

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON PRESIDENT PUTIN'S ARTICLE**

By Joseph P. Farrell, 25 June 2020

Many, many people sent me copies of Russian President Vladimir Putin's article on Russia's role prior to and during World War Two. It's an important article, and worth pondering carefully. It's a long article, and I will do my best to parse it:

### [Vladimir Putin: The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II](#)

Mr. Putin opens the article with a rather poignant reminder of how virtually every family in Russia currently, had some family members involved in the defense of that country from the Nazi onslaught during World War Two:

For my parents, the war meant the terrible ordeals of the Siege of [Leningrad](#) where my two-year-old brother Vitya died. It was the place where my mother miraculously managed to survive. My father, despite being exempt from active duty, volunteered to defend his hometown. He made the same decision as millions of Soviet citizens. He fought at the Nevsky Pyatachok bridgehead and was severely wounded. And the more years pass, the more I feel the need to talk to my parents and learn more about the war period of their lives. However, I no longer have the opportunity to do so. This is the reason why I treasure in my heart those conversations I had with my father and mother on this subject, as well as the little emotion they showed.

This passes shortly to a consideration of a question:

I often wonder: What would today's generation do? How will it act when faced with a crisis situation? I see young doctors, nurses, sometimes fresh graduates that go to the "red zone" to save lives. I see our servicemen that fight international terrorism in the Northern Caucasus and fought to the bitter end in Syria. They are so young. Many servicemen who were part of the legendary, immortal 6<sup>th</sup> Paratroop Company were 19-20 years old. But all of them proved that they deserved to inherit the feat of the warriors of our homeland that defended it during the Great Patriotic War.

This is why I am confident that one of the characteristic features of the peoples of Russia is to fulfill their duty without feeling sorry for themselves when the circumstances so demand. Such values as selflessness, patriotism, love for their home, their family and Motherland remain fundamental and integral to the Russian society to this day. These values are, to a large extent, the backbone of our country's sovereignty.

I cannot help but think that Mr. Putin's words are here to be understood as a message, both to his own people, and to the rest of the world, and particularly to the Globaloneyists of the West who are currently engaged on their project of undermining national sovereignties and cultures, especially their own. And the message (to the Russians) is: be prepared, we may have to defend our sovereignty again, and again at great cost and sacrifice. And the message to the self-destructing West is: think twice. The message is couched in a recitation of the obvious: World War Two in the European theater was won largely by the Russians. The bulk of the Nazi war machine juggernaut was deployed against Russia, and in order to defeat them, the Soviet Union had to deploy an equally massive military machine.

Mr. Putin then passes on to some unpleasant historical facts that few, now, know or are aware of, but they are there for all to see. For example, during the run-up to the pivotal Munich

Conference of 1938 between France, Britain, Italy, and Germany, the hidden bad actor behind the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was not just Nazi Germany, but *Poland*, which wanted its own share of the spoils:

Poland was also engaged in the partition of Czechoslovakia along with Germany. They decided together in advance who would get what Czechoslovak territories. On September 20, 1938, Polish Ambassador to Germany Józef Lipski reported to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Józef Beck on the following assurances made by Hitler: "...in case of a conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia over our interests in Teschen, the Reich would stand by Poland." The Nazi leader even prompted and advised that Poland started to act "only after the Germans occupy the Sudetes."

Poland was aware that without Hitler's support, its annexationist plans were doomed to fail. I would like to quote in this regard a record of the conversation between German Ambassador to Warsaw Hans-Adolf von Moltke and Józef Beck that took place on October 1, 1938, and was focused on the Polish-Czech relations and the position of the Soviet Union in this matter. It says: "Mr. Beck expressed real gratitude for the loyal treatment accorded [to] Polish interests at the Munich conference, as well as the sincerity of relations during the Czech conflict. The attitude of the Führer and Chancellor was fully appreciated by the Government and the public [of Poland]."

