

Cold War 2.0

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[Anti-Empire Report](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Tom Cotton, Senator from Arkansas

Cold War 2.0, part I

In last month's *Anti-Empire Report* I brought you the latest adventure of US State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki trying to defend the indefensible. She said then:

"As a matter of longstanding policy, the United States does not support political transitions by non-constitutional means," which prompted me to inform my readers: "If you know how to contact Ms. Psaki, tell her to have a look at my list of more than 50 governments the United States has attempted to overthrow since the end of the Second World War."

On March 13 her regular attack on all things Russian included this exchange with *Associated Press* writer Matthew Lee:

Lee: On this issue, did you get any more about this request to the Vietnamese on Cam Ranh Bay and not allowing the Russians to – and not wanting them to allow – you not wanting them to refuel Russian planes there?

Psaki: Well, just to be clear – and maybe I wasn't as clear yesterday, so let me try to do this again – it's – our concern is about activities they might conduct in the region, and the question is: Why are they in the region? It's not about specifically refueling or telling the Vietnamese not to allow them to refuel. [emphasis added]

Lee: So there hasn't been a request to stop refueling them, or there has?

Psaki: It's more about concerns. It's not as much about Vietnam as much as it – as it is about concerns about what activities they would be in the region for.

Lee: Okay. Well, you – I mean, there are U.S. planes flying over there all the time.

Psaki: Sure, there are.

Lee: So you don't want Russian planes flying there, but it's okay for U.S. planes to fly there? I mean, I just – it gets to the point where you – the suggestion is that everything the Russians are doing all the time everywhere is somehow nefarious and designed to provoke. But you can't – but you don't seem to be able to understand or accept that American planes flying all over the place, including in that area, is annoying to the Chinese, for one, but also for the Russians. But the suggestion is always that the American flights are good and beneficial and don't cause tension, and that other people's flights do cause

tension. So can you explain what the basis is for your concern that the Russian flights there in the Southeast Asia area are – raise tensions?

Psaki: There just aren't more details I can go into.

Cold War 2.0, part II

On Saturday, the Obama administration released a series of satellite images that it said showed the Russian army had joined the rebels in a full-scale assault to surround troops in the area around the city. Russia has denied that it is a party to the conflict, and it was impossible to verify the three grainy black-and-white satellite images posted to Twitter by the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt.

According to the United States, the images, commissioned from the private Digital Globe satellite company, showed artillery systems and multiple-rocket launchers Thursday in the area near Debaltseve.

"We are confident these are Russian military, not separatist, systems," Pyatt tweeted. (Washington Post, February 15, 2015)

When the time comes to list the ways in which the United States gradually sunk into the quicksand, slowly metamorphosing into a Third-World state, Washington's campaign of 2014-15 to convince the world that Russia had repeatedly invaded Ukraine will deserve to be near the top of the list. Numerous examples like the above can be given. If I were still the jingoistic nationalist I was raised to be I think I would feel somewhat embarrassed now by the blatant obviousness of it all.

For a short visual history of the decline and fall of the American Empire, see the video ["Imperial Decay" by Class War Films](#) (8:50 minutes).

During Cold War 1.0 the American media loved to poke fun at the Soviet media for failing to match the glorious standards of the Western press. One of the most common putdowns was about the two main Russian newspapers – *Pravda* (meaning "truth" in Russian) and *Izvestia* (meaning "news"). We were told, endlessly, that there was "no truth in *Pravda* and no news in *Izvestia*."

As cynical as I've been for years about the American mainstream media's treatment of ODE (Officially Designated Enemies), current news coverage of Russia exceeds my worst expectations. I'm astonished every day at the obvious disregard of any kind of objectivity or fairness concerning Russia. Perhaps the most important example of this bias is the failure to remind their audience that the US and NATO have surrounded Russia – with Washington's coup in Ukraine as the latest example – and that Moscow, for some odd reason, feels threatened by this. (Look for the map online of NATO bases and Russia, with a caption like: "Why did you place your country in the middle of our bases?")

