

Putin demonized for thwarting neocon plan for global domination. Neil Clark, Russia Today, 8 November 2014. (*Website Editor's note: this article will assist the reader to evaluate two sides of the current 'cold war' propaganda.*)

The continuing attacks on Vladimir Putin and Russia by members of the western political, military and journalistic elite tell us one thing – the Russian President is doing a good job both for the people of his country and in the international arena.

For it is a rule which invariably holds true – if the Western elites praise the leader of a foreign country it means he is doing something which is good for those elites and bad for his country. If he's demonized, as Putin is, it's the other way round.

The latest attack has come from Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The US Army general said that Russia was [“pushing on the limits of international order.”](#)

Dempsey talked of the need to “deter Russian aggression against our NATO allies” – and said that Russia had “kind of lit a fire of nationalism.”

“Once you light that fire, it's not controllable,” the General said. *“I am worried about Europe.”*

It's worth reflecting on Dempsey's words as they provide a classic example of what psychologists call 'projection'. The US General was accusing Russia of what his own country has been guilty of.

'Pushing on the limits of international order'? Was it Russia which launched an illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003 – claiming the country possessed WMDs which threatened the world? Was it Russia which led the illegal bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999? The US hasn't just pushed the 'limits of international order' it has been the number one international law breaker over the past twenty years.

'Russian aggression against our NATO allies'? Not one NATO country has been attacked by Russia – or threatened with attack. The aggression has been from the US against Russian allies. Over the last twenty or so years we have seen the US target a series of countries which had friendly links to Russia, including Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria. It's the US and its NATO allies who clearly need to be deterred, not Russia.

Russia has 'kind of lit a fire of nationalism'? Well, it was the US and their EU allies who did this in Yugoslavia in the 1990s – sponsoring separatists in order to break up the country – and it was the US and its EU allies who have been sponsoring and supporting extreme nationalists (some would say fascists and neo-Nazis) in Ukraine.

Dempsey says he is worried about Europe, but it's Russia which has cause to be worried about the US and Europe. Just take a look at the map on how NATO, since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe twenty-five years ago – has expanded eastwards, despite promises made by the west that [NATO would not expand](#).

When figures from the Western elite talk of ‘Russian aggression’ what they really mean is that Russia is checking Western aggression. When Putin is compared to Hitler – it is because he is standing in the way of the real heirs of Adolf Hitler, the war lobby in the West, who like the mustachioed one, have an insatiable appetite for attacking and threatening to attack independent sovereign states.

By any objective assessment, it’s the Western elites – and in particular the neocon faction within that elite – who are the biggest dangers to world peace, not Putin. Look at the havoc their policy of endless war, whether waged directly or through terrorist proxies, has caused in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

These serial warmongers are particularly angry that Russian foreign policy has thwarted their plans for ‘regime change’ in Syria, a key strategic objective. They’re also angry that Putin clamped down on oligarchs whose role was to help Western plutocrats get control of Russia’s natural resources.

Back in 2000, when he was first elected President, Western elites hoped that Putin would continue the path set by his predecessor Boris Yeltsin, a man whose rule was disastrous for ordinary Russians, who saw their living standards plummet and the value of their life savings destroyed, but very good for the Western elites. Yeltsin privatized vast swathes of the economy and acquiesced while NATO destroyed Yugoslavia. Yeltsin was bad news for Russia – but he was hailed as a great ‘democrat’ by the West – and eulogized on his death – which tells us everything we need to know about who benefited most from his rule.

Putin himself had no great desire to fall out with the West when he became President – quite the contrary. He was the first international leader to offer his condolences to President George W. Bush after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York. *“In the name of Russia, I want to say to the American people – we are with you,”* he said.

Putin co-operated with West over Afghanistan and the so-called ‘war on terror’. *“Russia will continue to provide intelligence information we have collected on the infrastructure, location and training of international terrorists,”* he declared.

A CNN article on how 9/11 was a ‘[turning point](#)’ for Putin makes interesting reading today.

It shows how much Putin was willing to co-operate with the US and gives lie to the assertion that it was he who provoked the ‘new’ Cold War.

The truth is that it was the aggressive neocon faction within the Western elite which did that. They’ve been calling for sanctions on Russia for over a decade now – way before Russia’s non-existent ‘invasion’ of Ukraine.

