

## Let's Make a Deal

The scene of ineptness is poignant. President Obama wrings his hands and decries the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. Secretary of State, former Senator Kerry, waves from a U.S. military transport as though he were embarking on the campaign trail. Everyone knows that nothing will happen, and the Russians will have their way.

There was a time when the United States demanded the same hegemony in North and South America that the Russians desire within their geographic orbit. The Monroe Doctrine was President Monroe's statement that the United States would control its own hemisphere and the will of local nationalities be damned. This has been longstanding U.S. policy, as we saw with the abortive Cuban invasion in the Bay of Pigs and the successful United States invasion of Grenada. The United States was not about to relinquish its control over a nearby territory.

The Russians have a checkered history in defending their own homeland. The Mongolians invaded Russia and made the ruling elite look like a bunch of impotent armored knights. In the Russian-Japanese war, it took President Teddy Roosevelt to bail out the combatants and win the Nobel Peace Prize as a result of his efforts.

In World War I, the Russians cut and ran, unable to play on the stage of world politics because of their own revolution. In World War II, the Russians were completely unprepared for the German double-cross and lost tens of millions of people defending their own homeland. From the time of the establishment of the Soviet Union until its fall, the Russian state was determined not to make the same mistakes it had made in the past.

When Putin rose to power, as the new Stalin, it was clear to anyone with the slightest interest in world events that the Soviet Union was on its way to being resurrected. What is happening in the Crimean region of the Ukraine is not the beginning. Russia has, over the last ten years re-established its powerbase in many of the old Soviet states and will continue so to do. The more important question is, what should the policy of the West be?

President Obama and other Western leaders have failed to grasp the global significance of the new Russia or the widening influence of the Chinese. Our financial indebtedness to the Asian world and our military

weakness in the face of a Russian resurgence is neither good for us nor for any other Western democracy.

Is war the answer? Almost certainly not, although U.S. military power will be part of the equation necessary to save the West from its own indolence.

The threat is not from Russia asserting authority within its own geographic hemisphere. Western concern should be what happens when the new Russia pushes beyond its borders. Iran, through Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, controls Syria and Lebanon. That control will only grow with the help of the Russians. The reason Russians want power in the Middle East is because they are close to Turkey and Russia's own former Soviet satellites. The Russians know that an out-of-control Iran threatens Russia's southern Muslim flank. Russia's answer to Iran has been not to threaten that far southern neighbor, but rather to own it.

What the United States and the West needs to do is to cut a deal with Russia. Just as many Republican and Democratic administrations have done in the past, we need to cede control to Russia of its former satellites while establishing a real line in the sand beyond those former Soviet nations. Putin understands power and resolve.

"Russia, you can and will control the Ukraine, and your other former satellites, and we will remain in control of the northern and southern hemisphere of our part of the world. The rest of the planet is up for grabs, and if you stay out of the Middle East, we will play nice in the Far East." Sound a bit Machiavellian? Of course it is. Machiavelli was giving advice to the ruling prince of an Italian nation-state. To paraphrase John Stuart Mill; forbear to do what is impossible and assert yourself where you must.

Part of the plan has to be for the United States to be less dependent on other nations. The United States' national deficit is an international problem for this country. Energy independence is a national security priority. Reducing the deficit, rebuilding the United States' infrastructure and growing the economy will represent the underpinnings of a resurgent America on the world stage.

Our international policy must be a two-pronged attack. First, permit the Russians and the Chinese what is theirs, and protect what is ours. Assert ourselves in the remainder of the world in a way which is credible, real, and at times, military. During the Cold War the policy was called

containment. George Kennan's philosophy is not yet dead, and neither is that of pro-growth Keynesians.

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