Cold War 2.0, part III

Following the murder of Russian opposition leader, and former Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov in Moscow on February 27, the West had a field day. Ranging from strong innuendo to outright accusation of murder, the Western media and politicians did not miss an opportunity to treat Vladimir Putin as a football practice dummy.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution urging an international investigation into Nemtsov's death and suggested that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Council, and the United Nations could play a role in the probe.

US Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham introduced a Senate Resolution condemning the Nemtsov murder. The Resolution also called on President Obama and the international community to pursue an independent investigation into the murder and redouble efforts to advance free speech, human rights, and the rule of law in Russia. In addition, it urged Obama to continue to sanction human rights violators in the Russian Federation and to increase US support to human rights activists in Russia.

So it went ... all over the West.

Meanwhile, in the same time period in Ukraine, outside of the pro-Russian area in the southeast, the following was reported:

- *January 29:* Former Chairman of the local government of the Kharkov region, Alexey Kolesnik, hanged himself.
- *February 24:* Stanislav Melnik, a member of the opposition party (Partia Regionov), shot himself.
- *February 25:* The Mayor of Melitopol, Sergey Valter, hanged himself a few hours before his trial.
- *February 26:* Alexander Bordiuga, deputy director of the Melitopol police, was found dead in his garage.
- *February 26:* Alexander Peklushenko, former member of the Ukrainian parliament, and former mayor of Zaporizhi, was found shot to death.
- *February 28:* Mikhail Chechetov, former member of parliament, member of the opposition party (Partia Regionov), "fell" from the window of his 17th floor apartment in Kiev.
- *March 14:* The 32-year-old prosecutor in Odessa, Sergey Melnichuk, "fell" to his death from the 9th floor.

The Partia Regionov directly accused the Ukrainian government in the deaths of their party members and appealed to the West to react to these events. "We appeal to the European Union, PACE [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe], and European and international human rights organizations to immediately react to the situation in Ukraine, and give a legal assessment of the criminal actions of the Ukrainian government, which cynically murders its political opponents."

We cannot conclude from the above that the Ukrainian government was responsible for all, or even any, of these deaths. But neither can we conclude that the Russian government was responsible for the death of Boris Nemtsov, the American media and politicians notwithstanding. A search of the mammoth Nexus news database found no mention of any of the Ukrainian deceased except for the last one above, Sergey Melnichuk, but this clearly is not the same person. It thus appears that none of the deaths on the above list was ascribed to the Western-allied Ukrainian government.

Where are the demands for international investigations of any of the deaths? In the United States or in Europe? Where is Senator McCain?

Torture via sanctions

Discussions on constraining Iran's nuclear program have been going on for well over a year between Iran and the P5+1 (the five nuclear powers of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany), led by the United States. Throughout this period a significant stumbling block to reaching an agreement has been the pronouncements of Yukiya Amano, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA is the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, and its inspections are considered a key safeguard against countries using civilian nuclear energy technology to produce weapons. Amano has consistently accused Iran of failing to reply fully and substantially to queries about "possible military dimensions" of present and past nuclear activities, or failing to provide sufficient access to nuclear facilities.

Failure by Iran to comply fully with IAEA demands undermine Tehran's efforts to win the lifting of crippling UN, US and other sanctions, which currently prohibit foreign companies from doing business with Iran and deny access to the global financial system. Media coverage of the negotiations regularly emphasize Amano's claims of Iran's insufficient responses to IAEA's demands. It is thus worth inquiring just who is this man Amano.

In 2009 Japanese diplomat Yukiya Amano became the head of the IAEA. What the Western media routinely fail to remind its audience is that a US embassy cable of October 2009 (released by Wikileaks in 2010) said Amano "took pains to emphasize his support for U.S. strategic objectives for the Agency. Amano reminded the [American] ambassador on several occasions that ... he was solidly in the U.S. court on every key strategic decision, from high-level personnel appointments to the handling of Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program."

