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How the Clintons Instigated Dangerous Confrontations with Russia

Stay Their Bloody Hands Before They Plunge Us into WW 3

by JOHN V. WALSH

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Ever more antiwar voices are clamoring for a Stop Hillary Clinton movement in the Democratic primaries – and with very good reason. There are many alarming, indeed frightening, indictments of her tenures as one-half president in the 90s and then as Senator and Secretary of State. Her estranged relationship with truth, her callousness toward human life and her love for every imperial military adventure and regime change scheme are beyond worrisome. They are downright scary.

But the most damning indictment yet of the Clintons on the world stage comes in the book *Superpower Illusions* by former Ambassador to the USSR, Jack Matlock. The book came out way back in 2009, but it is worth examining again as we confront the possibility of a return to Clintonism. And Matlock is a man who knows whereof he speaks. Wikipedia gives a summary of his career thus:

Jack Foust Matlock, Jr. (born October 1, 1929)[1] is a former American ambassador, career Foreign Service Officer, a teacher, a historian, and a linguist. He was a specialist in Soviet affairs during some of the most tumultuous years of the Cold War, and served as U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1987 to 1991.

After (graduate) studies at Columbia University..., (Matlock) entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His 35 year career encompassed much of the Cold War ... His first assignment to Moscow was in 1961, and it was from the embassy there that he experienced the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, helping to translate diplomatic messages between the leaders.

At the beginning of détente, he was Director of Soviet Affairs in the State Department, ..(attended) all but one of the U.S. – Soviet summits held in the 20 year period 1972-91. Matlock was back in Moscow in 1974, serving in the number two position in the embassy for four years (including time under President Jimmy Carter, jw). Matlock was assigned to Moscow again in 1981 as acting ambassador during the first part of Ronald Reagan’s presidency. Reagan appointed him as ambassador to Czechoslovakia and later asked him to return to Washington in 1983 to work at the National Security Council, with the assignment to develop a negotiating strategy to end the arms race. When Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, arms negotiations and summit meetings resumed. Matlock was appointed ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1987 and saw the last years of the Soviet Union before he retired from the Foreign Service in 1991.

There is no doubt that Matlock knew what was going on during this period, and he saw considerable promise for a peaceful, secure future at the end of the Bush I presidency. So when he forcefully condemns the Clintons for a disastrous turn in U.S. policy, he is a voice that must be heeded. The original sin of the era stains the Clintons, and they spawned their own inevitable Cain in the form of W.

Being a diplomat, Mattlock speaks diplomatically of the colossal, damaging shift in U.S. -Russia relations under the Clintons who reversed the approach of Reagan and Bush I. He gets to the point right away in the preface to *Superpower Illusions*:

“The Clinton administration’s decision to expand NATO to the East rather than draw Russia into a cooperative arrangement to ensure European security undermined the prospects of democracy in Russia, made it more difficult to keep peace in the Balkans and slowed the process of nuclear disarmament started by Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev.”

That is a severely damaging condemnation of the Clintons, one of historic dimensions, as we see now as events unfold in Ukraine, with one of Hillary's protégés, her State Department spokeswoman, Victoria Nuland, very much in charge of the U.S. intervention there. Matlock was so appalled by the Clintons that he changed his political affiliation:

“After I retired from the Foreign Service, I left the Democratic Party early in the Clinton presidency. I felt that President Clinton... lacked both the vision and the competence to take advantage of the opportunity the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union provided. That opportunity was nothing less than a chance to create a world in which security tasks could be shared, weapons of mass destruction reduced rapidly and barriers to nuclear proliferation raised.”

Matlock is appalled that President Clinton lacked *both the vision and the competence* to proceed on a peaceful task. What else is there? Of course he should have said Presidents Clinton since, as Bill always reminded us, he and Hillary shared the task – “two for one,” as he put it, or Billary or Hillbillary as the alternative media labels the duo.

Matlock does not let Bush II off the hook. He is no apologist for the GOP hawks. He sees “W” as continuing and deepening the folly of the Clintons, writing:

“In its sixteen years under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, America went from being the most admired country on the planet in many opinion polls to the most feared.....The majority of the people in many countries considered the United States the most dangerous country in the world. Nobody likes a bully....”

If anyone comes across as a hectoring bully in her public statements, it is surely Hillary. There are plenty of pundits, mostly of the Democrat or “progressive” persuasion, out there who are all too willing to blame Bush II for all this– even unto FOX’s Megyn Kelly. But in fact the latest bad turn in American imperial policies *began* with the Clintons.

Matlock also reminds us that it was the Clintons who began NATO’s war on the Balkans, the precedent for other “humanitarian” interventions, including Libya and Syria. This too was a sharp break with Reagan/Bush I as Matlock notes:

“Bush and Baker also injected caution in extending American involvement in disputes that were not directly relevant to American security. As tensions rose among Yugoslavia’s constituent republics, they tried to keep the United States aloof and leave the primary responsibility to

America's European allies. Regarding the growing conflict in Yugoslavia, Baker was quoted as saying, 'We don't have a dog in that fight.'"

