

I. NATO in the Thucydides Trap?

Is Anyone Paying Attention to Putin's 'Stern Warning'?

by Harley Schlanger

April 30—In the days following Russian President Vladimir Putin's National Address on April 21, which he stated was meant to send a "stern warning" to those out to destabilize Russia, Schiller Institute Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche sounded an alarm. In describing the allegations from both Belarusian and Russian intelligence agencies of the direct involvement of long-time Biden crony Michael Carpenter in a coup plot against Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko—which included a plan to assassinate Lukashenko—she said:

I find this absolutely incredible, because if this turns out to be the case, we could be closer to World War III than anybody realizes: Because this is exactly the kind of stuff which happens in the forefront of world wars.

She identified Carpenter as a collaborator of Biden in organizing the Maidan coup in Ukraine in 2014, serving as Biden's National Security adviser on Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Carpenter has ties to the ultra-nationalist Nazi wing of those who ran the coup, through his collaboration with leading fascist Andriy Parubiy. Carpenter is presently the director of the Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement at the University of Pennsylvania.

In his address, Putin described western support for the flight-forward by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, and the plot for regime-change in Belarus, as moving toward crossing a "red line," which would provoke a Russian response, which he said would be "asymmetrical, swift, and tough." He added, "Unfortu-

nately, 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." The failure of western leaders to condemn such "flagrant" provocations demonstrates the danger of what Zepp-LaRouche has described as "sleepwalking into war," a reference to the delusions that preceded World War I.

Putin lamented,



Press Service of the President of the Russian Federation/Mikhail Klimentyev

Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko (left) on April 22, 2021, after the coup and assassination attempt against Lukashenko.

Nobody seemed to notice. Everyone pretends nothing is happening. But such actions will have consequences. 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.

His warning was reiterated in an interview given by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Dmitry Kiselev of the Russian news agency *Rossiya Segodnya* on April 28. Asked if the situation today is worse than that

between the two superpowers during the Cold War, Lavrov acknowledged that if provocations continue,

... we will be living in conditions of a Cold War, or even worse.... In my opinion, tension did run high during the Cold War and there were numerous high-risk conflict situations, but there was also mutual respect. I believe that this is lacking now.

The deterioration of relations, he added, began under Obama, continued under Trump, and now “we can see that the Biden Administration continues to go downhill.”

Some Voices of Sanity

There have been some notable exceptions to the overall silence from the West about the danger of war arising from western actions. Former Congresswoman and presidential candidate Tulsi Gabbard gave a graphic warning to a national television audience on the Tucker Carlson show on April 12:

[A war with Russia] would come at a cost beyond anything that we can really imagine. This war is not a game.... [It] could exact a cost on every one of us that would result in excruciating death and suffering beyond comprehension—hundreds of millions dying and suffering, seeing their flesh burned from their bones.... It’s a cost that we will all pay.

After Putin’s speech, Gabbard tweeted toward President Joe Biden:

Are we prepared to see our loved ones burn alive in a nuclear holocaust in a war with Russia over Ukraine? If not, cut out the macho saber rattling and de-escalate before it’s too late.

U.S. Naval War College analyst Lyle J. Goldstein also warned of the danger of crossing red lines:

Americans should ask the uncomfortable question: Why do the U.S. and its allies appear to be



Twitter Account for Tulsi Gabbard

Tulsi Gabbard has spoken out for de-escalating, before it’s too late, to stop a catastrophic new world war.

encroaching upon so many different Russian red lines in so many situations simultaneously? We should not be touching the red lines of the other major nuclear armed powers on a daily basis.... We must learn to live amicably with Russia or risk a continuing succession of showdowns on the pattern of the Cuban missile crisis.

Accelerating Anti-Russia Escalation

A new flank against Russia was opened with the allegation that Russian GRU (military intelligence) operatives were behind an explosion at an ammunition depot in Vrbotice in the Czech Republic, which explosion occurred in October 2014. The apparent source of the allegation is Bellingcat, a British foreign intelligence, MI6-sponsored “open-source, citizen journalist” website, which has published numerous unsubstantiated anti-Russian stories, including accusing Russia of overt military intervention in Ukraine, facilitating and then covering-up Syrian government use of chemical weapons, and deploying a chemical weapon



U.S. Navy/John F. Williams

U.S. Naval War College analyst Lyle J. Goldstein has warned of the danger of crossing red lines with Russia and China.

against London-backed Russian “dissident” Alexey Navalny. Incredibly, the story on the Czech arms depot claims that the explosives were placed by the same two individuals Bellingcat accuses of poisoning the Skripals in March 2018.

This story was immediately seized upon to spark new demands for sanctions against Russia. Tom Tu-

gendhat, the chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the British Parliament, called the explosion a “direct attack on a NATO country,” while British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said it exposes how far Russia’s intelligence services will go “to conduct dangerous and malign operations in Europe.” The fallout from these allegations has included the expulsion of Russian diplomats from Czechia, as well as from several eastern European NATO members.

Two British warships are scheduled to enter the Black Sea in the next few days. Ben Wallace, the UK Secretary of State for Defence, said this will demonstrate “unwavering support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity.” It follows a visit to Kiev by British General Sir Stuart Peach, the Chairman of NATO’s Military Committee, who promised British and NATO support to defend Ukraine from “Russian aggression.”

Adding his voice to the attack, MI6 Chief Richard Moore said in an interview with *Times Radio*—the first ever given by a sitting MI6 chief—that Russia would pay a “huge price” if it invaded Ukraine. “The Russians are in absolutely no doubt of where the UK stands on this issue,” adding that they are completely in line with the Biden administration. He described Russia as “a declining power economically and demographically.”

