

Sanctions, smoke and mirrors from a kindergarten on LSD



HELP ENLIGHTEN YOUR FELLOWS. BE SURE TO PASS THIS ON. SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON IT.

By The Saker ([Vineyard of the Saker](#), a fraternal site)

[su_panel background="#f1f1f1" border="2px groove #5a5c61" shadow="9px 3px 5px #eeeeee" radius="3"] The latest US sanctions and the Russian retaliatory response have resulted in a torrent of speculations in the official media and the blogosphere – everybody is trying to make sense of a situation which appears to make no sense at all. Why in the world would the US Senate adopt new sanctions against Russia when Russia has done absolutely nothing to provoke such a vote? Except for Rand Paul and Bernie Sanders, ⁽¹⁾ every single US Senator voted in favor of these sanctions. Why?! [/su_panel]

TRUMP BRINGS KREMLIN APOLOGIST TO INTEL BRIEFING!



The absurd and ludicrous Russiagate scandal, fabricated out of sheer cloth, continues to poison relations between the world's two biggest nuclear powers. The media, under CIA control, has eagerly drummed up hostility to Moscow with the practice of people who have been doing this for over a century.

This is even more baffling when you consider that the single biggest effect of these sanctions will be to trigger a rift, and [possibly even counter-sanctions](#), between the US and the EU. What is absolutely clear is that these sanctions will have exactly zero effect on Russia and I don't think anybody is seriously expecting the Russians to change anything at all in their policies. And yet, every Senator except Paul and Sanders voted for this. Does that make any sense to you?

Let's try to figure out what is going on here.

First, a simple reminder: like all US politicians, from the county level to the US Congress, Senators have only one consideration when they vote – “what's in it for me?”. The very last thing which any US Senator really cares about are the real life consequences of his/her vote. This means that to achieve the kind of quasi unanimity (98%) for a totally

stupid vote there was some kind of very influential lobby using some very forceful “arguments” to achieve such a vote. Keep in mind that the Republicans in the Senate knew that they were voting against the wishes of their President. And yet every single one except for Rand Paul voted for these sanctions, that should tell you something about the power of the lobby which pushed for them. So who would have such power?

The website “[Business Pundit: Expert Driven](#)” has helpfully posted an article which lists the [10 top most powerful lobbies in Washington, DC](#). They are (in the same order as in the original article)

- Tech Lobby
- Mining Industry
- Defense Industry
- Agribusiness Industry
- Big Oil
- Financial Lobby
- Big Pharma
- AARP
- Pro-Israel Lobby
- NRA

Okay, why not? We could probably rearrange them, give them different labels, add a couple (like the “Prison Industrial Complex” or the “Intelligence Community”) but all in all this is an okay list. Any name on it jump at you yet?

One could make the case that most of these lobbies need an enemy to prosper, this is certainly true of the Military-Industrial Complex and the associated high tech industry, and one could also reasonably claim that Big Oil, Mining and Agribusiness see Russia as a potential competitor. But a closer look at the interests these lobbies represent will tell you that they are mostly involved in domestic politics and that faraway Russia, with her relatively small economy, is

just not that important to them. This is also clearly true for Big Pharma, the AARP and the NRA. Which leaves the Israel Lobby as the only potential candidate.

“Israel Lobby” is, of course, a misnomer. The Israel Lobby has very little interest in Israel as a country or, for that matter, for the Israeli people. If anything, the Israel Lobby ought to be called the “Neocon Lobby”. Furthermore, we also have to keep in mind that the Neocon Lobby is unlike any other lobby in the list above. For one thing, it does not represent US interests. Neither does it represent the interests of Israel. Rather, it represents the interests of a specific subset of the US ruling elites, in reality much smaller than 1% of the population, which all share in the one common ideology of worldwide domination typical of the Neocons.

These are the folks who in spite of their 100% ironclad control of the media and Congress lost the Presidential election to Donald Trump and who are now dead set to impeach him. These are the folks who simply use “Russia” as a propagandistic fulcrum to peddle the notion that Trump and his entourage are basically Russian agents and Trump himself is a kind of “Presidential Manchurian Candidate”.

Trump’s behavior towards Europe and the anti-Trump propaganda inside Europe has now put the EU and the US on a collision course. This is absolutely amazing: for the Russians the current tensions between the EU and the USA are a dream come true and yet they had absolutely nothing to do with it – it was all done by the self-defeating stupidity of the Americans who created this situation completely ex nihilo!

Keep in mind that the historical record shows that while the Neocons are fantastically driven, they are not particularly smart. Yes, they do have the kind of rabid ideological determination which allows them to achieve a totally disproportionate influence over US policies, but when you actually read what they write and listen to what they say you immediately realize that these are rather mediocre individuals

with a rather parochial mindset which makes them both very predictable and very irritating to the people around them. They always overplay their hand and then end up stunned and horrified when all their conspiracies and plans come tumbling down on them.

