#### WASHINGTON'S NEW COLD WAR AGAINST RUSSIA

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#### Abstract

This article will explain the recent renewal of the Cold War policy by the United States (US) against Russia through Colour Revolutions and regime change. Far from being a new strategy, it is the revival of geopolitics that blends with geo-economics in order to forestall a far more serious decline of the US, especially in terms of its global hegemony. This "new" policy is based on the old post-World War I US strategy of preventing a deepening economic relationship between Russia and Germany, or a Russia-China pact. As history witnessed, it was the Rapallo Treaty of 1922, which dismayed the Western allies after the World War I, as it threatened to make both Germany and Russia more independent of Anglo-American (Western) influence and control, especially with regard to their naturally dynamic economies.

**Keywords:** New Cold War, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Russia, Security, Challenges, Opportunities.

#### Introduction

After the World War-II, the US pursued a geopolitical strategy, which was immortalized by the first general secretary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), who asserted that the purpose of NATO was "to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down." In fact, geo-strategist Halford Mackinder too propagated this strategy after World War I in 1919.<sup>2</sup> While the strategy, known euphemistically as *containment*, served the US elite for four decades but after the cold war, there appeared to be a far lesser need for such an intrusive and domineering global strategy. With the demise of Soviet Union, Russia lost its satellites in Eastern Europe, the US became a dominant hegemonial state, and "Europe strove to define an independent identity," writes Henry Kissinger. These structural changes, as per Kissinger were in essence "renunciation" of the Westphalian system of 1648.<sup>3</sup>

However, after the chaotic Yeltsin years, in the 1990s, the subsequent recovery and simultaneous rise of Vladimir Putin to power in Russia; the US policymakers decided to weaken a resurgent Russia, which could become a serious challenge to its hegemony. Contrarily, the Russian elite considered "the post–Cold War settlement was unbalanced, even unfair." After the annexation of Crimea, Russian perceptions were that: "It looks like the so-called 'winners' of the Cold War are determined to have it all

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and reshape the world into a place that could better serve their interests alone," stated Putin during the annual Valdai Discussion Club in October 2014.4 It was thus no coincidence in 2000, just as Putin became President that Washington initiated a series of so-called Colour Revolutions, which in reality were a euphemism for overthrowing the sovereign and often democratically elected governments, all within the former territorial sphere of influence of the former Soviet Union, which Russia naturally viewed as its domain. These manipulated overthrows started with Yugoslavia and ended in Ukraine. It was obvious that the Kremlin could not afford to sit by idly with regard to this blatant encroachment of what it regarded as its traditional sphere of influence. Putin stated in March 2014: "If you press 'a spring to its limits," ... 'it will snap back hard'." This was what the US had done: "plotting 'colour revolution' against Russia, 'lying to us,' making decisions 'behind our back,' such as with NATO enlargement and missile defence in Europe, and trying 'to sweep us into a corner' for having an independent foreign policy."5 According to Putin the USA was "still pursuing the 'infamous containment policy' ... directed against Russia...." This became the trigger for Russia's foreign policy's perpetual quest to regain a strong state status in the 21st century. The Ukraine was the pivot around which Washington knew it would instigate a violent Russian response that could then be easily exploited by the Western, and mostly US controlled mass media, in order to demonize Russia. Even Mearsheimer asserted in fall 2014 that:

The crisis was largely the 'West's fault'.... Major Powers do not respond graciously to hostile alliances pushing up to their borders. The United States and its NATO partners should have understood that, by meddling in Ukraine ... they were guaranteeing a predictably aggressive Russian response.<sup>7</sup>

Kotkin observes that "Putin does not recognize the existence" of Ukraine's separation from Russia, which Putin ostensibly intended not to leave behind as a potent weapon to be used by the Western powers against Russia. Interestingly, Russia, according to Kotkin perceives the neighbouring smaller states "less as potential friends than as potential beachheads for enemies." Anti-West sentiments are profoundly pronounced under Putin's presidency. One can assume such sentiments were due to Washington's exploitation during Russia's debilitation and enervation period under President Boris Yeltsin and beyond. In fact, despite the US-Soviet World War II alliance - their relations continued to be still fraught with deep distrust. Factors behind this collision course of US-Russian foreign policies are explained and scrutinized in the subsequent sections of the article.

