

During his September 24 speech at UN President Obama named Russia as the major threat to the world peace, greater than ISIL, Al -Qaeda, and other terrorist groups combined

In the meantime:



US astronaut Barry Wilmore with Russian cosmonauts Alexander Samokutyayev and Yelena Serova prior to blasting off to the International Space Station on September 25, 2014



Today, roughly 40 percent of the supplies for US troops in Afghanistan move through the Northern Distribution Network across Russia. As the US military prepares to draw down in Afghanistan, the NDN likely will continue to grow in importance



Russia, viewed by the Obama administration as hostile to U.S. interests, has discovered what may prove to be a vast pool of oil in one of the world's most remote places with the help of America's largest energy company ExxonMobil



Hammered by the West, Putin Turns East

Vladimir Putin has a secret agent in his campaign to curb the impact of sanctions on Russia's economy: Mr. Yuan. Now, as sanctions from the west over the conflict in Ukraine prompt more Russian companies to look east for growth, Mr. Yuan has become something of an honorific... Russia is considering accepting yuan for gas under the \$400 billion, 30-year supply deal that China signed during Putin's visit to Beijing in May.
- *Bloomberg News*

Russia and China are close to another mammoth natural gas deal that could reshape the world's energy map. Right as the West is tightening the screws on Russia's energy sector, Vladimir Putin is accelerating his own pivot to the east, moving closer to another giant natural gas deal with China. If consummated this fall, the multibillion-dollar deal would at least partially alleviate Russia's fears about finding future markets for its gas exports and China's worries over finding future energy supplies, especially natural gas, for its growing economy and population. By potentially boosting Russia's leverage with respect to Europe while dealing a blow to other gas exporters' hopes of leaping into the Chinese market, the deal's knock-on effects could be felt from Brussels to British Columbia. - *Foreign Policy*

According to the prevailing wisdom in the West, the Ukraine crisis can be blamed almost entirely on Russian aggression. ...But this account is wrong: the United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility for the crisis. The taproot of the trouble is NATO enlargement, the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West. At the same time, the EU's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine – beginning with the Orange Revolution in 2004 – were critical elements, too...Putin's pushback should have come as no surprise. After all, the West had been moving into Russia's backyard and threatening its core strategic interests, a point Putin made emphatically and repeatedly. - *John Mearsheimer* - "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*

It is clearly in Moscow and Washington's common interest to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and global nuclear terrorism. Keeping all nuclear materials in the control of governments and erecting effective barriers to nuclear trafficking requires cooperation. It is in their common interest to make further arms reductions, rather than return to the arms race era and nuclear testing. And, if nuclear power is to provide clean electricity in more places around the world, Russia and the United States must share a common goal of making sure this spread happens safely and without exacerbating proliferation concerns.
- *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

Crimea is Russian. The Russians, British and French went to war over Crimea 170 years ago. The idea that Crimea was ever going to be allowed by Russians to be part of Ukraine, or a Ukraine that was hostile, was cloud-cuckoo-land. And from a purely military sense it was a rather cleverly executed plan. Rather than us getting back into some sort of Cold War, I want to see Russia brought into the family of nations ASAP because the bigger threat to us all is these non-state extremists.
- *Lord Richards, former Chief of British General Staff*

Just How Civilized Is the Western Civilization?

Those who have witnessed and especially those who in one degree or another helped bring about the momentous changes in USSR in the late 1980s and Russia in the early 1990s, remember only too well the overwhelming euphoria of those times. The dark years of totalitarian communism were receding into the past, and the peoples of Russia were ready, nay, eager to join the great family of the Western civilization led by the United States.

Twenty five years ago in April 1989 a large group of Americans went to Moscow to check out if Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost were for real or there were just a sinister KGB ruse to fool the naive West. The group included Members of Congress, exiled Soviet dissidents, foreign policy experts and scholars with strong anti-Soviet and anti-communist credentials while our host was Gorbachev's right hand man Alexander Yakovlev who was told that we are coming to help the Russians understand the "values of the Western civilization."

These were then and still are now the buzz words. They meant human rights, the rule of law, democracy, freedoms, market economy, and so forth. Fresh from the yoke of communism, Russians were eager to embrace all these nice things, and confidently expected them to come with help primarily from the United States.

A detailed report about how all this could be done was personally delivered to President George Bush, Sr. in the fall of 1990 by Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation but according to Paul it was dismissed by Condoleezza Rice who was present at this meeting.

What actually came about was somewhat different. Russia's economy crashed worse than in World War II. Millions lost their jobs, actually lost all means of earning a livelihood. The freedom of pursuing economic prosperity morphed into the freedom of banditry, bandit capitalism becoming a precise description of the prevailing order of things.

The West has actually abetted this state of affairs with its numerous advisors and IMF officials actually running the country. All this was clearly described in the 2000 Congressional report "Russia's Road to Corruption" commissioned by the House Speaker Dennis Hastert.

Anyone who has studied Russia's thousand-year history, its habit of rising, Phoenix-like, out of the ashes of countless invasions, subjugations, wars and revolutions, could have predicted that a reaction would inevitably set in against the tendency toward total ruin, subjugation, and disintegration. And it did set in. Time and again the Russians – not just the elite, but the masses, too – watched, amazed and shocked to see the methods used by the West to promote its values and most precious of them like freedom and democracy.

In the last fifteen years alone there was the bombing of Belgrade and breakdown of Serbia; the ousting of a legally elected governments through "color" revolutions; assaults on Iraq, Libya, Syria; the "Arab Spring," all leaving a bloody trail of hundreds of thousands dead, chaos, ruin, hatred and strife plus the rise of the new generation of terrorists which make Al-Qaida look like pretty moderate bunch.

However, what happened to Ukraine - the country tied to Russia for centuries through family, religious and economic links dispel the last illusions among Russians about the West.

In the greatest ironic twist EU finally agreed to bring Russia into negotiation process about EU – Ukraine economic association and to delay until the year 2016 the trade deal with Ukraine. However, all this was proposed by Moscow in the first place but Brussels has unceremoniously rejected this approach. What followed was the coup-d'état blessed by EU and U.S. which led to the civil war, thousands of civilians killed and wounded, hundreds of thousands refugees and huge devastation and destruction of South-Eastern Ukraine.

Now everyone, including some sober minds in EU leadership admit that all this could have been avoided had they agreed to involve Russia in the process from the outset. They finally did but what horrible price the Ukrainians had to pay for the West's incompetence at best or sinister ploy to weaken Russia's geopolitically at worst.

Now comes the most disgraceful act by U.S. Congress when this distinguished body invites Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to address its joint session – the highest honor which could be bestowed on the foreign leader. Besides being directly responsible for all these tremendous sufferings of Ukrainian people the man is accused of being a "corrupt oligarch" by no one else but by the U.S. embassy officials in Kiev.

Still, the real values of the Western civilization are not obsolete, of course, as the people do not necessarily approve the actions of their leaders. For example, according to the latest polls the solid majority of Americans disapprove Obama's foreign policy and only 13 % approve the job done by Congress. This is the good sign which shows that perhaps the Western civilization still has a chance to bring back the world's respect and admiration but this could happen only if American political landscape changes dramatically and finds the strength to recover from the devastating policy failures of Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations.

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The road map for Ukraine to join EU and NATO through the coup-d'etat, civil war, thousands of civilians killed and wounded, hundreds of thousands refugees, housing and infrastructure devastation, neo-Nazi marches, and mass graves

