

January 10, 2008
(Mijas Pueblo, Spain)

Sidebar

USA-Russian Relations

I The Natural Course. A confrontation with the USA is Russia's normal course. It satisfies the resurgence of Russia in world events (especially, in the Middle East). President Vladimir Putin has parted ways with the Gorbachev-Yeltsin pro-West agenda. Putin rejects that relationship because it makes Russia look weak. (Remember Putin's Soviet-KGB past.) An anti-West agenda (especially, an anti-US one) crowns Russia with a strong Stalin image. Can Putin-Medvedev effectuate the total change? Since Putin, unlike President Bush, enjoys a high approval rating of his badly informed people, he can, indeed, assert the anti-American rhetoric. (His followers enjoy it—his generals make scary waves to please the master.) Putin will be careful to walk a fine line. It will be accomplished slowly, methodically. Puppet Medvedev, portraying a false independence from Putin, will be the next spokesperson for the aggressive Putin-doctrine.

II The Alarming And Nasty Rhetoric. Moscow's tone is provocative, alarming, and it is getting nasty. (Have the US presidential aspirants recognized the tone?) It tells the free world that "we are back on the saddle." The Gorbachev-Yeltsin pro-West agenda (program) is sadly officially over. Recently, I read that a powerful Russian *generalissimo* said that if the US fired a defense missile (from Poland) to intercept an Iranian rocket it could cause Russia to *accidentally* retaliate. (Russia provides the rockets to Iran.) That is a serious message—disturbing to say the least. President Bush (and his successor) must deal with Russia intelligently. In my opinion, the Bush-Putin friendship will not suffice, and Secretary Rice's recent visit to the "cold" Kremlin has not stopped the nasty rhetoric. From the list of presidential candidates, "who" has the savvy and the Kennedy-Reagan personality to deal with Putin-Medvedev? (Who can stand up to them?) In my opinion, Putin's visit to Kennebunkport was merely social—he has a global political and military agenda to fulfill. Russia will proceed with that agenda without working with the US unless we elect a powerful leader who firmly (with stature, personality) engages the perturbing situation.

III Russia-Iran (the Middle East). The unity of Moscow-Tehran is perplexing, troubling. I am sure that Russia does not want Iran to have armed-nukes because they are so close to its border. (In Russia, Iranian distrust prevails.) However, Russia protects Iran from more severe UN sanctions, and embellishes its *civil* nuclear ambitions. Iran has become a solid investor (billions of dollars) in Russian military items: nuclear technology, missiles, fighter jets, big tanks. (The US will probably arm other Islamic nations and, surely, Israel.) On the other hand, Russia uses the West to close Iran's possibility of nuclear warheads. It seems to me that Moscow is setting the tone of the critical debate, not the US. Iran (with Russia's political and military protection) continues to enrich uranium. That is scary. That will lead to a confrontation with the West,

particularly with the US (and Israel). Will it be military? To prevent it, Russia wants to become a player in the Middle East (as was the failed Soviet Union). Basically, “oil” and “gas” will become the *sword*. Russia and Iran control “20%” of the world’s oil reserve and 50% of the world’s gas reserves. Will a barrel cost \$150 or more? (Ask Hugo Chavez the price he likes.) To deal with this powerful union, America needs a charismatic, talented, and strong leader—one that can eclipse the “image” of Putin-Medvedev. Do we have such a leader?

IV The Succession. Putin has appointed his “friend” (crony, puppet) Dimitry Medvedev to act as Russia’s next president. Russia’s general election is a rubberstamp of Putin’s wishes. Since the opposition is “nil,” Medvedev will be Russia’s next president. (Putin remains in the Kremlin as a strongman Prime Minister running the country.) The power of the people will sanction Putin’s authoritarian and anti-democracy agenda. Most Russians are used to it—democracy is no longer the natural course.

V The Next US President. Our *next* president must be ready (from day one) to deal with the provocative Russian Bear. President Bush, in his last year, must make US-Russia relations as important as democracy (peace) in Iraq and Pakistan and as important as Iran (no nukes with freedom and justice). Americans must understand that the “combo” of Moscow-Tehran is a dangerous one—at least a Russian ploy to annoy the West (and Israel). Our counter-challenge should be the “union” of the Middle East nations (some have plenty of oil). Since Russia’s wish is to be a player in that troubled region, America and its allies must stand together—with conviction of purpose (power) and a unique regional unification. President Bush should encourage a diplomatic framework to secure the perturbing region. (Meaning: Making Iran a full participant—willingly limiting nuclear ambitions expecting numerous other benefits from the West—avoiding sanctions.) Americans must elect a savvy president in these trying times—it is a very, very dangerous world. There is no time for foreign relations training on the job. We need an experienced, brainy, and powerful White House to protect Americans (and the free world). So, before you vote, be sure that you know that your “choice” is qualified.