With this on the record, Mr. Putin sends yet another message to the West:

The Soviet Union, in accordance with its international obligations, including agreements with France and Czechoslovakia, tried to prevent the tragedy from happening. Meanwhile, Poland, in pursuit of its interests, was doing its utmost to hamper the establishment of a collective security system in Europe. Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck wrote about it directly in his letter of September 19, 1938 to the aforementioned Ambassador Józef Lipski before his meeting with Hitler: "...in the past year, the Polish government rejected four times the proposal to join the international interfering in defense of Czechoslovakia."

Britain, as well as France, which was at the time the main ally of the Czechs and Slovaks, chose to withdraw their guarantees and abandon this Eastern European country to its fate. In so doing, they sought to direct the attention of the Nazis eastward so that Germany and the Soviet Union would inevitably clash and bleed each other white.

...

The Munich Betrayal showed to the Soviet Union that the Western countries would deal with security issues without taking its interests into account. In fact, they could even create an anti-Soviet front, if needed.

Given the recent Western interference in The Ukraine, and its constant refusal to accept geopolitical reality over Russia's 'annexation' of the Crimea (after, it should be recalled, a clear referendum in the Crimea itself), Mr. Putin's message would again seem to be clear: ignore our interests to your own peril.

Then comes what I regard as a central and significant series of statements:

Stalin and his entourage, indeed, deserve many legitimate accusations. We remember the crimes committed by the regime against its own people and the horror of mass repressions. In other words, there are many things the Soviet leaders can be reproached for, but poor understanding of the nature of external threats is not one of them. They saw how attempts were made to leave the Soviet Union alone to deal with Germany and its allies. Bearing in

mind this real threat, they sought to buy precious time needed to strengthen the country's defenses.

Nowadays, we hear lots of speculations and accusations against modern Russia in connection with the Non-Aggression Pact signed back then. Yes, Russia is the legal successor state to the USSR, and the Soviet period – with all its triumphs and tragedies – *is an inalienable part of our thousand-year-long history*. However, let us recall that the Soviet Union gave a legal and moral assessment of the so-called Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. The Supreme Soviet in its resolution of 24 December 1989 officially denounced the secret protocols as "an act of personal power" which in no way reflected "the will of the Soviet people who bear no responsibility for this collusion." (Emphasis added)

In other words, yes, we know that Stalin and his regime had little to no regard for the Russian people, and that their geopolitical calculations were, in the end, cynical, but cynical though those geopolitical calculations were, they were not blind nor irrational regarding the very real threat that Nazi Germany posed. Indeed, the Russian humiliation and surrender to the Kaiser in World War One was a fresh memory to most of those men in Stalin's politburo. After all, the Soviet regime had itself been mid-wifed into existence by the Kaiser's government precisely in an effort to bring an end to World War One in the east. Hidden behind Mr Putin's words is an intriguing position, one utterly the opposite of the cultural assumptions being wielded in the West by the political left, namely, that notwithstanding the criminality of Stalin's regime, Russians have a right to be proud of their contribution to the end of World War Two, and they will not, nor should they, erase it in the name of some abstract ideal of perfection. Contrast Mr. Putin's words that all this "is an inalienable part of our thousand-year-long history" with that of the left in the West. They are polar opposites.

And now come two bombshells:

Yet other states have preferred to forget the agreements carrying signatures of the Nazis and Western politicians, not to mention giving legal or political assessments of such cooperation, including the silent acquiescence – or even direct abetment – of some European politicians in the barbarous plans of the Nazis. It will suffice to remember the cynical phrase said by Polish Ambassador to Germany J. Lipski during his conversation with Hitler on 20 September 1938: "...for solving the Jewish problem, we [the Poles] will build in his honor ... a splendid monument in Warsaw."

Besides, we do not know if there were any secret "protocols" or annexes to agreements of a number of countries with the Nazis. The only thing that is left to do is to take their word for it. *In particular, materials pertaining to the secret Anglo-German talks still have not been declassified. Therefore, we urge all states to step up the process of making their archives public and publishing previously unknown documents of the war and pre-war periods – the way Russia has done it in recent years. In this context, we are ready for broad cooperation and joint research projects engaging historians.* (Emphasis added)

These two paragraphs alone I strongly suspect sent shockwaves and shudders through the corridors of power in the deep states of the West. Consider, firstly, the context of the remarks in the second paragraph above. The context is the *first* paragraph, and the reference to the silent international acquiescence or outright approval of the Western powers in the "barbarous plans of the Nazis", a clear reference not only to the Holocaust, but moreover, the implication is that to a certain extent, it was an international event, or plan. Perhaps I'm parsing Mr. Putin's words too closely here, but I think not, for I could not help but think of Max Nordau's words to the Tenth Zionist Congress, words uttered in 1910, and clearly

implying some long term and international planning behind the Holocaust, as I've indicated in some of my previous books.

