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*From Russia—With Love*

Mikhail Gorbachev wanted to rid the world of nuclear weapons (and he meant it). Ronald Reagan, caught up in his 'Star Wars' missile defense system (that proved to not work), passed on that opportunity. Then came Boris Yeltsin, a well-meaning drunk, who would have served to fulfill Russia's destiny as a 'gas station masquerading as a nation'—except for one small action by Yeltsin that changed the course of world history.

At Yeltsin's behest, he replaced himself with a young KGB attorney, Vladimir Putin, an unassuming, patient, focused, and dedicated leader who cared about his nation—and its security. It is because of Putin, and no one else, that Russia is now pre-eminent among great nations. No longer masquerading, Russia calls the energy sector shots.

And not only energy. Focusing on politics rather than military preparedness, a mendacious West, either oblivious or in wanton disregard of Russia's legitimate security concerns, encroached along Russian borders with nuclear-capable weapons systems.

Now, under sway of US 'rules-based order', Bobby Kennedy Jr. (whose CIA/Pharma take is right on), finds it necessary to refer to Putin as a 'thug'. Russell Brand (with his 6 1/2 million awakening butterflies), sees Russia's role in Ukraine—as an aggression.

Begging the question: other than invading Ukraine, did Putin have another way to go? Were there options for him? Was this a war of his choosing? For anyone taking a dispassionate look at circumstances, Putin's actions (though resulting in horrific loss of life), were a necessary consequence of an age-old human standard: 'stand your ground'. Other than nuclear threat or MLK Jr., non-violent protest—he had no choice.

It was not an easy choice. Putin is a democratically-elected leader with strong but not absolute support. Much of Russian monied interests (oligarchs with fortunes stolen from public coffers), rails against Putin's 'flinty insistence' on honest government transparency. With great concern/trepidation, Putin launched an SMO invasion into Ukraine.

He did it with insufficient forces, assuming a 'sane' NATO would see the merit in diffusing a situation unlike any faced by the West in various/sundry wars—this was Russia they were dealing with. He almost had a peace treaty signed, then it became clear that not only was the conflict in Ukraine existential to Russia's vital interests, the US/Britain harbored an insistence that a Russian defeat was also vital for NATO/EU/US.

That left Putin uncertain where this would go, but resolute that it would be decided on the battlefield. After Russian military missteps/misjudgments, US sanctions back-

fired as the Russian economy reached levels of sustainability never before realized. With that, the Russian people came on board—even if it meant total mobilization.

Now Ukraine and the West are losing—badly. But, among the insane—all is never lost. All that's needed is reinforcement of an idea that the Russian army is not professional and can be driven from the field by the likes of 'Tom Cruise and his Mavericks'.

That absurdity is not going to happen. While it is 'up for grabs', whether or not the US could mount a defense even of its own shores, there is no way Americans could cope with losses of 10 to 1 against Russia in Ukraine. Nevertheless, we may see that.

Since 2014, we have not listened to Putin and we will not accept that Russia is willing to martyr itself over security concerns for its people. And, the same 'damn fool' neocons who talk about using small tactical nukes in the field do not get it that Russia will respond to one small nuke from 'Uncle Sam' by 'raining down' the end of the world.

As our economy sits perched above an 'abyss of extinction' (closer by the day), and our Southern and Northern borders are sieves, too coarse to contain a rush of illegals that along with a 'flood' of 'illegal dollars—changes our republic into a tyranny/anarchy.

We don't survive a nuclear war. Far better would be an economic collapse. Even a 'Mad Max' scenario of 'armed marauding migrants' is preferable to nuclear holocaust. Yet we proceed towards armageddon. Right now I'm betting a 'dime to a dollar' that in smokeless backrooms at Langley or DC, those same discussions are taking place that preceded Vietnam except this time we haven't the time to train Ukrainians, but we have to get our planes involved, using (maybe retired), non active-duty US military pilots.

What these neocons have going for them is an utter lack of national dialogue. But what they don't have going for them is an EU tiring of the war, and a US populace (on all fronts), becoming more conservative. A direction that shows no signs of abating.

If we send in F-16s, what will happen to them? They will be slaughtered. Ukraine has no air defense and Russian systems in place are far too established and sophisticated.

US pilots or not, for now, it is a proxy war at the cost of every young Ukrainian male. There has never been a war such as this with this number of casualties over such a short time. Warfare has changed and it is Russia (and maybe China), calling the shots.

US Foreign Policy and its narrative is controlled by corporate interests that speaks in terms of democracy, but it is a democracy of controlled factions at odds with human values of liberty. What used to be 'liberals' has all but disappeared. What used to be the 'anti-war' left has ceased to exist—the 'left' now 'outdoes' the right as warmongers.

Coming back from the brink won't be easy. 'Anti-war left', replaced with contending identity groups makes for little opposition to starting a fight with Russia and China. And, with 'open-forum, free speech denied, any reasoned explanation of the buildup leading to inevitable conflicts with Russia/China is being portrayed as legitimizing the enemy.

It's understandable that MSNBC (motivated by ideology and profit), tells us Ukraine is poised to defeat Russia. They are not expected to offer the kind of war assessment given by (retired) Colonel Douglas MagGregor, who is motivated by concern for truth.

Nothing penetrates neocon ideology. It won't matter that Taiwan is on the verge of electing the party that desires peaceful reintegration into China. It won't matter when one EU state, Hungary, vetoes an Article 5 war against Russia. And, it matters not at all that Putin invites his critics in for a 3 hour question/answer. So, here it comes: "From Russia With Love"—but with Sean Connery dead and James Bond as the bad guy.

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