

# US and Them

by G. Murphy Donovan



"If I want to, I can take Kiev in two weeks." – Vladimir Putin

After WWII, Soviet Communists played an outsized role in American Intelligence operations, threat analysis, and defense budgets. If America didn't have the Soviets or Russians as straw men, we probably wouldn't have much of an "existential" threat to talk about at all. Throughout, we never seem to do any honest comparative analysis of American and Russian relative effectiveness in the worlds of Intelligence threat analysis, operations, or policy.

For the moment let's ignore American warning and analytical fails in places like the Mid-East, Cuba, Suez, Vietnam, Lebanon, Iran, Yugoslavia, Georgia, Iraq, Rwanda, Libya, Syria, and New York. With Moscow, we know little about their analysis of these matters anyway. We do see operations, however, to the extent that actions say anything about policy.

So let's thin the herd and take just two recent shared

national security dramas as illustrations, Afghanistan and the fall of the Warsaw Pact. This is not to say that these issues are by any means resolved. They are, however, examples of a relatively new phenomenon; catastrophic warning botch, subsequent analytical malaise, followed by policy left to marinate in a swamp of strategic inertia.

Afghan and East European fiascos are the most poignant because they have the Soviet Union or Russia in common. Indeed, a new "[red scare](#)" is trending these days in the American Intelligence Community, replacing the rapidly deflating Communist balloon. Threat inflation and jingoism are fashionable again on both sides of the American political divide.

Joe McCarthy we hardly knew you.

## Afghanistan

In 1978 the Communist Party of Afghanistan staged a coup, followed by a series of counter-coups. In 1979, the Brezhnev regime in Moscow deployed the 40<sup>th</sup> Soviet Army across the border to stabilize a secular client government in Kabul. In short order, Islamist fanatics, known romantically in those days as the *Mujahedeen*, rose in revolt and a decade long Soviet/American surrogate war began (see *Charlie Wilson's War* nee Operation Cyclone). Almost immediately, the American Central Intelligence Agency came in on the side of religious insurgents to [fund and arm](#) "allies" that now include at least twenty Afghan based Muslim terror cells including; *Al Qaeda*, *ISIS*, the *Taliban*, *Jamiat-e-Islami* (Sunni), and *Harakat-i-Islami* (Shia) to name just the big dogs. *Bin Laden's* Saudi crew sought and received refuge in both Muslim Pakistan and Muslim Afghanistan before and after 9/11.



We should point out that Afghanistan is a border country on the Russian Federation's eastern frontier. At the same time, Afghanistan is eight thousand miles from any US border, nearly 12 hours by air.

Nonetheless, under American tutelage, the Kabul regime became a narco-terrorist base camp. Afghanistan and its jihadist war lords are now arguably the world's largest exporters of [opium](#), terror plots, and religious fanatics.

Drugs now finance the Muslim jihad.

The Soviets cut their losses and withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. American forces, regular and clandestine, are still mired in South Asia after 36 years. Since the "Mujahadeen" started killing Americans, there and abroad, no one calls Muslim militants "freedom fighters" or allies anymore. In a similar vein, Islam's assassins in Caucasus region used to be celebrated by CIA as freedom fighters too – until the Chechen jihad visited a Boston marathon. When Moscow tried to warn the US about Chechen terrorists, CIA and the FBI [ignored](#) the Intel from the Russian FSB.

Afghanistan to date is a very expensive, unprecedented American analytical and operational Intelligence failure. In the space of nearly four decades, Afghanistan went from surrogate war with the Soviets to an insurgent war with the natives. Indeed, today American regulars kill the very Muslim jihadists that the CIA was supposed to be liberating from Soviet hegemony.

The “[great game](#)” today has new meaning: no end in sight for the West. Pyrrhic war has become the new small wars standard for Afghanistan and possibly all global conflicts with Muslims.

America is no longer in it to win it and the global Islamist *jihād* knows it. The Pentagon may not be in the “security” business either anymore, but it seems DOD will be the small war business indefinitely. Endless micro war, if nothing else, is still an American cash cow.