I submit that this is exactly what is happening right now.

[dropcap]F[/dropcap]irst, the Neocons lost the elections. For them, it was a shock and a nightmare. The “deplorables” voted against the unambiguously clear “propaganda instructions” given to them by the media. Next, the Neocons turned their rabid hatred against Trump and they succeeded at basically neutering him, but only at the cost of terribly weakening the USA themselves! Think of it: 6 months plus into the Trump administration the USA has already managed to directly threaten Iran, Syria, the DPRK and in all cases with exactly zero results. Worse, Trump’s behavior towards Europe **and the anti-Trump propaganda inside Europe has now put the EU and the US on a collision course.** This is absolutely amazing: for the Russians the current tensions between the EU and the USA are a dream come true and yet they had absolutely nothing to do with it – it was all done by the self-defeating stupidity of the Americans who created this situation completely *ex nihilo!*

So while Kim Jong-un fires missiles on the 4th of July, the Syrian Army is closing in on Deir ez-Zor, the Ukraine is turning into Somalia, the Russian economy is back to growth and Putin’s popularity is as high as ever, the Neocons are totally freaking out and, as is typical of a person losing control, they don’t do things which would make sense but do what they are used to doing: slapping sanctions (even if they are totally ineffective) and sending messages (even if they are totally ignored). In other words, the Neocons are now engaging in magical thinking, they deliberately chose to delude themselves about their power and influence and they are coping with their full-spectrum failure at everything by pretending that their votes in Congress matter. The truth is – they

don't.



Here is where we need to turn to the other misconception in this matter, that the Russian reaction to these latest sanctions is really about these sanctions. It is not.

First, let's tackle the myth that these sanctions are hurting Russia. They really don't. Even the 100% russophobic Bloomberg is beginning to realize that, if anything, all [these sanctions have made both Putin and Russia stronger](#). Second, there is the issue of timing: instead of slapping on some counter-sanctions the Russians suddenly decided to dramatically reduce the US diplomatic personnel in Russia and confiscate two US diplomatic facilities in a clear retaliation for the expulsion of Russian diplomats and seizure of Russian diplomatic facilities by Obama last year. Why now?

Many observers say that the Russians are "naive" about the West and the USA, that Putin was "hoping" for better relations and that this hope was paralyzing him. Others say that Putin

is “weak” or even “in cahoots” with the West. This is all total nonsense.



People tend to forget that Putin was an officer in the foreign intelligence branch of the KGB, the so-called “First Main Directorate” (PGU). Furthermore, Putin has recently revealed that he worked in the highly secretive “Directorate S” of

the PGU and he was in charge of contacts with a network of illegal Soviet spies in East-Germany (where Putin was under the official cover of Director of the USSR-GDR Friendship House). If the PGU was the “elite of the elite” of the KGB, and its most secretive part, then the “Directorate S” was the “elite of the elite” of the PGU and its most secretive part. This is most definitely not a career for “naive” or “weak” people, to put it mildly! First and foremost, PGU officers were “specialists on the West” in general, and of the United States especially because the USA was always officially considered as the “main enemy” (even if most PGU officers personally considered the British as their most capable, dangerous and devious adversary). Considering the superb level of education and training given to these officers, I would argue that the PGU officers were amongst the best experts on the West anywhere in the world. Their survival and the survival of their colleagues depended on their correct understanding of the western world. As for Putin personally, he has always taken action in a very deliberate and measured way and there is no reason to assume that this time around the latest US sanctions have suddenly resulted in some kind of emotional outburst in the Kremlin. You can be darn sure that this latest Russian reaction is the result of very carefully arrived at conclusion and the formulation of a very precise and long-term objective.

I submit that the key to the correct understanding of the Russian response is in the fact that the latest US sanctions contain an absolutely unprecedented and, frankly, shocking feature: the new measures strip the President from the authority to revoke the sanctions. In practical terms, if Trump wanted to lift any of these sanctions, he would have to send an official letter to Congress which would then have 30 days to approve or reject the proposed action. In other words, the Congress has now hijacked the power of the Presidency to conduct foreign policy and taken upon itself to micromanage US foreign policy.

That, my friends, is clearly a *constitutional coup d'état* and a gross violation of the principles of separation of powers which is at the very core of the US political system.

It also is a telling testimony to the utter depravity of the US Congress which took no such measures when Presidents bypassed Congress and started wars without the needed congressional authority, but which is now overtly taking over the US foreign policy to prevent the risk of "peace breaking out" between Russia and the USA.

And Trump's reaction?

He declared that he would sign the bill.