# Russian Quest to Regain Grandeur

If we take the Western mass media at face value, than it is obvious that Russia under Putin is out to tyrannize and bully the Ukrainian population into surrendering to Kremlin's imperial quest for domination, not just in the Ukraine, but also in the entire region. This is the dogmatic Western mainstream media image. However, such reporting omits far more than it is willing to state. Namely, since the end of the Cold War, the US elite has been deliberately pushing Russia into a corner, leaving it with only

two options: either capitulate to US demands or reassert its position in what Russia has regarded, for centuries, to be its legitimate sphere of influence. It was clear that Kremlin could not accept capitulation; instead it had to oppose and challenge this imperial strategy that is in line with its historical legacy. Secondly, Putin could not acquiesce to loss of Russian prestige that occurred after the end of the Cold War, and evidence suggests that the Kremlin is "determined to restore it, in part by expanding Russia's borders," states Treisman." Ostensibly, Russia's Crimean annexation was planned under pressure that the Kremlin might lose its strategically pivotal naval base in Sevastopol, and NATO's expansion was another factor behind the Kremlin's move with its "dream" to regain its past grandeur.12 The Russian elite believe that the US caused recent deterioration of their relations. In this context, they point to US interference in Russia's internal affairs for many years, particularly United States' meddling in Ukraine. Russian policymakers object to the US efforts to bring Ukraine into NATO. This would obviously move the US-led military alliance right up to Russian territories, and to NATO's deployment of missile defence systems in Eastern Europe that the Kremlin asserts could be used for offensive objectives. In fact, NATO's missile deployments followed the USA's unilateral withdrawal from the US-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002.

## Hidden War against Russia

Reunification of East and West Germany was a key event in the modern history. It is known that President Mikhail Gorbachev was instrumental in allowing the reunion of Germany, but he wanted a guarantee from the US and the West that a united Germany would not become a member of the NATO. This was the traditional Russian fear since the World War II. Incidentally, during World War II the Nazi invaders had massacred about 18-27 million Russians.<sup>13</sup> When US President Bush Sr. was reluctant to give such a guarantee, Gorbachev pushed for a pledge that NATO would not be expanded eastwards toward Russia. This was likely the minimal assurance that would satisfy the conservatives and anti-Gorbachev factions in Russia, before agreeing to reunification of Germany, and hence to let East Germany quit the Warsaw Pact. History recorded that Gorbachev received Washington's assurance that NATO would not expand eastward. 4 In response to that solemn US pledge the once mighty Soviet Union promised Washington and NATO to systematically dismantle its huge nuclear arsenal. For this, the Russian Duma ratified the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) which came into force in April 2000.15 Both sides made ratification dependent on their adherence to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which prohibited an active missile defence shield by both sides.16

NATO's expansion commenced about four years after the US pledge not to expand it eastward. This move was not only a breaking of the trust that had developed in the Western and Russian capitals, but was vital in raising fear and even paranoia of Russia's encirclement by hostile US and Western forces along its borders.

NATO is the biggest military machine ever assembled, and according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) it accounts for 70% of the world's total defence spending, 17 while the US defence budget is 36% of the global defence spending, whereas Russia's being a mere 4.1%. 18 In 2016, the US spent \$ 611

billion on defence and, on the other hand, Russia spent \$ 69.2 billion making its budget merely 10.2% of the US. China's defence budget was estimated at \$ 215 billion, making it about a third of the United States.