### The Warsaw Pact Void

It’s probably safe to say that the Soviets withdrew from South Asia in 1989 because they had bigger fish to fry in Europe. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were falling apart by 1990. Russian/ American relations were pretty good in the wake of collapse. Indeed, Moscow and Washington cooperated prudently to remove nuclear weapons from Ukraine.



Alas, relations went sour quickly as the EU and NATO, not satisfied with the fall of the Warsaw Pact, took an active part in the subsequent dismemberment of Tito’s ecumenical Yugoslav (1991-2001). Here again, the Clinton Administration and NATO took the Islamist side, helping to create two new Muslim majority states in the heart of Europe. Kosovo and Bosnia today now [provide](#) more jihadist fighters to the Levant than any other European states.

Blowback indeed!

By the time Vladimir Putin took the wheel as Russian prime minister in 1999 a new Cold War was blowing in from the West. A crumbling Soviet empire seemed to be easy pickings. As the Warsaw Pact fell, NATO expanded and began a relentless march to the Russian border to fill the vacuum created by the Kremlin's retreat from East Europe. NATO and the EU now rattle sabers along the new Russian western frontier from the Baltic rim to the Black Sea.

“According to the Federation of American Scientists, the United States has 160-200 B61 nuclear bombs at six airfields in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey.”

Imagine that Russians had nuclear weapons in Canada or Mexico! Imagine that the Red Army ran military drills, north and south, along US borders!

In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Russian Republic, the Kremlin was relatively passive about an imperial NATO on the Russian frontier. Western meddling in Kiev politics in 2013, however, proved to be a bridge [too far](#) for Moscow. In 2013, Ukraine President Yanukovich's expressed a fatal reluctance to sign the [Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement](#), an alignment of Ukraine's economic interests with the European Union. In short, the Yanukovich regime seemed to be looking East, not West.

A coalition of EU and American interests, including the US Congress (John McCain), the US State Department (Victoria Nuland), and USAID were principal players in the subsequent [Euromaidan](#) protests followed by bloody revolution which culminated with the ouster of Yanukovich.

The Neocon putsch in Ukraine was not without consequence.

George Soros claims that \$50 billion for a revolution in Ukraine was [a bargain](#). Where USAID goes, the CIA and the Open Society [Foundations](#) are not far behind. The humanitarian sheep

is ever the best cover for the subversive wolf. We are now told that the Trump administration has ordered CIA to [sever all ties](#) with all Soros affiliates. Well he might.

The Kremlin pushback in Crimea was a clear signal. Russia is not a pushover, not another toothless European mutt.

The peaceful annexation of Crimea was a warning, a shot across NATO's bow. No Kremlin leader could yield [Sevastopol](#), the largest Russian Black Sea naval base to neo-fascist Kiev usurpers any more than any American president would give Pearl Harbor to Japan or restive Hawaiians.

Clearly, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact left NATO without an obvious military threat, without a compelling strategic rationale. When the Warsaw Pact fell, Brussels and Washington simply couldn't take yes for an answer from Moscow.

You might think that NATO and the EU would have worried more about the migrant blitz, the blowback from military folly in the Levant and North Africa. Brussels is/was doing little or nothing about the various jihads and Muslim small wars, including the soft and kinetic aggression of the Muslim diaspora. European open border policy alone is on track to achieve a cultural, if not political, sea change in Europe that Moscow could never hope to match.

Islam is not adjusting to Enlightenment values today so much as Europe is choking on the recidivist mores of 7<sup>th</sup> Century Mecca. Euro-[submission](#) is trending from the Bosphorus to the Irish Sea.

History moves, alas, on two vectors, backwards and forward. The Gates of [Vienna](#) have finally been breached. Berlin, Brussels, London, Paris, and Rome are again in the jihad crosshairs.

Oblivious to the Islamist menace, NATO, with American urging, cultivates a Russian threat to survive as an institution. Were

Brussels to recognize the Islamic threat, NATO might have to do something about it. Thus, the resuscitation of the red menace was not just inevitable, by now it's a kind of fiduciary requirement for military budgets in Washington and Europe.

