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Neocons Scheme for More 'Regime Change'

By James W Carden

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Exclusive: The neocons are back on the warpath, seeking to bomb the Syrian government and scheming to destabilize nuclear-armed Russia en route to another “regime change” – while ignoring the grave dangers, says James W Carden.

In 1985, the diplomat and historian George F. Kennan published a seminal essay in *Foreign Affairs* magazine in which he took on the topic of “Morality and Foreign Policy.” Objecting to the habit of American policymakers to link foreign policy objectives to specific desired outcomes within the borders of sovereign nations, Kennan struck a blow for the Westphalian interstate system which had been the cornerstone of international life since 1648.

Standing against the neocon tide yelling “stop!”, Kennan decried what he called the “histrionics of moralism” that guided American policymakers into believing they were responsible – and worse still, had it in their power – to right every wrong in every corner of the globe.

The self-declared mission to remake the world in America’s image has only become more entrenched since Kennan’s essay appeared three decades ago. In fact today’s neocons – positively high on self-righteous indignation, particularly when it comes to Russia and Syria – are perhaps even worse than their ideological forbearers who at least understood the all-too-real dangers of a nuclear conflagration between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

Today's neocons – comfortably ensconced in U.S. government- and NATO-funded think tanks, major newspapers and magazines, issue forth groundless denunciations of the Russian government; eagerly cheer on the destruction of a modern European state, Ukraine; cheer on NATO's latest adventures on the Russian frontier; and earnestly hope that a secular Syrian government be replaced by a band of Sunni religious fanatics, all the while smugly shrugging off the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between Russia and the West. Vladimir Putin and Bashar al-Assad, you see, are “bad guys”: end of discussion.

And this brings us to the neocons who, unlike the scores of Christopher Hitchens acolytes in the Washington media world, actually wield some power. On June 7, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland seemed pleased to report that the U.S. has already spent \$600 million on “security assistance” in Ukraine, while \$787 million has been requested for FY2017.

Meanwhile, efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the sovereign government of Russia, with an eye towards another “regime change,” continue apace. Nuland, in a remarkably candid response to a question from perhaps the Senate's leading advocate of “regime change,” Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Maryland, said the State Department not only works with the Soros-funded Open Russia, it works side-by-side with Russian “journalists who have fled” Russia.

Endless ‘Regime Change’

This points to what is the *de facto* policy towards not only Russia, but towards any government which finds itself in America's crosshairs: work relentlessly to undermine the legitimacy of that government, with the ultimate aim of overthrowing it.

Can there be any doubt this is so in light of the “dissent memo” which was sent by 51 State Department officials this week? According to the *New York Times*, the memo urged Secretary of State John Kerry and President Barack Obama “to carry out military strikes against the government of President Bashar al-Assad.”

What these American *diplomats* are, in effect, calling for is a policy which would lead to a war with Russia, would kill greater numbers of civilians, would sunder the Geneva peace process, and would result in greater gains for the radical Sunnis “rebels” who are the principal opponents of the Assad regime.

But these diplomats, heedless of the costs or likely ramifications of their preferred policy, feel the U.S. simply must unleash the dogs of war so that they can feel better about themselves for having done “something.”

The dual policies of isolating and provoking Russia and endless war in the Near East is the predictable yet natural outgrowth of American foreign policy as it has been pursued since 1950.

Searching for a post-World War Two rationale on which to base American policy in the aftermath of perceived Soviet aggression in Greece and Turkey, President Harry Truman's National Security Council issued NSC-68. The brainchild of former Wall Street wunderkind

turned uber-hawkish policy adviser Paul Nitze, NSC-68 might correctly be viewed at the original sin of the America's postwar foreign policy.

According to the policy directive, the U.S. must “foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system ... foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system ... with a view to fomenting and supporting unrest and revolution in selected strategic satellite countries” all with an eye toward reducing “the power and influence in the Kremlin inside the Soviet Union.”

Sound familiar? Substitute the word “Soviet” with “Russia” or even “Syria” and we have the template for America's more recent imperial adventures. Worryingly, as we approach the November presidential elections, there seems not an ounce of interest inside the Washington establishment for a new approach.