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<http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2014/04/28/obama-aims-at-regime-change-in-russia/>

Obama aims at regime change in Russia

By M K Bhadrakumar

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The United States has announced a further set of sanctions against Russia. The White House statement justified the sanctions in terms of Russia's "illegal intervention" and "provocative actions" in Ukraine and Moscow's alleged refusal to follow through on the Geneva deal on de-escalation.

These are, again, "smart sanctions" targeted at what the White House calls "Mr. Putin's inner circle" and entities directly connected with the Kremlin elites. The stunning thing is the inclusion of Igor Sechin, a powerful personality, indeed, whom many regard as Putin's alter-ego — which presages that Obama is preparing to take the fight to the lion's den.

Things are getting "personal", indeed. Although Obama maintained, "The goal is not to go after Mr. Putin personally", the goal increasingly seems to be precisely what he denied.

The US seems to have figured out meticulously the dark secrets of the Russian elites — where they keep their illegal wealth in the western world and so on.

Armed with that wealth of information, the US seems to be aiming to create dissensions within the Russian elites and crack up the calculus of power in Moscow — a veritable "regime change". Capitulate or regime change — that's the choice the US is offering Moscow.

It's a high-risk project. Of course, the system that Putin created is not a pushover. But, the US is undoubtedly in a punishing mood. What accounts for it? Can't be Syria. Can't be Iran, Iraq or Afghanistan. Can't be the Arctic, can't be BRICS.

Yes, it has to be the unprecedented humiliation and damage caused to the US' global standing and foreign and security policies by the Edward Snowden affair, which Washington believes was masterminded from the Kremlin. It's payback time for the CIA.

Clearly, the Ukraine game is no longer being played by politicians and diplomats. Smiley's people are on the prowl. The fact that the CIA director John Brennan visited Kiev a week ago underscores that the game is deadly serious.

According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the CIA station in Kiev is now occupying an entire floor of the Ukrainian intelligence agency's headquarters and is controlling the flow of events from the very nerve centre.