Any pejorative use of the word "Russian" in national security analysis these days is a kind of budget Viagra. Inside the Beltway, any diminution of the Moscow menace is a threat to chauvinists and bigots in both major political parties.

Erstwhile Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper captures the [paranoid](#) racism that now characterizes official US analyses. General Clapper claims Russians are "genetically driven to co-opt, penetrate, gain favor." Seems America's former top spy is oblivious to the 185 ethnic groups and 100 languages that cover the 11 time zones of modern Russia.

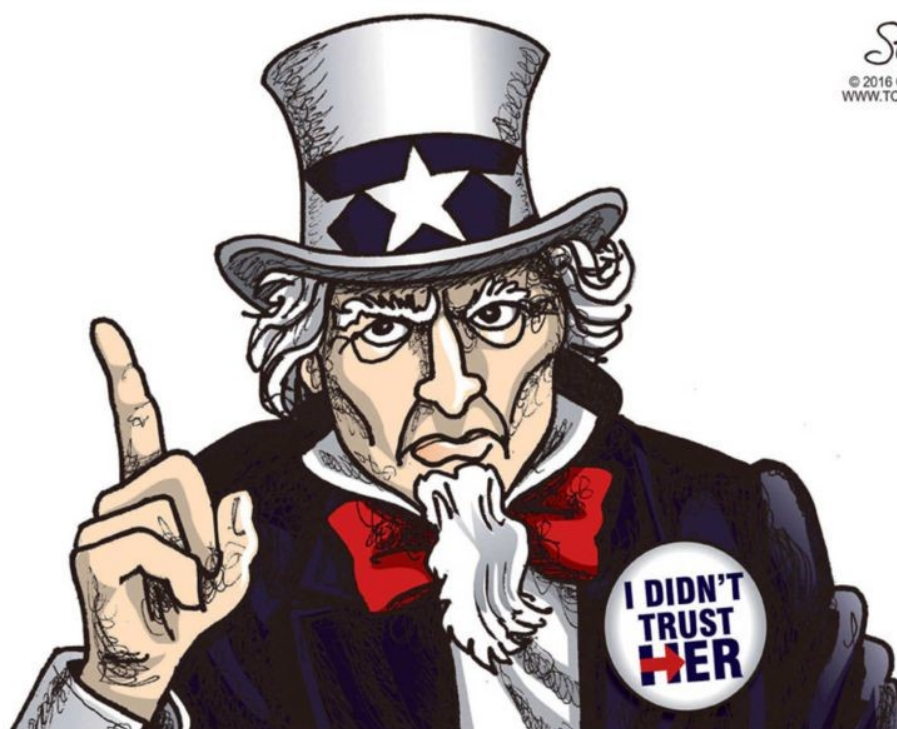
Are we to believe that all these ethnicities in Russia are genetic cretins?

### Branding the Wrong Threat

If red scare propagandists in America didn't have double standards, they wouldn't have any metrics at all. When jingoists criticize any real or imagined Kremlin transgression, the indictment reads "the Russians did/are this or that." When Arabs, Persians, or Muslims bomb, slaughter, or behead; there are few similar blanket condemnations by race or religion. Indeed, no matter how badly Islamists behave, the threat is universally characterized as "a few bad apples." Indeed, Mohamed's religious lemmings have ethnic immunity. Muslims are now [a race](#), a religion, and a protected species by acclamation.

Russophobia is politically correct, islamophobia is not. Blanket demonization of Russians is patriotic, blanket condemnations of Muslims is "racism."

The Benghazi fiasco provides the best example of foreign policy double think on Islam. When Libyan jihadists eradicated the American ambassador, consulate, and CIA annex in Libya, [the villain](#) put forward by the Obama White House, the Clinton State Department, and Brennan's CIA was an American video-maker.



In fact, Libyan jihadists attacked an amateur CIA gun running operation in Libya. The Agency and the State Department were using the Benghazi consulate (“annex”) to collect and transship Kaddafi era weapons to CIA affiliated jihadists and other lost causes in the Levant. In effect, the North African jihad, cut the US [gun running](#) pipeline to the Levant jihad. John Brennan, while at CIA, would have you believe that ambassador Stevens and colleagues were killed by an American video or a spontaneous protest riot.