But I think there's a second set of implied messages here, revealed in Mr. Putin's remarks in the second paragraph above, for note that (1) he specifically mentions the contents of the "secret Anglo-German talks" that "still have not been declassified." Again, I have to pause, because I strongly suspect these talks, which were conducted by Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, and his representative Helmut Wolthat (also the man that Goering appointed to oversee - here it comes - the Antarctic expedition), also have something to do with Rudolf Hess's subsequent flight to Britain in 1941. Hess himself had conducted back channel diplomacy with the British prior to his flight, and there is some evidence that he had personally met with British representatives in neutral Nationalist Spain. Hess's flight occurred prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union, and hence there is much speculation that Hess was attempting to "clear the table" of pesky British interference so that the full might of the German war machine could fall on Russia. (For all of this, see my book *Hess and the Penguins*)

So we have two possible allusions here, both with strong implied messages: (1) Russia knows something of the implied cooperation re. the Holocaust, and (2) Russia knows something about the Anglo-German negotiations, which have not been declassified by either the British government nor the German government, since the end of the war. (There's a further inference here, namely, that since much of the wartime German archives ended up in the hands of the USA after the war, the USA probably knows these details as well. Those archives, once part of the Berlin Document Center, were turned back over to the German federal government archives.)

Now, with all that context in mind, consider the message - and possibly the implied threat - that Mr. Putin is conveying with the following words:

*Therefore, we urge all states to step up the process of making their archives public and publishing previously unknown documents of the war and pre-war periods – the way Russia has done it in recent years. In this context, we are ready for broad cooperation and joint research projects engaging historians.*

In other words, we can either cooperate to craft a new narrative beneficial to all parties ("we are ready for broad cooperation and joint research projects engaging historians") and carefully covering all parties' complicity in "something", *or*, since it is clear "we all know something that we're not talking about", Russia can expose it unilaterally ("we urge all states to step up the process of making their archives public and publishing previously unknown documents of the war and pre-war periods - the way Russia has done it in recent years.")

To put this analysis country simple, I believe Mr. Putin's words here are no longer a message addressed to the Russian people, nor even to the West, but rather, a message in the clear, in a kind of "public diplomacy in the shadows" intended for the deep state(s) of the West, with just enough detail to indicate that Russia knows more details and is prepared to leak them if the West is not prepared to take Russia's interests into consideration. This implies something very significant: if the message is "received," then how would it be conveyed to Mr. Putin? Answer: by a careful release or declassification of *some* of those classified archival documents to which he refers, and then subsequently, by the formation of an international committee or research foundation to 'examine' and 'interpret' those materials, and create the new narrative.

That this interpretation appears to be more or less generally correct is revealed by Mr. Putin's following words:

Therefore, it is unfair to claim that the two-day visit to Moscow of Nazi Foreign Minister Ribbentrop was the main reason for the start of the Second World War. All the leading countries are to a certain extent responsible for its outbreak. Each of them made fatal mistakes, arrogantly believing that they could outsmart others, secure unilateral advantages for themselves or stay away from the impending world catastrophe. And this short-sightedness, the refusal to create a collective security system cost millions of lives and tremendous losses.

Saying this, I by no means intend to take on the role of a judge, to accuse or acquit anyone, let alone initiate a new round of international information confrontation in the historical field that could set countries and peoples at loggerheads. *I believe that it is academics with a wide representation of respected scientists from different countries of the world who should search for a balanced assessment of what happened. We all need the truth and objectivity.* On my part, I have always encouraged my colleagues to build a calm, open and trust-based dialogue, to look at the common past in a self-critical and unbiased manner. Such an approach will make it possible not to repeat the errors committed back then and to ensure peaceful and successful development for years to come.

