

U.S. Voices: Cooperate With Russia

U.S. Rep. Michael Grimm, Dec. 30: Congressman Grimm (R-N.Y.), co-chair of the House Russian Caucus, a statement posted on his website (<http://grimm.house.gov/>), warned that the Sochi Olympics could become a Benghazi nightmare, and urged the U.S. to cooperate with Russia:

“I strongly condemn the terrorist attacks in Russia. As we approach the opening of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, we must not let the terrorists incite fear. The Olympics are a time for member nations to put aside their differences in the name of peaceful competition. That is why we must remain vigilant and take every threat seriously.

“We cannot sweep these threats under the rug, like we did with Benghazi or the warnings from Russia on the Tsarnaev brother behind the Boston Marathon bombing. Each time we fail to recognize these threats,

we not only risk the lives of innocent Americans, but appear weaker and vulnerable in the eyes of the enemy. In doing so, we allow the terrorists to become emboldened and continue their reign of terror throughout the world attacking us and our allies.

“The only winners in Sochi should be our athletes, which is why we must work closely with Russia and our allies to combat the threat of terrorism. That begins with taking every threat seriously and acting accordingly, so that the Winter Olympics remain a dream for athletes around the globe, instead of becoming a nightmare like Benghazi.”

U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, Jan. 3: Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, in a statement Jan. 2, called for closer security cooperation between the U.S. and Russia in the runup to the Winter Olympics in Sochi, and said he is planning a hearing on the topic in the near future. “Whenever unarmed citizens are victims of terrorist attacks, we should stand in solidarity with their countries—especially with Russia. Unfortunately, our own recent relations with Moscow have called into question what should be Washington’s automatic response. . . .

“Our security cooperation should be at a much higher level and much more extensive,” Rohrabacher said. “Whether it is 9/11 or the murders of Russian schoolchildren or attacks in Egypt, radical Islamic terrorists should know that the good people are standing together and will not cower when confronted with monstrous crimes against unarmed and innocent civilians.”

Columnist Patrick Buchanan, Jan. 3: Writing on his website (<http://buchanan.org/blog/obama-go-sochi-6154>), the former Presidential advisor stated: “President Obama, in a gesture of solidarity with the Russian people, who have suffered more than any European people from Islamic terror since 9/11, should announce he has changed his mind and will be going to Sochi. The impact would be dramatic. The Western boycott of the winter Olympics would collapse. The attention of the world’s TV cameras, along with the rest of mankind, would turn to Sochi. Success of the games would be assured.”

Rejecting those calling for a boycott and “snubbing” of President Putin, Buchanan says that U.S. relations with Russia are too serious to be blocked by petty quarrels. “Putin,” he noted, “approved NATO strikes on Libya. He has gone along with U.N. sanctions on Iran. He has held off sending Russia’s most advanced

air defense system to Iran. He has assisted the United States in the war in Afghanistan. He pulled Obama’s bacon out of the fire in Syria when the American people and Congress told Obama that, red line or no red line, he had no authority to bomb Syria. We are now working with Russia on Syria’s chemical weapons. And her cooperation is crucial in handling North Korea and negotiating a deal to keep Iran away from a nuclear bomb.”

Commentator Rachel Marsden, Dec. 31: published a column entitled “U.S., Russia Can Go for Olympic Gold in War on Terror,” *The Tennessean*, noting that in early September, she had written that Russia and the West could team up against the forces of radical Islam, but that now, “It looks set to happen sooner than expected” because of the current wave of Islamic terrorist attacks. Putin should “go for the gold in the anti-terrorism pentathlon,” Marsden writes, noting that “This confluence of events—the Syrian conflict, the Sochi Olympics and ongoing Islamic terrorism—puts Russia in position to take charge.” She concludes: “It seems as if humanity could only benefit from some Russian-American cooperation—in the spirit of the Games and international sportsmanship, of course.”

Former Pentagon official Dov Zakheim, Jan. 3: In a column “Washington and Moscow: Brothers in Arms?” published in *The National Interest*, Zakheim writes, “Washington’s announcement that it stands ready to assist Russia with security for the Sochi Olympics offers both countries an opportunity to expand beyond their cooperation in combating terrorism, despite the awkward reality of Edward Snowden’s self-imposed exile in Russia.” After describing the threats emanating from Chechnya and Dagestan, and the leading Chechen role within the Syrian opposition, Zakheim acknowledges that “the Russians have proved to have been correct when they asserted over two years ago that the Syrian opposition would be dominated by extremists.” So now, he continues, with Obama’s hesitancy to exert power in the Middle East, there is “much to recommend in increasing counterterrorism coordination with Moscow not only with regard to the Winter Olympics, but also in seeking to diminish even further the threat of Sunni radicalism throughout the Middle East, including, and indeed especially, in Syria.” And furthermore, “there is much to be said for the administration’s cooperating with Russia on matters that go beyond counterterrorism.”