This makes Russia the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest arms spender, closely followed by Saudi Arabia, which spent \$ 63.7 billion.<sup>19</sup> On top of this, due to the US-European Union (EU) sanctions (imposed in 2014), which caused a deep recession, and led to collapse of the *Ruble* and the toppling of oil prices Russia slid even to 4<sup>th</sup> rank of global defence expenditures in 2015, behind Saudi Arabia.<sup>20</sup> However, before 2016, at one point Russian arms export levelled off at the \$ 50 billion mark.<sup>21</sup>

Ikenberry argues that the "far-flung system of multilateral institutions, alliances, trade agreements, and political partnerships' - still reigns...." He insists that not only Russia, China and Iran are incapable of displacing the US as the dominant force behind this order; they also don't have an alternative model. Replacing this system is not an option as "at the end of the day they are about 'gaining voice within the existing order and manipulating it to suit their needs,' not replacing it." This makes Russia not a revisionist power but merely a part-time spoiler. Ikenberry asserts that Putin's annexation of the Crimea "reflects 'Russia's geopolitical vulnerability, not its strength'." He argues that "Putin may be 'winning some small battles,' but 'he is losing the war,' as the circle of democratic states and NATO allies draws closer to his borders." He sums up that "Russia is not on the rise; to the contrary, it is experiencing one of the greatest geopolitical contractions of any major power in the modern era."

It was clear, if Ukraine would be incorporated by mighty NATO; this would create substantial vulnerabilities and weakness for Russia easily exploitable by Washington and, in the worst case scenario, can be used to even destabilize Russia itself. All these factors coupled with other escalatory risks between US and Russia primarily due to latter' first-use nuclear policy against a conventional attack, US deployment of advanced conventional weapons capabilities, missile defence systems and absence of conventional arms control, non-reduction of strategic offensive weapons and confidence-building measures are few irritants/causes of bilateral instability along with other hotspots like Syria and the Baltic region.

This worst case scenario was in no way a figment of some conspiracy writers' imagination, as recent Russian history reveals, in form of the Yeltsin era (1992-2000) when the US power elite used its pliant tool - the International Monitory Fund (IMF), which it controls via voting rights, to wage economic warfare via "shock therapy" in order to undermine the immense wealth of Russia through Western dollar-holding speculators, as Russia was economically at its weakest, having suffered through a very recent stock market crash and drastic *Ruble* devaluations in 1998. During this utterly corrupt era, a tiny handful of Russian businessmen seized invaluable state-owned raw material assets and became billionaires overnight. They became the *oligarchs* and their wealth made them into the new masters of post-communist Russia, but their wealth depended on and was denominated in *Dollars*. Washington believed that the *oligarchs* were tied to the West and specifically to the US. As Engdahl exposed, "Washington's

strategy had been to take control of post-Soviet Russia by taking control of its new billionaire oligarchs."<sup>26</sup>

## **Tightening the Noose around Russia**

Washington used another *Colour Revolution* in Georgia in November 2003 to encroach further into the former Soviet territory.<sup>27</sup> This "Rose Revolution" caused dismay among the Russian elite as it feared that the covert regime overthrow technique would be used even in Russia itself.<sup>28</sup> Russian worries were not allayed when, in 2003, the Bush administration provided the small Central Asian former Soviet republic of Georgia with direct military assistance and advisors. This was yet another clear violation of the promise given to Russia about not extending NATO eastward. During October 2004, Putin visited Beijing to formalize an agreement relating to the border issues, which Kremlin termed as "unparalleled heights" in Sino-Russia relations. Simultaneously, a re-energized Russia and the rising China began to emerge as a potential counterweight to US hegemony, which propelled Washington to accelerate its pace of strategic manoeuvres to encircle both Russia and China with military bases and alliance systems stretching right from the Far East to Europe, along with NATO's simultaneous push toward the Russian hinterland, and the US initiation of its "pivot to Asia" policy of 2012.<sup>29</sup>

