

Putin Judoes The War Script

by Jonathan Tennenbaum and Rachel Douglas

An address by the President of Russia, speaking in German to the German Parliament, the Bundestag, convened in reunified Berlin, would have been an historical milestone at whatever moment it occurred. The speech Vladimir Putin gave there on Sept. 25 became something even more—the offer of a precious opportunity, perhaps the last, to avert the worst catastrophe of modern times. Two weeks to the day after violent attacks on New York and Washington brought the world into a new, acute phase of crisis, Putin’s extraordinary intervention changed the axioms of policy, and challenged other world leaders to do likewise.

What he said in Berlin, the Russian President has also bolstered by intense personal diplomacy with other heads of state, by telephone and in person, and by a Sept. 24 formal statement, addressed both to the Russian people and to the United States (see p. 33).

In a situation where precipitous military actions, billed as reprisals for Sept. 11, threaten to ignite the infamous “clash of civilizations” from the Middle East and Central Asia, throughout Eurasia, and beyond, a calm but passionate Russian President stepped up before an astonished audience of government officials and parliamentarians in Berlin, and said, in effect: “Dear friends, this is not going to work. Russia will not play this game. The world has changed.” At the same time, Putin extended an unmistakable offer to the United States, to drop the rotten geopolitical axioms that locked the world into two world wars and a Cold War in the 20th Century, and to institute a new quality of cooperation among nations, typified by the collaboration of Russia, China and other Asian nations, around the Eurasian Land-Bridge.

The quality of shift proposed by Putin, matches that of U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s offer to the Soviet leadership on March 23, 1983, when he announced the Strategic Defense Initiative to replace the dominant, ever more perilous military

doctrine of the superpowers, Mutual Assured Destruction. Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov’s “No” to that offer signed the death warrant for the Soviet empire, and blocked the shift to stable security and healthy economic relations among nations, which could have been made.

In 1983, it was Lyndon LaRouche’s conception of war-avoidance, that Reagan put forward and Andropov rejected. Today, Putin offers a war-avoidance approach that the United States and other nations—all those who are under the Anglo-American financial system that’s now as shaky as the Soviet economy was in 1983—would reject at their own great peril. It is spelled out in his speech at the Bundestag, the full text of which accompanies this article, and should be read and reread by any person concerned with the survival of humanity at this juncture. The content of Putin’s policy coincides, lawfully enough, in three major areas with the strategic perspectives promoted by LaRouche today.

First, Putin explicitly rejects the “clash of civilizations,” asserting that there is nothing inevitable about a spread of religious and ethnic warfare in Eurasia, and that among the means to prevent that, “a whole complex of political, educational, and economic measures” should be developed by the world community. Second, Putin is committed to cooperation among Eurasian nations in all areas—economic development, political, and cultural. While the Russian President spoke in Berlin, a Russian deputy minister of railways was in Vienna to present Russia’s vision of Eurasian Transport Corridor development, to an international conference of railway officials. Third, Putin expressed with emotion his personal knowledge of the power of German Classical culture, as typifying the best of “extended European civilization”—as the Russian President has put it several times recently. Talking about “Greater Europe,” of which Russia is a part, Putin is simultaneously engaged with Russia’s



Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives in Germany on Sept. 25. His intervention in Germany has overturned the axioms of those who seek to continue the Cold War, and those who are promoting a “clash of civilizations.”

great neighbors to the east and south—China, India, and Iran—and thus brings to life Russia’s unique identity as a Eurasian nation.

The Context Of Deliberation

Putin did not spell out everything, that one might wish to have been said on the occasion of his speech in the Bundestag. In particular, he did not explicitly address the world financial crisis, which is central. Nor did he explicitly address the gross manipulation of world opinion by the mass media, which reduce all irregular warfare to “terrorism run by Osama bin Laden.” But, the nature and the implications of the cooperation Putin has offered come into focus, when we examine those crucial areas which he did not elaborate, but which are raised forcefully by the context in which his speech occurred. That context has been shaped, to a large extent, by the personal role of Lyndon LaRouche, and particularly his dialogue with Russian institutions over the recent period.

Since late 2000 at the latest, a number of leading circles in Russia have come into essential agreement with LaRouche’s standpoint on three decisive points:

1. That the world, and most emphatically the United States itself, had already entered, *before* Sept. 11, the terminal phase of the worst financial, monetary, and economic crisis in modern times. No amount of manipulation, up to and including the launching of war, could possibly save the present financial system from disintegration. This is what LaRouche himself laid out, just two months ago, in an invited speech before

the Economic Policy Committee of the Russian State Duma (Parliament). Leading Russian institutions have demonstrated their seriousness on this matter, by initiating measures to “de-dollarize” the economy, to create the option of a new gold-based currency in Russia, and to begin to explore the possibilities of alternative currency systems with other countries.