Yes, the man is willing to put his signature on the text which represents an illegal coup d'état against his own authority and against the Constitution which he swore to uphold.

With this in mind, the Russian reaction is quite simple and understandable: they have given up on Trump.

Not that they ever had much hope in him, but they always strongly felt that the election of Trump might... maybe provide the world with a truly historical opportunity to change the disastrous dynamic initiated by the Neocons under Obama and maybe return international relations to a semblance

of sanity. Alas, this did not happen, Trump turned out to be an overcooked noodle whose only real achievement was to express his thoughts in 140 characters or less. But the one crucial, vital, thing which Trump absolutely needed to succeed in – mercilessly crushing the Neocons – he totally failed to achieve. Worse, his only reaction to their multi-dimensional attempts at overthrowing him were each time met with clumsy attempts at appeasing them.

For Russia is means that President Trump has now been replaced by “President Congress”.

Since it is absolutely impossible to get anything done with this Congress anyway, the Russians will now engage in unilaterally beneficial measures such as dramatically reducing the number of US diplomats in Russia. For the Kremlin, these sanctions are no so much an unacceptable provocation but an ideal pretext to move on a number of Russian internal policies. Getting rid of US employees in Russia is just a first step.

Next, Russia will use the frankly erratic behavior of the Americans to proclaim *urbi et orbi* that the Americans are irresponsible, incapable of adult decision-making and basically “gone fishing”. The Russians already did that much when they declared that the Obama-Kerry team was недоговороспособны (nedogovorosposobny: “non agreement capable”, more about this concept [here](#)). Now with Trump signing his own constitutional demise, Tillerson unable to get UN Nikki to shut the hell up and Mattis and McMaster fighting over delusional plans to stop “not winning” in Afghanistan, the Obama-Kerry teams starts to look almost adult.

Frankly, for the Russians now is the time to move on.

I predict that the Neocon-crazies will not stop until they impeach Trump. I furthermore predict that the USA will not launch any major military interventions (if only because the

USA has run out of countries it can safely and easily attack). Some “pretend interventions” (like the ill-fated missile strike on Syria) remain, of course, quite possible and even likely. This internal slow-mo coup against Trump will absorb the vast majority of the energy to get anything done, and leave foreign policy as simply another byproduct of internal US politics.

The East-Europeans are now totally stuck. They will continue to haplessly observe the unfolding Ukrainian disaster while playing at silly games pretending to be tough on Russia (the latest example of that kind of “barking from behind a fence” can be seen in the rather pathetic [closure of the Romanian air space](#) to a civilian aircraft with Russian Vice-Premier Dmitri Rogozin amongst the passengers). The real (West) Europeans will gradually come back to their senses and begin making deals with Russia. Even France’s Emmanuel Macron de Rothschild will probably prove a more adult partner than The Donald.

But the real action will be elsewhere – in the South, the East and the Far-East. The simple truth is that the world cannot simply wait for the Americans to come back to their senses. There are a lot of crucial issues which need to be urgently tackled, a lot of immense projects which need to be worked on, and a fundamentally new and profoundly different multi-polar world which needs to be strengthened. If the Americans want to basically recuse themselves from it all, if they want to bring down the constitutional order which their Founding Fathers created and if they want to solely operate in the delusional realm which has no bearing on reality – that is both their right and their problem.

Washington DC is starting to look like a kindergarten on LSD – something both funny and disgusting. Predictably, the kids don’t look too bright: a mix of bullies and spineless idiots. Some of them have their fingers on a nuclear button, and that is outright scary. What the adults need to do now is to

figure out a way of keeping the kids busy and distracted so they don't press the damn button by mistake. And wait. Wait for the inevitable reaction of a country which is so much more and better than its rulers and which now desperately needs a real patriot to stop [Witches' Sabbath](#) in Washington DC.

I will end this column on a personal note. I just crossed the USA, literally, from the Rogue River in Oregon to East Central Florida. During that long trip I did not only see breathtakingly beautiful sights, but also plenty of beautiful people who oppose the satanic ball in DC with every fiber of their being and who want their country to be free from the degenerate demonic powers which have taken over the federal government. I have now lived a total of 20 years in the USA and I have learned to love and deeply appreciate the many kind, decent, honorable and simply beautiful people who live here. Far from seeing the American people as enemies of Russia, I see them as natural allies, if only because we have the same enemy (the Neocons in DC) and absolutely no objective reasons for conflict, none whatsoever. Moreover, in many ways Americans and Russians are very much alike, sometimes in comical ways. Just as during the Cold War I never lost hope in the Russian people, I now refuse to lose hope in the American people. Yes, the US federal government is disgusting, evil, ugly, stupid, degenerate and outright satanic, but the people of the USA are not. Far from it. I don't know if this country can survive the current regime as one unitary USA or whether it will break up in several quite different entities (something I see as very possible), but I do believe that the people of the USA will survive and overcome just as the Russian people survived the horrors of the 1980s and 1990s.