Brennan today still does not have any explanation for not sending help to his besieged CIA colleagues when help might have mattered. Kris Paranto, a former Army ranger who survived the Benghazi fight, accuses the Obama White House, the Clinton State Department, and the Brennan CIA of putting “politics



before lives.” For his candor, “Tanto” Paranto and his mates lost their CIA jobs – and their security clearances. Truth today is often just another suicide mission.

Paranto has, however, provided the answer to Hilary Clinton’s infamous Benghazi interrogative before Congress: “What difference does it make?”

When politicians lie, Mrs. Clinton, patriots die.

Alas, the American Intelligence Community has cultivated three tragic flaws since 9/11; too big and bureaucratic for warning, too timid and political for actionable analysis, and too incompetent to win anything but irrelevant pyrrhic victories, the *bin Laden* kill included.

It took America a decade to get *bin Laden* after the 9/11 slaughter. It took Russia less than two years after the [Beslan](#) massacre to kill *Basayev* and his crew. The Chechen jihad has been suppressed; the Afghan, Levant, North African, and European jihads, and their Arab financiers, are still thriving.

Benghazi might be the perfect example of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing in the American national security megaplex. Like the welfare state, no one inside the Beltway seems to know what to do except throw money at problems and then make excuses for predictable fails and bad actors.

Any atrocity by Muslims can be [rationalized](#). Any pushback from the Putin regime along Russians borders is mislabeled as aggression.

Brussels and Washington need to be careful what they wish for, cautious about baiting the Russian bear. NATO is a house of cards, largely an American artifact financed by American dollars since 1949. If Europe will not pay to defend its culture and civilization today, surely it will not fight for

those same values tomorrow. Most of continental Europe either appeased, or capitulated to political fascism in the last century. To date, Europe's indifference to religious fascism in Muslim urban ghettos and revanchist fascism in the [Baltics](#) and [Ukraine](#) are ominous echoes of Vichy France and Quisling Scandinavia.

Hands up is now a European tradition.

Without Russians, NAZI fascism and Japanese imperialism [would never](#) have been defeated in the last world war. The Soviet Union lost 40 million, military and civilians, in 20<sup>th</sup> Century battles against fascism. The United States, in contrast, suffered less than 500 thousand dead. At the start of WWII, the Russian population was 170 million compared to 123 million Americans. Since WWII, the American population has doubled whilst the Russian population has yet to recover pre-war totals.

Few Americans know of or [appreciate](#) the sacrifices made by Russians in the last century.

Russophobes and demagogues need to be mindful of Russian history before playing nuclear chicken with the Red Army in Eastern Europe. There is little historical evidence to suggest that Europe or America will fight as well or make as many sacrifices as Russians, especially if the *casus belli* is fascism of any stripe.

A tragic irony characterizes Russian and Muslim dilemmas. Since 1948, Islamic fascists, both Shia and Sunni, have been slaughtering Jews, Christians, Europeans, Americans and just about any non-Muslim or "unislamic" demographic. Global atrocities in the name of Mohamed, the Koran, or Islam are now routine. Russia, in contrast, with the exception of several Soviet era surrogate conflicts, does not sponsor global blood vendettas against America or its allies.

The Russians are not coming. Islamists are already here – and still killing. Alas, it is Russia that is [advertised](#) to Americans as the “existential” threat.

In short, those who actually kill today are tolerated; those who might threaten us tomorrow are demonized. Verily, real distinctions between friend and foe are hopelessly confused. For two generations now; American threat analysis, strategy, and military operations have gone from pyrrhic to incomprehensible to fatally flawed.

Strategic calculus is always leavened by leadership. The difference between Russians and Americans today is that the Kremlin can trust its national security establishment. The White House cannot.

The first great American casualty of the 21<sup>th</sup> Century was public trust. That treasure is now a [deficit](#). Real war with Islam is fought with kid gloves and the rhetorical conflict with Russia is on deck to be made kinetic by strategic gun slingers.

Defeat is the price of fake analyses, fey leaders, and foolish policy. Losing is also a very bad habit, especially when it becomes a national ethic.

First published in the