heard that the soldier being interviewed was spending his Thanksgiving in Ukraine.

It occurred to me that the soldier just might have committed a security *faux pas* by revealing where he was, but I also recalled that there have been joint military maneuvers as well as some kind of training mission going on in the country, teaching the Ukrainian Army how to use the shiny new sophisticated weapons that the United States was providing it with to defend against "Russian aggression."

Ukraine is only one part of the world where the Trump Administration has expanded the mission of democracy promotion, only in Kiev the reality is more like *faux democracy* promotion since Ukrainian **President Petro Poroshenko** is clearly exploiting [a situation that he himself provoked](#). He envisions setting himself up as a victim of Moscow to aid in his attempts to establish his own power through a security relationship with Washington. That in turn will help his bid for reelection in March 2019 elections, in which his poll numbers are currently running embarrassingly low largely due to the widescale corruption in his government. Poroshenko has already done much to silence the press in his county while the developing crisis with Russia has enabled him to declare martial law in the eastern parts of the country where he is most poorly regarded. If it all works out, he hopes to win the election and subsequently, it is widely believed, he will move to expand his own executive authority.

There also has to be some consideration the encounter with the Russians on the Kerch Strait was contrived by Poroshenko with the assistance of a gaggle of American neoconservative and Israeli advisers who have been actively engaged with the Ukrainian government for the past several years. The timing was good for Poroshenko for his own domestic political reasons but it was also an opportunity for the neocons warmongers that surround Trump and proliferate inside the Beltway to scuttle any possible meeting between a vulnerable Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin at the G20 gathering in Argentina.

The defection of Trump's lawyer **Michael Cohen**, together with the assumption that a lot of anti-Trump dirt will be spilled soon, means that the American president had to be even more cautious than ever in any dealings with Moscow and all he needed was a nod of approval from **National Security Adviser John Bolton** and **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** to cancel the encounter. A heads-of-state meeting might not have solved anything but it certainly would be better than the current drift towards a new cold war. If the United States

has only one vitally important relationship anywhere it is with Russia as the two countries are ready, able and apparently willing to destroy the world under the aegis of self-defense.

Given the anti-Russian hysteria prevailing in the U.S. and the ability of the neocons to switch on the media, it should come as no surprise that the Russian-Ukrainian incident immediately generated calls from the press and politicians for the White House to get tough with the Kremlin. It is important to note that the United States has no actual national interest in getting involved in a war between Russia and Ukraine if that should come about. The two Eastern European countries are neighbors and have a long history of both friendship and hostility but the only thing clear about the conflict is that it is up to them to sort things out and no amount of sanctions and jawing by concerned congressmen will change that fact.

Other Eastern European nations that similarly have problems with Russia should also be considered provocateurs as they seek to create tension to bind the United States more closely to them through the NATO alliance. The reality is that today's Russian Federation is not the Soviet Union and it neither aspires to nor can afford hegemony over its former allies. What it has made very clear that it does want is a *modus vivendi* where Russia itself is not being threatened by the West.

Recent [military maneuvers in Poland and Lithuania](#) and the stationing of new missiles in Eastern Europe do indeed pose a genuine threat to Moscow as it places NATO forces on top of Russia's border. When Russia reacts to incursions by NATO warships and planes right along its borders, it is accused of acting aggressively. One wonders how the U.S. government would respond if a Russian aircraft carrier were to take up position off the eastern seaboard and were to begin staging reconnaissance flights. Or if the Russian army were to begin military exercises with the Cubans? Does anyone today remember the Bay of Pigs?

When it comes to international conflicts context is everything. Seeing the incident between Russia and Ukraine in Manichean terms as an example of Moscow's aggressive instincts is satisfying in some circles, but it does not in any way reflect the reality on the ground. Internal politics of the two countries combined with deliberate fabrications that are expected to generate a certain response operate together to create a largely false narrative for both international and domestic consumption. Unfortunately, narratives have consequences: in this case, the sacrifice of the possibly beneficial meeting between Trump and Putin.

The same dynamic works vis-à-vis Washington's other enemy *du jour* Iran. In the case of Russia, useless "friend" Ukraine is pulling the strings while regarding Iran it is conniving Israel and Saudi Arabia. Iran has been accused of being the world's leading sponsor of terror, of destabilizing the Middle East, and of having a secret nuclear weapon program that will be used to attack Israel and Europe. None of those assertions are true. The terrorism tag comes from the country's relationship with Hezbollah, which is only a terrorist group insofar as it is hostile to Israel and pledged to resist any future Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Washington and Israel have pushed the terrorism label for Hezbollah, but most Europeans have begun to disregard the designation since the group has become a part of the Lebanese government.

And regarding destabilizing the Middle East, that has largely been the end result of actions undertaken by the United States, Israel and the Saudis, while the alleged Persian nuclear weapons program is a fantasy. If someone in the U.S. national security apparatus had any

brains the United States would work to improve relations with Iran real soon as the Iranians would in the long run quite likely prove to be better friends than those rascals who are currently running around using that label.

And there are other friends in unlikely places. Beleaguered British **Prime Minister Theresa May** is wailing loudly [against a Trump threat](#) to reveal classified documents relating to Russiagate. The real problem is that the documents apparently don't expose anything done by the Russians. Rather, they seem to appear to reveal [a plot by the British intelligence and security services](#) working in collusion with then CIA **Director John Brennan** to subvert the course of the 2016 election in favor of the Deep State and Establishment favorite **Hillary Clinton**. How did that one work out?

So how about it? Teenagers who get in trouble often have to ditch their bad friends to turn their lives around. There is still a chance for the United States if we keep our distance from the bad friends we have been nurturing all around the world, friends who have been convincing us to make poor choices. Get rid of the ties the bind to the Saudis, Israelis, Ukrainians, Poles, and yes, even the British. Deal fairly with all nations and treat everyone the same, but bear in mind that there are only two relationships that really matter - Russia and China. Make a serious effort to avoid a war by learning how to get along with those two nations and America might actually survive to celebrate a tricentennial in 2076.

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