Since 2008, the outgoing Bush administration exerted "enormous pressure on a reluctant European Union and governments to admit two former Soviet Republics, Georgia and Ukraine, into NATO." But even that wasn't enough provocation for Washington as: "That new NATO expansion came in the wake of a bold announcement in early 2007 by the United States Government that it planned to install advanced missile bases and radar stations in two former Warsaw Pact countries, now NATO members: Poland and the Czech Republic." Washington tried to justify its missile bases claiming that they are allegedly a defence against the "rogue states" like Iran and North Korea. This is not spurious as Iranian missile threats nor its matching warheads are not only non-existent but would also require a huge effort by Iran to materialize in the first place. Moreover, Iran is fully aware that the US would annihilate it if it were ever to fire such missiles against the US, or even against its allies. Thus, the United States' claimed defensive missile system is not defensive at all, as it provides the US - in any future military conflict with Kremlin, a major offensive advantage.

These events show that Washington's encirclement is not just focused on Russia, as the US is very actively using a "containment" policy against China and North Korea; by 2010 this resulted in an arms race between the US and China. This led to Pyongyang's testing of Hydrogen weapons and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs, range 6,700-8000 km) in September 2017. Yet, most paramount is the transforming geostrategic trajectory of Middle East where the US has aggressively moved to topple the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria. Having already deposed Qaddafi's Libyan government, the US is also supporting radical groups there to topple the government. Moreover, it is obvious that the US aggressively provoked the Iraq War of 2003, and still has its troops in Afghanistan. Iraq was a longtime ally of the

former Soviet Union, just like Libya was, and Syria still is, while Afghanistan, before the Soviet invasion, was also a client state of the Kremlin.<sup>39</sup>

## The Origins of Anti-Soviet/Russia Grand Strategy

It was Sir Halford Mackinder, the British father of geopolitics, who came up with the Heartland Theory. He believed that Russia was the "geographical pivot of history." In a crucial policy paper in 1904, Mackinder "asserted that control over Russia would determine who would or could control the vast expanses of Eurasia, and by extension the entire world." Mackinder saw that "either a Russo-German alliance, or a Sino-Japanese empire that conquered Russia, would be able to contend for world hegemony." Mackinder heavily influenced the future US geo-strategists. While the Second World War was still ongoing, he was invited by the influential *Council on Foreign Relations* journal *Foreign Affairs*, in the US, to give his thoughts on post-war geopolitics. "The resulting article, published in 1943, ominously presaged the Cold War. Even before the outcome of World War Two was clear, Mackinder wrote:"

(T)he conclusion is unavoidable that if the Soviet Union emerges from this war as conqueror of Germany, she must rank as the greatest land Power on the globe. Moreover, she will be the Power in the strategically strongest defensive position. The Heartland is the greatest natural fortress on earth. For the first time in history, it is manned by a garrison sufficient both in number and quality.<sup>41</sup>

The Washington Post writer Michael Dobbs described what transpired in Belgrade. It went back to a secret closed-door meeting in October 1999. In Belgrade in-depth opinion poll of 840 voters of Serbia onto an overhear projection screen was flashed by the US pollster Doug Schoen, drawing the strategy for tumbling the remaining Europe's rulers of communist-era. His simple as well as effective message was; Milosevic, four lost wars survivor, seventy-eight days of NATO bombing, global sanction decade and two main street uprising remained "completely vulnerable" to a well-effective electoral challenge. According to the results of the poll, oppositional unity was the key. In the later year, it brought down Milosevic!<sup>42</sup>

Gotov Je (He's Finished) became the slogan of the revolution. The organizing group behind it was called *Otpor* (resistance). 43 Interesting is how initially the US supported Milosevic, during the early 1990s, but; later US official propaganda demonized Milosevic as the next Hitler in terms of atrocities committed. This total reversal suggests a hidden agenda on Washington's part. 44 Behind *Otpor* was the US State Department, which was led by US Ambassador to Serbia, Richard Miles. The US Agency of International Development (USAID) had channelled the funds through commercial contractors and through the so-called NGOs – NED, NDI, and International Republican Institute (IRI). 45 Conspicuous about all these US organizations is that they are overtly supportive of democracy.