Even if Iran makes a superior effort to satisfy IAEA and Washington's demands on all issues, it would remain questionable to what extent and how rapidly the sanctions would be removed, particularly under a Republican-controlled Congress. Iran specialist and author Gareth Porter recently wrote that "the United States and its allies have made no effort to hide the fact that they intend to maintain the 'sanctions architecture' in place for many years after the implementation of the agreement has begun. Last November, administration officials explained that US sanctions would only be removed after the International Atomic Energy Agency had verified that 'Tehran is abiding by the terms of a deal over an extended period of time' in order to 'maintain leverage on Iran to honour the accord'."

To appreciate the extraordinary degree of pressure and extortion the United States can impose upon another country we should consider the case of Libya in the decade-plus following the destruction of PanAm Flight 103 in 1988 over Scotland. To force Libya to "accept responsibility" for the crime, Washington imposed heavy sanctions on the Gaddafi regime, including a ban on international flights to Libya and payment of billions of dollars to the families of the victims. Libya eventually did "accept responsibility" for the crime, although it was innocent. As difficult as this may be to believe, it's true. [Read my account of it here.](#)

Even after Libya accepted responsibility it still took years for the US to wipe out the sanctions, and it's not clear that at the time of Gaddafi's death in 2011 all of them had been removed. Once a nation becomes an Officially Designated Enemy of the empire the methods of torture can be exquisite and endless. Cuba is presently negotiating the end of US sanctions against Havana. They will need to be extremely careful.

"Like others of his ilk - such as David Horowitz and Christopher Hitchens - he learned too much in college and too little since." Sam Smith

I've never been too impressed by what college a person went to, or even if they attended college at all. Gore Vidal did not attend any college; neither did H. L. Mencken; nor did Edward Snowden, who has demonstrated a highly articulate and educated mind. Among the many other notables who skipped a college education are George Bernard Shaw, Ernest Hemingway, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Then we have graduates from Ivy League colleges like George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Tom Cotton. I don't have to present the case for Bush's less-than educated mind; we're all only too familiar with its beauty. But Obama has matched Georgie Boy for stupidity and inanity time and time again. My favorite, which he's used on at least five occasions, is his reply to questions about why his administration has not prosecuted Bush, Cheney, et al for torture and other war crimes: "I prefer to look forward rather than backwards". Picture a defendant before a judge asking to be found innocent on such grounds. It simply makes laws, law enforcement, crime, justice, and facts irrelevant. Picture Chelsea Manning and other whistle blowers using this argument. Picture the reaction to this by Barack Obama, who has become the leading persecutor of whistleblowers in American history.

Is there anyone left who still thinks that Barack Obama is some kind of improvement intellectually over George W. Bush? Probably two types still think so: (1) Those to whom color matters a lot; (2) Those who are very impressed by the ability to put together grammatically correct sentences.

And now we have Mr. Cotton, Senator from Arkansas and graduate of Harvard undergraduate and law schools. He'll be entertaining us for years to come with gems like his remark on "Face the Nation" (March 15): "Moreover, we have to stand up to Iran's attempts to drive for regional dominance. They already control Tehran and, increasingly, they control Damascus and Beirut and Baghdad. And now, Sana'a as well."

Heavens, Iran controls Tehran! Who knew? Next thing we'll hear is that Russia controls Moscow! Sarah Palin, move over. Our boy Cotton is ready for *Saturday Night Live*.

Notes

1. *Washington Post*, February 15, 2015, "[Amid doubts, truce in Ukraine appears to take hold](#)"
2. RT, March 12, 2015, "[EU lawmakers demand international investigation into Nemtsov's death](#)"
3. John McCain website, Press Release, "[Senators John McCain And Lindsey Graham Introduce Resolution Condemning Murder Of Russian Opposition Leader Boris Nemtsov](#)"
4. Research for this section was done by a person who was raised in the Soviet Union and now lives in the United States.
5. Middle East Eye, March 27, 2015, "[Sanctions and the fate of the nuclear talks](#)"

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