2. That a global solution to this crisis can only be reached through a new quality of cooperation among sovereign nation-states, centered on the large-scale development policy that LaRouche has identified as the Eurasian Land-Bridge. This means cooperation to create a network of transcontinental infrastructure corridors, combining modern railroads and maglev lines, water and energy systems stretching from Europe across the vast hinterland of Central Asia and Siberia, to the great population centers of East and South Asia. This, too, was a central topic of LaRouche’s discussions with leading Russian institutions; and this has become, increasingly, a shared vision among the leaders of Russia, China, India, Malaysia, Iran, and other countries of Asia, which are seeking to join together and with Europe in this kind of development. It is also broadly agreed, that implementation of the Eurasian Land-Bridge policy is inseparable from the creation of new financial, monetary, and trade arrangements, opposed to “free trade,” and converging on the creation of a new world monetary system.

3. That a powerful faction of the Anglo-American oligarchy is conducting systematic and escalating warfare against

the Eurasian Land-Bridge policy, to the point of fomenting generalized religious and ethnic warfare in Eurasia, in order to prevent the consolidation of an alternative to their present collapsing global system. The Russians have clearly identified this as “the Brzezinski strategy,” and Putin pointed to it directly, in his repeated condemnation of the “clash of civilizations.”

These points were understood and acknowledged in leading Russian circles prior to Sept. 11. Since then, another dimension of clarity was added: a general consensus, among intelligence professionals in Russia, that the events of Sept. 11 could not have occurred without an active and deliberate role of powerful elements within U.S. institutions themselves; and that LaRouche’s characterization of the initiation of a de facto coup process in the United States, is most likely accurate.

Russia’s Own Policy

It is no wonder that the Anglo-American press, which triumphantly welcomed Putin’s supposed endorsement of the anti-terrorism “crusade” announced by President Bush, has scarcely reported on his Bundestag speech. No doubt, they suspect—and not without reason—that the Russian President, an expert in Japanese martial arts, is in the process of “judoing” the whole operation. The sudden reversal, just 24 hours after Putin’s speech, of an expected decision to activate the “common defense” clause of NATO in preparation for a massive military operation against Afghanistan, most likely has to do with Russia’s intervention, which had already taken shape before Putin took the podium in Berlin.

After a state visit to Armenia on Sept. 14-15, Putin operated for a week from his working vacation headquarters, at Sochi on the Black Sea. He conducted phone calls with European, Asian, and Central Asian leaders. By no later than Sept. 22, when Putin met for six hours (interrupted only by an hour-long conversation with Bush) with his “force” ministers, the heads of the Defense Ministry and security agencies, he had made a decision. It was evidently determined that Russia did not have the power to prevent U.S. military action in Afghanistan—even though it threatens disastrous consequences for the entire region. Yet, Russia could not ignore or simply acquiesce to U.S. military operations in Central Asia. After all, this is the region of the “Great Game” since the 19th Century, the cockpit for geopolitical designs in which Russia was cast as antagonist.

With the five-point policy announced by Putin on Sept. 24, the Russian leadership walks a fine line with respect to any prospective military operations. Russia joins the new anti-terror front, but on her own terms, and for a price.

In interviews given before his visit to Germany, and in the Sept. 24 national address, Putin offered sympathetic support to the United States in the “battle against evil,” while at the same time drawing clear and principled limits. He stated that reason and the principles of international and national

law must be upheld; in particular, Russian law forbids the deployment of her military abroad, except under the auspices of the United Nations. Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, as well as Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff Gen. Anatoli Kvashnin during his tour of Central Asia in mid-September, “categorically” ruled out the involvement of Russian troops there. The institutional role of the UN must be upheld, said Putin, especially the UN Security Council. Its permanent members, including Russia and China, must be consulted on any actions.

And, the whole concept of the “clash of civilizations” must be rejected as “wrong and destructive.” Putin demanded that the same standard be applied to the years-long insurgency in Chechnya, and for good measure pointed to *London* as a center of recruitment to the ranks of guerrilla forces and terrorists, demanding that Western governments put a stop to such activities.

Putin and his team thereby aim to contain the worst consequences of the prospective military actions, while at the same time increasing maneuvering room for the grave military-financial-political crisis which is certain to ensue. Without putting the decisive issue of the financial collapse explicitly on the table, Putin has positioned himself in such a way, that as the crash accelerates and efforts to reverse it fail, the weakness of the United States under current policy will be all the more manifest, and the possibilities of organizing an alternative all the greater. It is thus an open-ended flanking maneuver.

Thanks to Putin’s intervention, an alternative pathway for policymaking has been opened up, for leading the world away from the precipice, and toward a very different and much brighter future. Whether or not that opportunity will be realized, will depend on the extent to which, very quickly, key individuals and institutions in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere act with the quality of courage and strategic understanding of the world, which until now has been manifested only by Lyndon LaRouche.

In the meantime, one thing is clear. When Putin passionately declared, at a high point of his speech in Berlin, “the Cold War is over!,” he spoke not with the intonation of a defeated power, but with the confidence of a great nation. Russia lives, and Putin was demanding an end to the evil British geopolitical doctrine, which gave rise to the Cold War in the first place.

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