On the British role in the attacks on Russia, Lavrov said in an April 28 interview with *Sputnik*:

I still believe that the U.K. is playing an active and very serious subversive role.... They are trying to influence European Union member states’ approaches to Russia.



UK Ministry of Defence

As a war provocation, a British carrier strike group heads for “maneuvers” off China’s coast.



C-SPAN

Biden collaborator Michael Carpenter has been named as involved in both the coup in Ukraine in 2014, and the recent coup and assassination attempt in Belarus.

Think-Tanks Mobilize for War

One measure of how committed the global oligarchy is to carry out regime change against Russia, China and other sovereign nations, can be gleaned from a quick survey of articles published by, and public events organized by leading trans-Atlantic think-tanks, with programs designed to create an “enemy image” of those nations to justify provocations that could lead to war. These think-tanks, funded by corporations that are part of the broadly-defined Military Industrial Complex (MIC), and by trust funds of wealthy families, provide a home for former government officials, as well as a launching pad for opportunists auditioning to become a part of the shadow government.

In the next days, events are scheduled by the Atlantic Council, which includes Michael Carpenter on its board. These include “Putin’s Mediterranean Gambit”; “Putin’s Pressure Points—Navalny and Cyber Warfare”; and “The Impact of Sanctions on Russia.” Chatham House, home of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA, British intelligence), which published a paper on April 23, “Europe Must Admit Russia Is Waging War,” is sponsoring a roundtable on “World Order in the 21st Century,” featuring a study done by the Lloyd George Study Group on World Order, and comments by speakers from Georgetown University and the RIIA-sister organization, the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

Others involved in this escalation include the neocon Jamestown Foundation, which will sponsor a workshop and webinars on “The Growing Importance of Belarus on NATO’s Eastern Flank”; and the Center for a New American Strategy (CNAS), which posted a video, “NATO, China and Russia: A Balancing Act.” This features Ian Brzezinski, the son of Zbigniew Brzezinski, who promoted the British geopolitical design of the “Arc of Crisis” during the Carter administration, introducing U.S. involvement in the “forever wars” in South Asia as a strategy to break the southern republics away from the Soviet Union. CNAS’s past chairman was Victoria Nuland, who played a lead role, along with Joe Biden, in the February 2014 coup in Ukraine. Nuland was just confirmed to the number-three position in the Biden State Department.

An example of the role played in shaping policy by these think-tanks is an article in the May-June 2021 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the CFR. In “Russia’s Weak Strongman,” author Timothy Frye provides a blueprint for undermining the authority of Putin to fuel the prospects of a coup. In describing him as a “personalist autocrat,” Frye writes that Putin “faces the dual threats of a coup from elites around him and a popular revolt from below,” as in the western-sponsored regime change efforts currently centered on Navalny. Frye issues a veiled threat to Putin, that when such leaders lose power, they “have tended to end up in exile, in jail, or dead,” adding that “Putin is surely aware of this danger.” Frye’s article is coherent with the publication by the Atlantic Council in January of “The Longer Telegram,” which offers a purported profile of power struggles within the Chinese government. The anonymous author of that document suggested these “struggles” be exploited by western intelligence agencies to undermine President Xi Jinping, as part of a broader effort to contain the alleged aggression coming from his government.

The Case of Belarus

The attempted “color revolution” coup in Belarus, identified by Putin as one of Russia’s “red lines,” provides another example of how western intelligence agencies run regime-change coups. Western intelligence and political leaders claim that the election of August 9, 2020, won by Lukashenko, was riddled with fraud, and should be overturned. Demonstrations by “pro-democracy” groups led to clashes with security forces, with western governments decrying the violence used to put down the protests—an attempt to repeat the operation behind the Maidan coup in Ukraine.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas admitted providing millions of euros to support the protests.

The narrative of the heroism of the protestors, “spontaneously” arising to take on a Russian-backed authoritarian regime, was promoted nonstop, as sanctions were imposed on Belarus and threats made against Russia in case Putin intervened to aid Lukashenko.

Left out of this narrative is the pre-planning that went into the attempt to remove Lukashenko, and open the way for Belarus to be brought into NATO. Donald Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo played a role in this during 2019-20, when he intervened in a dispute between Russia and Belarus over oil deliveries. Pompeo said:

The United States wants to help Belarus build its own sovereign country, [and wishes to make sure that] they should not be forced to be dependent on any one partner.

Pompeo visited Belarus in February 2020, pushing this version of a beneficent U.S. commitment to aid the process of “democratic transformation.”

His intervention had been scripted in a 2019 report by the RAND Corporation, another long-time participant in the MIC. That report provided a strategy for the destabilization of Belarus, through an effort to woo it away from Russia with offers of western financial support and, if that failed, backing forces fighting for “democracy,” to unleash a color revolution. As the intensity of the protests by citizens of Belarus has dwindled, the passion for regime change from trans-Atlantic forces has not.

One final example of the insanity of western allegations against Russia is a bizarre story, covered in *Politico*, which claims that marines in Syria who became ill with “flu-like symptoms” may have been targeted by Russian “directed energy weapons,” according to sources in the Pentagon. *Politico* reported that Pentagon officials had done in-person briefings to Congress members on this charge, leading war-hawk Republican Senator Marco Rubio to assert that this is another example of “Russian aggression in the Middle East.” Unfortunately for the narrative-spinners of regime-change, further investigation showed the story was false. Investigators discovered that the sickness was the result of “bad food” served to the soldiers; they were experiencing food poisoning. Nevertheless, Biden’s Director of National Intelligence told a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that the intelligence community members “are focused on this issue.”