

NATO, Merkel Are Playing With a Cuban Missile Crisis

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Nov. 29—The current policy of President Obama, Prime Minister Cameron, NATO, the EU, and Chancellor Merkel is concentrated on a single goal: driving President Putin out of office by a policy of regime change. All the stops have been pulled out for a foreign-steered color revolution, not only in Ukraine, but also in Russia: escalation of sanctions and economic war to ruin the Russian economy with the aim of overthrowing Putin; escalating military expansion; and a NATO arms buildup. These measures are a “chicken game,” but a game with thermonuclear fire, at the end of which we may all be obliterated.

Have We Learned Nothing from History?

Alastair Crook, a former officer of Britain’s MI6 secret service, writing on his website ConflictsForum.org on Nov. 14, quoted William Polk, one of the three members of President John F. Kennedy’s crisis management team during the Cuban missile crisis, who recently [warned](#) that we are today in exactly the same escalating spiral of confrontation as occurred then, one that could lead to a real war. Now as then, writes Polk, there is an inability to grasp how the “other” perceives us, a refusal to accept the other’s “truth” and subjective experience of history, or even to acknowledge that there might be another “truth” out there, other than our own.

Polk recalls that it was the stationing of combat-

ready, nuclear-tipped American Jupiter missiles in Turkey, aimed against the Soviet Union around the clock, that prompted the Soviets to station nuclear missiles in Cuba. And that contrary to the usual representation, the United States by no means forced Khrushchov to back down, but rather, both sides quietly pulled back their missiles. Indeed, the Americans realized that a further escalation would have led to a nuclear war. Polk warned urgently that today exactly the same pattern of confrontation is playing, out and those responsible have obviously learned absolutely nothing from history.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov criticized exactly this “strategy” on Nov. 22 at a meeting of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy in Moscow. The West, he said, “went all out in Ukraine and supported extremists, thereby giving up their own principles of democratic regime change. What came out of it was an attempt to play chicken with Russia, to see who blinks first. As bullies say, they wanted to Russia to ‘chicken out’ (I can’t find a better word for it), to force us to swallow the humiliation of Russians and native speakers of Russian in Ukraine.”

The question is how long Putin and the Russian government will keep their cool. First, all promises not to extend NATO to the borders of Russia were broken. Two-digit billions were spent for “color revolutions” to topple Russia-friendly or neutral governments in East-

ern Europe, with the help of paid activists—a strategy that now the Russian and also Chinese military characterize as a method of irregular warfare.

President Vladimir Putin, in an interview with Germany's ARD-TV on Nov. 17, pointed out that the true intention of the EU Association Agreement for Ukraine was to weaken the Russian economy, through duty-free import of EU products to Ukraine (and thus to a country within the customs regime of the Commonwealth of Independent States): "This means that all European goods would simply enter the customs area of the Russian Federation via Ukraine"—a measure of economic warfare that was intended as such at the time.

Then the West scandalously backed a Nazi coup on Feb. 21 in Kiev, whereby State Department official Victoria Nuland's favorite, "Yats" (Arseniy Yatsenyuk) became prime minister. The Nazis' atrocities against the Ukrainian population were ignored, and when the population of Crimea responded to these developments in a referendum by choosing to become part of Russia, a deafening chorus of Pharisees began singing that this referendum destroyed the legal order in Europe. Since her speech in Sydney, Australia, on Nov. 17, Chancellor Merkel has herself been giving a solo performance in this spectacle.

When the Russian government recently introduced a resolution in the UN General Assembly, calling on governments to denounce the glorification of Nazi ideology and the denial of Nazi crimes, only three States voted against it—the United States, Canada, and Ukraine—while the EU countries all abstained! It is telling that the other EU countries are taking this attitude, but for the German government to do so, is inexcusable and abominable.

Shifts in Germany

While a not insignificant part of the German population is unwilling to undertake the mental effort to understand how the Ukraine crisis unfolded, and therefore is taken in by the anti-Putin propaganda of the lock-step media, others are of the opinion that Merkel, at the very least, should maintain dialogue with Putin. But what sort of dialogue?

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* reported on a policy paper from the Chancellor's Office, according to which the Petersburg Dialogue—a bilateral German-Russian discussion forum founded in 2001—should be "reformed" and get a new leadership.

Both the chairman of the German-Russian Forum, Mathias Platzeck, and the chairman of the Petersburg Dialogue, Lothar de Maizière, are evidently considered too uncritical of Russia. Merkel has thus adopted the positions of critics such as the deputy chief of the Union parties caucus in the Bundestag (parliament), Andreas Schockenhoff; Green party Bundestag member Marie-Luise Beck; as well as representatives of several non-governmental organizations. The Dialogue is also therefore supposed to become a forum for critical engagement with Russian policy. Schockenhoff has already been mentioned as a possible successor to de Maizière.

Thus the fox is to be placed in charge of guarding the chicken coop. Schockenhoff, after all, at a recent event replied contemptuously to a question from the audience concerning the policies of the BRICS countries, saying that the Russian economy is facing collapse anyway, and Putin will soon be gone. If this cold warrior should actually be named for this post, it would be tantamount to a declaration of war against Russia, and the Petersburg Dialogue would be better off simply closing down.

Rather belatedly, various trade associations, such as the 1828 Saxony Industry Association are now finally criticizing the sanctions against Russia as a threat to a relationship of trust that took 25 years to build up. As correct and important as these statements are, they fall short. Thanks to Chancellor Merkel's contentious policies, Germany is participating in the thermonuclear chicken game against Russia, and the time is now just a few minutes before midnight.

The obvious additional problem is that this time, there is no Kennedy in the White House, whereas Obama has removed Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel from office, because Hagel was acting more in accord with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are oriented toward war prevention, than to the White House.

What Germany now urgently needs is an open and honest debate about the strategic situation and what our real interests are. Chinese President Xi Jinping's offer to Obama is still on the table, that the United States and other major countries should work together with China and the BRICS countries in building a new economic order and the New Silk Road. Chancellor Merkel should either respond positively to this offer and immediately lift the sanctions against Russia—or she should retire.

Translated from German by Susan Welsh