



By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

Stalinism at home and a divided world – should we fear Russia's plans?



Can you imagine Nazi Germany legitimately possessing the right of veto at the United Nations Security Council?

If this seems ridiculous, imagine Nazi Germany presiding over the UN Security Council and having someone similar to Alfred Rosenberg, a Nazi minister, addressing the UN Security Council.

If this seems impossible, can you imagine Poland being accused of Germanophobia by Joseph Goebbels in 1939? The head of Nazi Germany's propaganda industry and various media outlets would similarly complain about Poland's Germanophobia.

In parallel, imagine Stalin being embraced or admired by leading Western political parties, starting with the US, France, Italy, or Germany.

It all sounds surreal, yet this is the world we live in today, eighty years after the end of WW2.

Russia has gone off the rails with Putin. The only reason we now face a war in Europe and global political crises because of the war in Ukraine is that the West was not wise enough when the USSR collapsed in 1991.

The USSR collapsed, but Russian empirical thinking remained the same.

The smaller and wounded Russian empire spent thirty years thriving on its grievances against the West and accumulating resources to strike back.

Stalinism is back

Russia pretended to be humble, democratic, and friendly. But its true face was revealed during the two Chechen wars in 1999, causing explosions in Russia and Moscow, and in the murders of dissidents like Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB/FSB officer who exposed Putin and was brutally killed by polonium poisoning in 2006. Nevertheless, the West refused to acknowledge yesterday's USSR.

Similar to Soviet days, we can currently see Russian troops and tanks in sovereign European countries, because these countries refuse to surrender to perverted Russian ideology, and deny self-proclaimed Russian superiority and greatness. This has not only been the case in Ukraine, but also in Moldova and Georgia.

Interestingly enough, Stalinism and deviant Soviet doctrine are not only back on the global stage, but they have returned to knock at the doors of the Russian people.

We are again in a situation where speaking the truth and criticising the Kremlin is dangerous, just like during the USSR.

Imagine a Russian citizen on a Moscow trolley bus carelessly beginning to criticise the Russian army in Ukraine. According to today's Russian laws, he or she can be charged with the discreditation of the Russian army, and face ten or more years in prison.

If this sounds like Ionesco's Rhinoceros, or 1984 by Orwell, there is more to add to describe the ongoing Russian judicial communism.

If, whilst expressing dissatisfaction with current developments in Russia and the ongoing war in Ukraine, this Russian citizen on a Moscow trolley bus coincidentally or intentionally addresses a foreign national, this

person could legitimately be charged with treason.

If this seems frightening, then wait for more. After the bizarre and fabricated Vladimir Kara-Murza treason case and the sentencing of this brave Russian man to twenty-five years in prison, the Russian puppet and servile parliament went further - to life imprisonment.

Russia did not come to the West for friendship

The Kremlin has been using defensive strategies. This can be seen both domestically with Stalinist repressive initiatives and purges, and on the global stage.

With recent scandals, arrests and deportations of Russian nationalists around the globe, it is no longer a surprise to the Western establishment that any Russian dealing with Western influencers and state employees could easily be at least a Kremlin emissary, if not a spy.

If this Russian citizen is a state employee involved in something innocent like the promotion of cultural, historical, or religious cooperation between Russia and Western countries, in today's Russian reality, one can be almost certain that this innocent-looking Russian delegate and representative is, at a minimum, a part-time Russian spy.

In fact, every Western businessman or public official who has dealt with Russian delegates, representatives and emissaries of any kind within the past five years or so, be it Russian government officials or Russian businessmen, this Western government employee or businessman should probably contact relevant agencies and describe the essence of

interactions with Russian nationals to detect whether he or she was a subject of Russian malicious influence and possible recruitment.

Since early 2000, Russia has not approached the West for friendship and cooperation. Russia was coming West to subvert the West, undermine the West, divide the West, and recruit accomplices.

Whether it involved Russian bankers, artists, or priests, they were all advancing the Kremlin's anti-western agenda even if it appeared otherwise.

Now that all Russian conventional recruitment and subversion technologies have been detected and revealed, Russia has gradually started losing its massive army of sympathisers in the West, or as Russian intelligence calls them, Western "useful idiots". Russia will explore alternative opportunities to impact the West, and continue to enjoy its bargaining leverage over the West.

Taking hostages will continue

We have already seen Russia's action regarding food and nuclear blackmail. Since it has not been as successful as anticipated, there will be further Russian activities which would most probably surprise Western politicians.

Russia will take more hostages than in the past. The US basketball player Brittney Griner, the US marine Paul Whelan who occasionally visited Russia and socialised with average Russian citizens, or Evan Gershkovich, the US journalist who was recently captured.

Even Vladimir Kara-Murza could be easily classified as a hostage to be used for future exchange or bargaining.

Russia will certainly commit more lawless activities, to save itself and unsettle the West.