As described in *Full Spectrum Dominance*:

Through slick Madison Avenue marketing techniques and careful study of genuine protest movements, the US Government had, in effect, perfected

techniques for 'democratically' getting rid of any opponent, while convincing the world they were brought down by spontaneous outbursts for freedom. It was a dangerously effective weapon.46

## The Next Targets of Washington's 'Coloured Revolutions'

Within a month of the overthrow of the Milosevic government in Serbia, US Ambassador Richard Miles was inside the tiny Republic of Georgia in what was once part of the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup> His assignment was to install a repetition of the Serbian overthrow in Tbilisi, Georgia.<sup>48</sup> At the time, in 2002, Saakashvili was Georgia's Justice Minister serving under President Eduard Shevardnadze; Miles, however, would teach Saakashvili on how to bring down Shevardnadze.<sup>49</sup>

On its own website, Sharp's institute admitted to being active with opposition 'pro-democracy' groups in a number of countries, including Burma, Thailand, Tibet, Lithuania, Estonia, Belarus, as well as Serbia. <sup>50</sup> Conveniently, his target countries entirely coincided with the US State Department's target for regime change over the same time period.... Among the advisors to Sharp's institute at the time of the Serbia Otpor! Operation, in addition to Colonel Helvey, was a high-ranking US intelligence specialist, Major General Edward B. Atkeson, US Army (Retired). <sup>51</sup> A former Deputy Chief of Staff Intelligence, US Army Europe, and member of the National Intelligence Council under the director of the CIA, General Atkeson also served with the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State. Another advisor to Sharp's Albert Einstein Institution was former US Rear Admiral Gene R. La Rocque (Retired), head of the Center for Defence Information. <sup>52</sup>

Just as rebellion was synthetically spreading in Georgia, another crucial part of the old Soviet Union and thus Russia's sphere of influence was suddenly added to Washington's "hit list." It was the Ukraine, which lies at the very heart of ethnic Russia, which was now also part of the targeted area of yet another US instigated Coloured Revolution.<sup>53</sup>

A look at a map of Eurasian geography revealed a distinct pattern to the Washington-sponsored Coloured Revolutions after 2000. They were clearly aimed at isolating Russia and ultimately cutting her economic lifeline—her pipeline networks, that carried Russia's huge reserves of oil and natural gas from the Urals and Siberia to Western Europe and Eurasia – straight through Ukraine. The transformation of Ukraine from independent former Russian republic to pro-NATO US satellite was accomplished by the so-called 'Orange Revolution' in 2004 overseen by John Herbst, appointed US Ambassador to Ukraine in May 2003. The pipelines traverse through Ukraine. In January 2005, the US State Department bought the Ukrainian Presidency for a mere \$ 20 million. St

At a certain point in 2004, with the overthrows of governments in Georgia and the Ukraine, Putin felt compelled to take control over the one strategic asset Russia possessed and that the Western European NATO countries badly needed: Energy, as Russia is by far the world's largest producer of natural gas.<sup>56</sup>

## The Pipeline Wars of Eurasia

Full Spectrum Dominance explains why Washington would implement the overthrow of governments around Russia, in what was traditionally seen as the Kremlin's sphere of influence:

The unspoken agenda of Washington's aggressive Central Asia policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union could be summed up in a single phrase: control of energy. So long as Russia was able to use its strategic trump card—its vast oil and natural gas reserves – to win economic allies in Western Europe, China and elsewhere, it could cannot be politically isolated...The colour revolution in the tiny Republic of Georgia and the effort to draw Georgia into NATO under the new President, US-trained Mikheil Saakashvili, was in part aimed at securing a new oil pipeline route to get the vast oil reserves of the Caspian Sea near Baku in Azerbaijan. <sup>57</sup>