[Sidebar: after being accused of being a "paid Putin agent" (Vladimir, please send me money!!), a "Jew-lover" or even a "crypto-Jew" myself, a Nazi and Anti-Semite (which decent and good person has not been called an Anti-Semite" at least once in his/her life), a Communist and a Muslim (or, at least, a

“Muslim propagandist”), I will now be called an “USA lover”. Fine. Guilty as charged! I do love this country very much, as I do love its people. In fact, my heart often breaks for them and for the immense sufferings the Anglo-Zionist Empire also inflicts upon them. In the fight between the people of the USA and the Empire I unapologetically side with the people whom I see as friends, allies and even brothers.]

Right now the USA appears to be plunging into a precipice very similar to the one the Ukraine has plunged into (which is unsurprising, really, the same people inflicting the same disasters on whatever country they infect with their presence). The big difference is the immense and untapped potential of the USA to bounce back. There might not even be a Ukraine in 10 years, but there will most definitely be a USA, albeit maybe a very different one or even maybe several successor states.

But for the time being, I can only repeat what Floridians say when a hurricane comes barreling down on them: “hunker down” and brace for some very difficult and dangerous times to come.

–The Saker

EDITOR'S NOTE

⁽¹⁾ Sanders' vote against the sanctions is one of those instances of having to be grateful for very small favors, but the explanation of his vote shows the man, once again, as the repulsive toady he has been all along. Who needs enemies with friends like these? For one thing it confirms Sanders ignorant and broken moral compass when it comes to US foreign policy and the crimes of imperialism. The man cannot be trusted, and

were he in the White House we can see where his administration would soon tilt. Adding a layer of rancid idiocy to Sanders' abominable vote justification, our Internaut scouts bumped into a Kossack (a Daily Kos Democratic party supporter, the Daily Kos being a proud appendage to the Dems, and a *cloaca maxima* for mediocre intellects) who obviously bought the ludicrous and still very much evidence-less Russia-hacked-our-election-and-kept-Hillary-from-winning line. Below you can see him (or is it her?) whining about Sanders' inexplicable volte face. This idiot obviously wanted a *unanimous* vote for worsening relations with Russia and still more US adventurism at the cost of non-American lives...By the way, the Daily Kos is a rallying ground for Dems and liberals happy to attack Trump from the right. It's a grand mutually masturbatory society. Well, didn't Caitlin just say that these people are not only repugnant but hopeless?

Someone, namely one of his ardent supporters, please explain why!

I'm starting to feel a certain way about this man and what his true intentions may be (needlessly dividing a party he won't even join, etc). so before I get on some conspiracy theory train ala Stein and her connections to Putin, please set me straight.

Then I'll just go back to strongly disagreeing with his 'style', but think he's still on 'our' side.

[Thursday, Jun 15, 2017 · 6:54:06 PM EDT · DR11](#)

so here is Sanders' explanation (provided by some of his most ardent supporters):

"I am strongly supportive of the sanctions on Russia included in this bill. It is unacceptable for Russia to interfere in our elections here in the United States, or anywhere around the world. There must be consequences for

such actions. I also have deep concerns about the policies and activities of the Iranian government, especially their support for the brutal Assad regime in Syria. I have voted for sanctions on Iran in the past, and I believe sanctions were an important tool for bringing Iran to the negotiating table. But I believe that these new sanctions could endanger the very important nuclear agreement that was signed between the United States, its partners and Iran in 2015. That is not a risk worth taking, particularly at a time of heightened tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia and its allies. I think the United States must play a more even-handed role in the Middle East, and find ways to address not only Iran's activities, but also Saudi Arabia's decades-long support for radical extremism."

a seemingly reasonable, if still insufficient in my mind, explanation for being only one of two Senators to vote no. Sen Sanders needs to realize that consensus requires compromise, not purity of position at all costs.

(Source: <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2017/6/15/1672214/-Why-did-Sanders-vote-against-Russian-sanctions>)

About the Author

The Saker is the nom de guerre of a former military and geopolitical analyst of Russian descent currently living in Florida. He is the author of the leading blog covering the Ukraine crisis, [The Vineyard of the Saker](#), which gets an astounding 50,000 page views per day. (August - September 2014). His articles are some of the most popular on **Russia Insider**. Of the many blogs covering the subject, his has shot far ahead of the others, due to his sharp analysis and insight. Readers thought it so important that volunteers have begun putting out French, German, Serbian, and Russian

language versions. There is even a New Zealand edition. These editions add another 20,000 views per day to his global reach.

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