Just recently, family members of captured Evan Gershkovich produced a video of Evan addressing a Russian audience, showing how sympathetic to the Russian people Evan is.

It was very touching and sincere, but imagine telling Nazi soldiers that committing manslaughter is not right, and that people that Nazi soldiers are killing and torturing are “nice”.

This is exactly how the Russian majority perceived this very humane video by Evan Gershkovich's family members.

If the West wants its hostages back, it has to take action that immediately sensitises Russia: make a proposal that Russia would be afraid to reject. Any such proposal could be effective only if it threatens with force and fear.

Standing ovations for Trump in the Russian parliament

Russia has long been at war with the West. It has been an ideological war, where the majority of the Russian people actively and proudly took part.

In 2016, the entire Russian parliament gave a standing ovation when it was announced that Donald Trump had won the US elections. No matter what pro-Trump American politicians and media outlets say, Russia intentionally contributed to Trump's victory because his global vision and domestic agenda were beneficial to Moscow.

After its 2016 election meddling, Russia was

convinced of its invisibility, and since then, Russian military aggression has been destined.

Russia will now play dirty and no longer try to pretend and hide its true intentions.

A peculiar post appeared a few days ago from Margarita Simonyan, the head of Russia Today and one of Russia's chief propagandists.

In her Telegram post, she proposed the exchange of several hostages held in captivity by Moscow, including Vladimir Kara-Murza, for Julian Assange.

Assange is not a Russian citizen, yet is important to Russia because if he were extradited to the US, he could testify and confirm working in conjunction with the Russians in 2016, helping advance Trump's candidacy.

Trump is still Russia's most admired American president, and the best hope Russia has to end the war in Ukraine on Russian terms if he is reelected president in 2024.

Populists around the world look up to Russia

It has been a long time since Western politicians faced communists and fascists. It would be worth reminding the West that while facing fascists or communists, one cannot use typical political tactics used in normal political circumstances.

Both communists and fascists well understood that they could not peacefully interact with the free and democratic Western world.

Today's Russia wants a divided world, similar to the one of Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill in the past.

Ironically, MAGA Republicans and other populists and authoritarians around the globe identify a world order from the past as desirable.

The world will never be safe as long as there is fascism, communism, or Putinism. In today's world, isolating deviant regimes with a wall as was once in Berlin is no longer feasible.

Remarkably enough, Putinism and Russki (Russian) world doctrine were able to accommodate features of both fascism and communism.

Unfortunately, many people around the globe still consider the war in Ukraine a political factor. MAGA Republicans have been trying to please Donald Trump, their patron, by requesting the US to stop assisting Ukraine.

Similarly, Brazilian leftist president Luiz Lula da Silva recently said that the war in Ukraine is happening because America is helping Ukraine, and not because Russia has occupied Ukrainian territories.

Until recently, Emanuel Macron, the French head of state, kept calling Putin, seeking a way for Russia to end the war "not humiliated".

Be ready for new dirty tricks

Russia is a global threat that will not go away by itself. Russia, just like the USSR, has been exercising a deviant and aggressive ideology that has been a clear and present danger to the world order, and cannot be accommodated by a free and democratic world.

Russia can only identify and deal with corrupt or delusional Western politicians like Donald Trump or, for example, French right-wing politician Marine Le Pen.

Those Western politicians with whom Russia can interact with cooperation present a danger to the order of their countries. This was clearly demonstrated in the course of the insurrection attempt at the US Congress organised by Donald Trump and his congressional MAGA enablers.

The West should be prepared for the whole set of new dirty tricks, deviant initiatives, and bellicose launches by Russia, because what Russia had anticipated before attacking Ukraine has not worked out well for it.

The Russian people are now as frightened and subverted as they were throughout the USSR years.

The Russian elites are equally afraid, because they have either been involved in the aggression against Ukraine or taken part in previous subversion and recruitment attempts of the Western political class and, just like Putin, see no happy ending for themselves unless Russia is successful in ending the war with Ukraine and wins the ideological standoff with the West on Russian terms.

The West must be prepared to deal with the Kremlin's criminals who will do everything to distract, divide and undermine Western countries. It must be ready for new attempts by the Kremlin to commit more acts of unimaginable brutality and violence, more acts of terrorism and criminality abroad and even in Russia against its own people.

The West must develop a clear plan. To establish something similar to the Ukraine Defence Group, which would take action vital to remove the threat Russia presents for the planet.

Most importantly, the West must not forget that Russian elites have embezzled hundreds of billions of dollars. Putin has built twenty palaces, some of which cost a billion dollars, have striptease and aqua-discotheque facilities, and they do not want them to burn in radioactive flames.

The West must remember that the best way to deal with the Kremlin is to demonstrate a lack of fear and display contempt. Do not be afraid of Russia, and Russia will then concede.