The current ‘cold war’ against Russia can be traced back to 2003.

Rebuilding the economy and improving living standards for ordinary Russians inevitably meant action being taken against certain oligarchs who had made vast fortunes in the Yeltsin years. These oligarchs, such as Boris Berezovsky and Mikhail Khodorkovsky had some powerful supporters, in the West. As I detailed in an article for the New Statesman in November 2003 – influential neocons in Washington who had links to Russian oligarchs, used the arrest

of Khodorkovsky for fraud and tax evasion to push for a hardening of US [policy](#) towards Moscow.

“The arrest of one man has sent us a signal that our well-intentioned Russian policy has failed. We must now recognize that there has been a massive suppression of human rights and the imposition of a de facto Cold War-type administration in Moscow” [wrote](#) Bruce P. Jackson of the Project on Transitional Democracies and the Project for the New American Century’

Jackson called for sanctions to be imposed on Russia by Congress. Sounds familiar?

In 2003, Putin also angered hawks in Washington by opposing the war against Iraq – not only that he openly ridiculed the claims about Iraq’s WMDs.

“Earlier this year, Russia's stubborn holding of its line on Iraq infuriated the neoconservatives and increased their determination to work towards regime change at the next presidential elections in 2004 and to accelerate their plans to secure Russia's energy resources”, I wrote in the New Statesman.

The neocon propaganda stepped up again with the mysterious death of M16 agent Alexander Litvinenko, in London in late 2006. Inevitably the death was blamed on Moscow – despite the absence of proof. As I highlighted in the Guardian in an article entitled ‘In Bed with Russophobes,

The incident was used in their campaign against Putin’s national revival. *“These rightwing hawks are gunning for Putin not because of concern for human rights but because an independent Russia stands in the way of their plans for global hegemony,”* I wrote, adding that *“those on the center-left who have joined the current wave of Putin-bashing ought to consider whose cause they are serving.”*

In 2008, Putin, now firmly established as a NeoCon hate figure, angered the endless war lobby still further by standing up to aggression by the US client state of Georgia against the people of South Ossetia. The importance of what happened in Georgia in 2008 cannot be understated. It was as Seumas Milne notes in his book *The Revenge of History* *“one of two events in 2008 which signalled the end of the New World Order of unchallenged US global and economic power”* (the other was the banking crash). *“The former Soviet Republic (Georgia) was a particular favorite of Washington’s neoconservatives”* says Milne. *“Its forces, armed and trained by the US and Israel, made up the third-largest contingent in the occupation of Iraq.....The short-lived Russian-Georgian conflict marked an international turning point..... Russia had called a halt to a relentless process of US expansion.”*

The newly-elected US President Barack Obama promised a ‘reset’ of relations with Russia, but with the neocons still in town and peddling their anti-Putin and anti-Russian propaganda there was never any hope of that succeeding. The current wave of Russophobia can be linked to events in the Middle East- and Russia’s refusal to back ‘regime change’ in Syria. They desperately wanted Bashar al-Assad removed- so as to break the alliance between Syria, Hezbollah and Iran, but Russia has got in the way.

Ukraine was where the neocons thought they would get their revenge. The US sponsored regime change in Kiev, an enterprise in which the State Department’s Victoria Nuland the wife

of the Project for a New American Century co-founder Robert Kagan played a prominent role, finally enabled the hawks to get what they been dreaming of for over ten years – the sanctioning of Russia. The ‘get tough with Russia’ stance they’ve long been calling for has finally become the official policy of the US and leading EU countries. The demonization of President Putin in the West has become ‘mainstream’.

The neocon plan is for the Russian economy to be weakened by sanctions, which they hope will lead to a reduction in support for Putin and make it easier for them to destabilize the country and bring about a ‘regime change’ in Moscow. They want a compliant stooge in the Kremlin who will surrender all of Russia’s natural resources, and allow them to get rid of President Assad and the Baathists in Syria – an essential prerequisite before any attack on Iran.

At the moment one man is getting in the way of those war plans.

To repeat: *“those on the centre-left who have joined the current wave of Putin-bashing ought to consider whose cause they are serving.”*

Because Putin is not the problem – it’s the people attacking him who are.