

## PUTIN GIVES A LESSON IN STATECRAFT

# Replace Murderous Sanctions with Economic Reconstruction

by Harley Schlanger

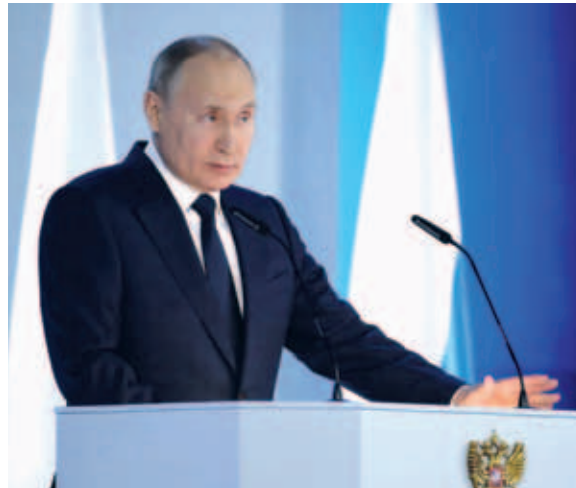
April 23—As tensions increase dramatically due to the targeting of Russia, China and other nations that refuse to submit to the unipolar, “rules-based order” enforced by the U.S., UK and NATO, President Putin delivered a stern warning in his 17th annual State of the Nation Address on April 21. While addressing Russian concerns over the state of the economy, his remarks were pointed regarding the strategic crisis stemming from ongoing geopolitical provocations in Ukraine, against Belarus and elsewhere,

even as he reiterated his desire for more cooperation, renewing his call for a summit of the Permanent Five (P5) members of the United Nations Security Council.

The crux of his message to those pursuing a unipolar world order is that they should be aware that Russia will not tolerate actions which threaten the nation’s sovereign interests. The clear language he employed ought to be studied by those trans-Atlantic officials who operate under the delusion that western military and economic power is sufficient to impose a world order based on the classic geopolitical division between the looters and those to be looted, through consolidation of a global central banker’s dictatorship known as the “Great Reset.” He was speaking as NATO is conducting Defender-Europe 21 exercises and considering bringing Ukraine in as a NATO member, which would place NATO troops and weapons systems on Russia’s western border.

Putin stated:

The meaning and purpose of Russia’s policy in the international arena ... is to ensure peace and



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*President Vladimir Putin of Russia, in his annual State of the Nation address on April 21, warned that Russia will not tolerate actions that threaten its sovereign interests.*

security for the well-being of our citizens, for the stable development of our country. Russia certainly has its own interests we defend and will continue to defend within the framework of international law, as all other states do. And if someone refuses to understand this obvious thing or does not want to conduct a dialogue and chooses a selfish and arrogant tone with us, Russia will always find a way to defend its stance.

He continued, polemically criticizing the use of sanctions and the launching of regime-change coups as instruments of foreign policy:

At the same time, unfortunately, everyone in the world seems to be used to the practice of politically motivated, illegal economic sanctions and to certain actors’ brutal attempts to impose their will on others by force. But today, this practice is degenerating into something even more dangerous—I am referring to the recently exposed direct interference in Belarus in an attempt to orchestrate a *coup d’état* and assassinate the President of that country. At the same time, it is typical that even such flagrant actions have not been condemned by the so-called collective West. Nobody seemed to notice. Everyone pretends nothing is happening.

But listen, you can think whatever you like of, say, Ukrainian President Yanukovich or Maduro in Venezuela.... You can like or dislike

them, including Yanukovych who almost got killed, too, and [was] removed from power via an armed coup. You can have your own opinion of President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko's policy. But the practice of staging *coups d'état* and planning political assassinations, including those of high-ranking officials—well, this goes too far. This is beyond any limits.

In this regard, we behave in an extremely restrained manner, I would even say, modestly, and I am saying this without irony. Often, we prefer not to respond at all, not just to unfriendly moves, but even to outright rudeness.... We want to maintain good relations with everyone who participates in the international dialogue. But we see what is happening in real life....

We really want to maintain good relations with all those engaged in international communication, including, by the way, those with whom we have not been getting along lately.... We really do not want to burn bridges. But if someone mistakes our good intentions for indifference or weakness and intends to burn or even blow up these bridges, they must know that Russia's response will be asymmetrical, swift and tough.

Those behind provocations that threaten the core interests of our security will regret what they have done in a way they have not regretted anything for a long time.

At the same time, I just have to make it clear, we have enough patience, responsibility, professionalism, self-confidence and certainty in our cause, as well as common sense, when making a decision of any kind. But I hope that no one will think about crossing the "red line" with regard to Russia. We ourselves will determine in each specific case where it will be drawn.