As early as the Clinton administration British Petroleum (BP) had sought to build an oil pipeline that would avoid transit through Russia. Due to the mountainous terrain, the only conceivable route was from Baku across Georgia via Tbilisi, and then across the Black Sea to NATO country Turkey where it would connect with a pipeline to the Mediterranean Turkish port of Ceyhan. The paramount significance of this pipeline was that:

By 2003, Russian had become the world's second largest producer of crude oil, after Saudi Arabia. During the Soviet era the economies of Ukraine, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and the other Republics of the USSR had been fully integrated economically. After the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, its gas and oil pipelines and export routes across Eurasia continued to operate. Moreover, the former Soviet regions, including Ukraine, continued to receive Russian gas via the state gas monopoly, Gazprom, at highly subsidized prices below that charged in Western Europe.<sup>58</sup>

Full Spectrum Dominance gives us a superb overview of what is at stake in terms of Washington's hegemony:

The Washington strategy of 'democratic' coups – the colour revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine – were designed strategically to cut China off from access to the vital oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea, including Kazakhstan and, ultimately Russia. ... The encirclement of Russia would allow for control of pipelines and other ties between it and Western Europe and the Middle East. <sup>59</sup>

In the US elitist *Foreign Affairs* journal Zbigniew Brzezinski who worked as a consultant to British Parliament tells us why the US government has set its predatory eyes on Russia and Eurasia. For starters, China and India are in Eurasia. And after the US, the next six largest economies and military spenders are there. Eurasia accounts for 75% of the world's population, 75% of its energy resources, and 60% of its GNP. This means that together Eurasia's potential power trumps even the United States. <sup>60</sup>

# The Endgame for US Dominance over Russia

Whitney's article reveals the hidden new Cold War between the US and the aggrieved Russians:

The US wants to separate the continents, 'prevent the emergence of a new rival', install a tollbooth between Europe and Asia, and establish itself as the guarantor of regional security. To that end, the US is rebuilding the Iron Curtain along a thousand mile stretch from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery are being sent to the region to reinforce a buffer zone around Europe in order to isolate Russia and to create a staging ground for future US aggression. Reports of heavy equipment and weapons deployment appear in the media on nearly a daily basis although the news is typically omitted in the US press. <sup>61</sup>

When it comes to explaining all these drastic deteriorations in US-Russian relations even the right wing in the US is candid in its admitting that this represents the grand strategy for the US in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The war in Ukraine is the typical historical stumbling block needed to trap Russia there so that its trade route plans are frustrated.

#### **Conclusion**

Analysts of both the left and right agree that Ukraine has no link with democracy, sovereignty or even aggression of Russia; it is simply an issue of geopolitics. In this vicious game of geopolitics the US will do everything in its power to demonize Putin, to turn Brussels against Kremlin, and to sabotage the Russian economy. <sup>62</sup> It is reverting to the centuries old game of Divide and Conquer. Keep your potential adversaries at each other's throats all the time: European vs. Russians, Shia vs. Sunni or one ethnic Ukrainian vs. other; <sup>63</sup> that is how empires were built.

The reason for the *Coloured Revolutions*, the war over the Ukraine and even the war over Yugoslavia all now make sense! Since US power elites believed that economic downturn of the US can be blocked only by initiating a conflict in the Central Asian region, distracting the plans for EU-Asia (which are economically-integrated) and by dismembering Russia. In order to assert its hegemonic designs over the two continents and to uphold its superpower image in the world Washington seems to be determined to play crucial role in the conflict. <sup>64</sup> Thus, anything less than this will be considered as a foreign policy defeat by power elites of the US. This indicates that Russia needs to formulate itself for chaotic, fratricidal wars on its borders and coloured regime change turmoil in its capital; it should resist reprisals from its trading partners, conspiracies to devalue its resource based revenues and attacks on its currency. <sup>65</sup>

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