When one reads these remarks in the context of the rest of President Putin's article, it is clear that "collective security" is one of his major concerns and goals. Notably, and presciently, Mr. Putin realizes that "collective security" is impossible without a "search for a balanced assessment of what happened," i.e., a new, agreed-upon narrative.

There is, however, a problem with Mr. Putin's analysis of "collective security" itself. One could argue that the pre-World War One system of alliances that ultimately led to the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance that later became, sans Italy, the Central Powers, was a form of collective security. Note that the very name "Triple Entente" incorporates the word "entente," meaning understanding, which could incorporate the idea of a "common narrative," in this case, that imperial Germany was the problem. That "system" of 'collective security' meant that any international crisis between two countries - Austria-Hungary and Serbia for example - could quickly balloon into a much wider conflict, as it did. Today, it is a common criticism of the United Nations that almost any crisis between two nations can quickly reach out to involve parties not immediately concerned. More importantly, "collective security" is usually the typical response to a perceived threat that is more powerful than any one component of its "collectively secure" opposition: Germany clearly in the case of the two World Wars, but who now is the focus of Mr. Putin's pleas for collective security? The USA? China? Probably the former, and do not rule out the latter. Indeed, via the EU, President Putin seems to be pointing the finger to the USA which, to be sure, *has* manipulated the record and resorted to its own disinformation campaigns in the wake of the developments in the Ukraine, which developments it (along with the EU in the form of Germany) has had a clear and guilty hand in:

However, many of our partners are not yet ready for joint work. On the contrary, pursuing their goals, they increase the number and the scope of information attacks against our country, trying to make us provide excuses and feel guilty, and adopt thoroughly hypocritical and politically motivated declarations. Thus, for example, the resolution on the *Importance of European Remembrance for the Future of Europe* approved by the European Parliament on 19 September 2019 directly accused the USSR together with the Nazi Germany of unleashing the Second World War. Needless to say, there is no mention of Munich in it whatsoever.

This is quickly followed by this statement:

I believe that such 'paperwork' – for I cannot call this resolution a document – which is clearly intended to provoke a scandal, is fraught with real and dangerous threats. Indeed, it was adopted by a highly respectable institution. And what does that show? Regrettably, this reveals a deliberate policy aimed at destroying the post-war world order whose creation was a matter of honour and responsibility for States a number of representatives of which voted today in favour of this deceitful resolution. Thus, they challenged the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the efforts of the international community to create after the victorious 1945 universal international institutions. Let me remind you in this regard that the process of European integration itself leading to the establishment of relevant structures, including the European Parliament, became possible only due to the lessons learnt from the past and its accurate legal and political assessment. And those who deliberately put this consensus into question undermine the foundations of the entire post-war Europe.

Translation: the European Union project is destined to fail so long as it excludes Russia from the very idea of "Europe." Case in point: excluding any mention of Russia's decisive, essential, and central role in winning the war in Europe:

Apart from posing a threat to the fundamental principles of the world order, this also raises certain moral and ethical issues. Desecrating and insulting the memory is mean. Meanness can be deliberate, hypocritical and pretty much intentional as in the situation when declarations commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War mention all participants in the anti-Hitler coalition except for the Soviet Union. Meanness can be cowardly as in the situation when monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism are demolished and these shameful acts are justified by the false slogans of the fight against an unwelcome ideology and alleged occupation. Meanness can also be bloody as in the situation when those who come out against neo-Nazis and Bandera's successors are killed and burned. Once again, meanness can have different manifestations, but this does not make it less disgusting.

Neglecting the lessons of history inevitably leads to a harsh payback. We will firmly uphold the truth based on documented historical facts. We will continue to be honest and impartial about the events of World War II. This includes a large-scale project to establish Russia's largest collection of archival records, film and photo materials about the history of World War II and the pre-war period.