## Sanctions Everywhere

As Putin emphasized in his speech, the use of sanctions as a means of conducting regime-change and imposing the "rules-based order" has become the *de jure* policy of the trans-Atlantic alliance. In the last years, the

U.S. has imposed sanctions against at least 39 nations, including Russia, China, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Venezuela, and North Korea. This is justified under the specious claim that this is a means of punishing authoritarian governments, a "humanitarian" intervention to protect the citizens who otherwise suffer under "anti-democratic" oppression imposed by "autocratic" regimes.

The handbook for this was Samantha Power's book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, in which she asserts that sanctions flow from the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect." What she never answers are who, or what interests, are being "protected" by sanctions, which deny access to credit, food, medicine, parts and equipment, and other neces-



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*Two targets of regime change: Viktor Yanukovych, former President of Ukraine (who was ousted in 2014), and Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus, whose planned assassination was foiled.*

sary goods to the people of targeted nations. Power served in key positions under President Obama, including as Ambassador to the UN, and has been appointed by President Biden as head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which determines which nations will receive aid from the United States. Biden also placed her on the U.S. National Security Council, praising her as "a world-renowned voice of conscience and moral clarity." He said that as administrator of USAID, she "will be a powerful force for the vulnerable ... while promoting American interests."

Power identifies former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as her "personal mentor." Albright, who introduced the sanctions against Iraq imposed by the Clinton administration that resulted in the deaths of 500,000 children under the age of six, once was asked if this price was "worth it." She responded, "I think this

is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it.”

This tradition continues at the center of U.S. policy. On April 21, Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo bragged that he imposed 1,500 sanctions on Iran after the Trump administration withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). These sanctions, according to Pompeo, drew down Iran’s foreign exchange reserves by \$123 billion, leaving only \$4 billion. “We took away 95% of the Iranian exchange reserves,” he boasted, “in just two-and-a-half years.” The result is that, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, Iran has been unable to purchase medical equipment and food, while many children are starving and suffer from malnutrition.

Biden’s Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, confirmed the administration will not lift these sanctions on Iran, and has praised the sanctions against Syria—the so-called Caesar Sanctions—as a means to cause enough suffering as to further the goal of removing Syrian President Assad. Blinken, while serving as Deputy Secretary of State under Obama from 2015 until 2017, frequently expressed disagreement with the administration’s policy toward Syria, complaining that not enough was being done to overthrow Assad.

The Caesar Sanctions are based on a fraudulent report produced by Human Rights Watch, and were passed by the Congress in June 2020, influenced by vigorous lobbying for them by Pompeo.

### Reconstruction, Not Sanctions

The large-scale threat to human life in Syria resulting from these sanctions was challenged by the Apostolic Nuncio to Syria, Cardinal Mario Zenari, who reported that 90% of the population in Syria has been plunged into extreme poverty, and that humanitarian aid is urgently needed. But aid is not enough, he added,



UN/Manuel Elias

*Samantha Power, President Obama’s Ambassador to the UN, who promoted the British-inspired “Responsibility to Protect” policy on which today’s sanctions regime is based, abrogating national sovereignty.*

which kill children.

Col. Richard Black (ret.), formerly Chief of the Army Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon, made the same point, addressing a Schiller Institute conference on March 21. He debunked the idea that sanctions are useful in punishing “dictators” and “authoritarian” regimes:

Sanctions do nothing but attack the innocent, the poor, the helpless! They are the most cruel and barbaric type of warfare that we can wage.



DoS/Ron Przynsucha

*Antony J. Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State, has praised sanctions against Syria as a means to cause enough suffering so as to further the goal of removing President Assad.*

citing the *Populorum Progressio* encyclical of Pope Paul VI, in which he wrote, “Development is the new name for peace.” Cardinal Zenari stressed that in addition to lifting the deadly sanctions, economic reconstruction must take place.

This call was seconded by the Schiller Institute’s Helga Zepp LaRouche, who is mobilizing support for Zenari’s call. There is nothing “humanitarian,” she said, about sanctions

This statement is coherent with conclusions set forth in numerous international agreements, including the Geneva and Nuremberg Conventions, the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all of which prohibit the targeting of defenseless civilians as “a crime against humanity.”

Instead of murdering children, in Syria, Yemen, and throughout southwest Asia, the

Schiller Institute has called for extending China’s Belt-and-Road Initiative as the true road for peace. It is time to reconstruct the region, which has been devastated by illegal wars, orchestrated by the geopolitical doctrines of the British Empire, and conducted by the U.S. and its NATO allies. This will be a major topic at the Schiller’s Institute’s upcoming May 8 conference, “The Moral Collapse of the Trans-Atlantic World Cries Out for a New Paradigm.” More information on that conference is available [here](#).