But there is no fight for which Hillary lacks a dog, and almost always it is a dog of war. The war in the Balkans so engaged her that she declared that she came under fire while visiting there to cheer on the effort. The claim of bullets whizzing by her head turned out to be little more than another in the fabric of mistruths woven by this "congenital liar," as the late William Safire, a master and connoisseur of the trade of deception himself, labeled her.

On locations 3236 to 6276 of the Kindle edition of *Superpower Illusions*, Matlock makes his case against the Clintons. Here are some of his words:

"For all of its initial talk about a 'partnership for reform,' the Clinton administration dealt with Russia as if it no longer counted, even in European politics. Two decisions in particular turned Russian public opinion during the years of the Clinton administration from strongly pro-American to vigorous opposition to American policies abroad. The first was the decision to extend the NATO military structure into countries that had previously been members of the Warsaw Pact – something Gorbachev had understood would not happen if he allowed a united Germany to remain in NATO. The second was the decision to bomb Serbia without authorization from the United Nations Security Council. " (A similar contempt for the UN showed up when Obama and Hillary won approval for a no fly zone over Gaddafi's Libya to the UN Security Council in 2011 by getting China and Russia not to veto it – and then turned it into a bombing campaign, in violation of promises to Russia and China, something Putin labeled as the last straw in terms of trusting the U.S. – jw)

"There was no need to expand NATO to ensure the security of the newly independent countries of Eastern Europe. There were other ways those countries could have been reassured and protected without seeming to re-divide Europe to Russia's disadvantage. As for the bombing of Serbia (another favorite project of Hillary's, jw), if NATO had not been enlarged in the manner that occurred, Russia's government would be much more willing to put pressure on Slobodan Milosevic to come to terms with the Kosovars and – if unsuccessful in this effort – more willing to vote in the United Nations to authorize military intervention.....Clinton's actions severely damaged the credibility of democratic leaders in Russia who appealed for a more considerate attitude toward Russian national interests."

"Combined with claiming "victory" in the Cold War (Something the Clintons did but Reagan had not done! jw) expanding NATO suggested to the Russian public that throwing off

communism and breaking up the Soviet Union had probably been a bad idea. Instead of getting credit for voluntarily joining the West, they were being treated as if they had been defeated and were not worthy to be allies.”

“The Clinton administration was deaf to these appeals as well as those of George Kennan the author of the successful containment policy, who warned that enlarging NATO in the proposed manner would be the ‘most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-cold-war era.’ He then explained why: ‘Such a decision may be expected to ... restore the atmosphere of the cold war in East-West relations and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking. And last but not least it may make it much more difficult, if not impossible, to secure the Russian Duma’s ratification of the START II agreement and to achieve further reductions of nuclear weapons’”

Thus, the Clintons turned the United States in a very confrontational direction, something that is a hallmark of Hillary’s views to this day. Again Matlock:

“The Clinton administration, without any provocation, in effect repeated a fundamental mistake made at Versailles in 1919. ... The Clinton administration practically ensured that ... Russia would lose its incentive to reduce nuclear weapons....My point is that the United States should have made every effort to bring the European states, West and East, and including Russia into a new security arrangement.....”

Matlock concludes this section:

“The Clinton administration’s action in bombing Serbia without U.N. approval not only enraged Russia and made close cooperation on nuclear issues more difficult, but it also sent a message to other countries with policies or practices that met American disapproval: Better get nuclear weapons as fast as you can! Otherwise, you can become a target for the U.S. Air Force.”

I would disagree with one point Matlock makes. He feels that the Clintons made the mistakes they did out of domestic political concerns, specifically to get the votes of Poles and others of Eastern European extraction who harbored considerable resentment against the Soviet Union and hence Russia. But the Clintons pursued these policies deep into his second administration right up to the 2000 election of W.

Moreover, Hillary espoused these policies consistently in her 2008 primary battle with Obama who defeated her, largely by presenting himself in contrast to her as the candidate of

Peace. And she continued to espouse these hawkish policies right up to last week where she told the Wall Street Journal that she will be a more warlike president than Obama, saying that she would have sent more arms to the “moderate” Syrian rebels long ago – in contrast to Obama. (Of course the “moderate” Syrian rebels have the same base in reality as the Seven Dwarfs. They are a fairy tale.)

From watching the Clintons in the White House for eight years and from Hillary’s hawkish record as Senator and Secretary of State, there can be little doubt that her views are heartfelt. She remains a lethal admixture of neocon and humanitarian imperialist views, an American Exceptionalist, giddy with American military power, arrogantly confident that “our values” are universal and determined that no other power, however peaceful, will achieve the military or economic might to stand up to the U.S. As China rises, peacefully so far, consistent with its history and culture, and as Russia and Iran gain strength, her views could plunge us into a World War. She is far too shallow, arrogant and bellicose to be President at a time when new thinking and considerable wisdom is needed. The Clintons have already done quite enough damage to humanity. It is long past time to stay their hand from doing more.