Again, I have a strong caveat to register. Mr. Putin is clearly calling for "honesty" and an "opening of the archives" to create a real, or at least a closer approximation to the real record of World War Two. In this respect, I do not blame him one bit for wanting Russia's role acknowledged in and by the West. But I have to wonder how far this desire for honesty goes. So let's imagine that an international commission of scholars were to gather to address some of the issues President Putin raises in his article. What if some scholars point out - as Diana West has so passionately argued and demonstrated in her recent book *American Betrayal* - that it was due to the many Soviet agents of influence in the west and particularly in the administration of Franklin Roosevelt that Allied military resources were diverted to the 1944 cross-channel invasion, which would better have been used to thrust from Italy directly into the Balkans, which would have simultaneously unhinged the entire German military position on the eastern front, and denied the Soviet armies the occupation of whole swaths of Eastern Europe, and led to a vastly different post-war order? Would such views be welcome? Perhaps, perhaps not. (My *suspicion* is that this kind of honesty would actually be welcomed, but one has to think deeply and long as to why.)

After reviewing the various nations' contributions to the defeat of Nazism, President Putin then returns to one of his major concerns: collective security, the UN, and particularly the Security Council:

What is veto power in the [UN Security Council](#)? To put it bluntly, it is the only reasonable alternative to a direct confrontation between major countries. It is a statement by one of the five powers that a decision is unacceptable to it and is contrary to its interests and its ideas about the right approach. And other countries, even if they do not agree, take this position for granted, abandoning any attempts to realize their unilateral efforts. So, in one way or another, it is necessary to seek compromises.

The calls that have been made quite often in recent years to abolish the veto power, to deny special opportunities to permanent members of the Security Council are actually irresponsible. After all, if that happens, the United Nations would in essence become the League of Nations – a meeting for empty talk without any leverage on the world processes. How it ended is well known. That is why the victorious powers approached the formation of the new system of the world order with utmost seriousness seeking to avoid repetition of the mistakes of their predecessors.

The creation of the modern system of international relations is one of the major outcomes of the [Second World War](#). Even the most insurmountable contradictions – geopolitical, ideological, economic – do not prevent us from finding forms of peaceful coexistence and interaction, if there is the desire and will to do so. Today the world is going through quite a turbulent time. Everything is changing, from the global balance of power and influence to the social, economic and technological foundations of societies, nations and even continents. In the past epochs, shifts of such magnitude have almost never happened without major military conflicts. Without a power struggle to build a new global hierarchy. Thanks to the wisdom and farsightedness of the political figures of the Allied Powers, it was possible to create a system that has restrained from extreme manifestations of such objective competition, historically inherent in the world development.

It is a duty of ours – all those who take political responsibility and primarily representatives of the victorious powers in the Second World War – to guarantee that this system is maintained and improved. Today, as in 1945, it is important to demonstrate political will and discuss the future together. Our colleagues – Mr. Xi Jinping, Mr. Macron, Mr. Trump and Mr. Johnson – supported the Russian initiative to hold a meeting of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon States, permanent members of the Security Council. We thank them for this and hope that such a face-to-face meeting could take place as soon as possible.

There's another problem lurking here, and it's one Mr. Putin himself alluded to earlier in his article when he referred to the inherent problems of the Versailles system, a system which made the two most powerful continental powers - Germany and Russia - pariahs on the international stage. One wonders exactly how well any system of collective security on the Security Council will work, so long as two powers, Japan and Germany, remain without a permanent seat on the security council, and if they are to be forever demonized and denied that role on the security council. And if possession of nuclear weapons states are the criterion, then why is "the world's largest democracy," India, excluded from that status as well? If Taiwan could eventually lose its permanent seat and veto status on that body to Communist China, then perhaps it's time to rethink the position of those nations as well.

The bottom line is, there is much to ponder in Mr. Putin's remarks, both by way of its open statements, "public shadow diplomacy," and by way of its distorting omissions. If and when the five power summit occurs, we'll find out much more about where "they" intend to take

"us." And if, once again, those other powerful nations are excluded from the process, then it does not, in my opinion, bode well.

And, if I'm correct in my speculative assessment of those two "bombshells" in President Putin's article have any element of truth to them, then it appears that Russia is willing to play hardball. Mr. Trump, M. Macron, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Xi will have to be on their game.