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Cold War 2: What's at Stake?

Deena Stryker
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The Bible orders that children not be forced to pay for their parents' misbehavior, an injunction that has long since been replaced in Washington with guilt by association.

Ever since Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels stood up against nineteenth century robber barons, socialism has been anathema to America's rulers. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, measures intended to keep socialism at bay culminated in the House un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), chaired by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy that black-listed thousands of Americans, accused of supporting the Soviet Union, some of whom committed suicide after losing their jobs.

The USSR imploded in 1991, due to bad management by a series of aging politicians combined with American policies aimed at taking it down. And yet, a quarter of a century after embracing market capitalism, Russia is still the target of US attacks, both metaphorically and literally. When President Obama, castigating Russia's 'behavior' as though he were rebuking a child, for supposedly violating US norms for the 'world community', President Putin replies that one country should not run the world. Together with most leaders, he calls for a multi-polar condominium in which the US would be one of four or five power centers. Unfortunately, Americans continue to be told their country is exceptional and hence must lead the world, while much of it is unhappy with the disastrous impact of US-style modernity on society's social and mental health.

Once in a while, the MSM accuses Vladimir Putin of calling the West "degenerate", without spelling out his reasons. Americans are unaware that the former FSB officer is profoundly religious, and that religion is central to his policies. Unbeknownst to most Americans, the Russian president's commitment to Eastern Orthodoxy and its moral teachings also explains the support of traditional right-wing European parties, whether Catholic or Protestant. His critique of modernity also dovetails with the less familiar 'new right' and 'post-modernists' such as French philosopher Alain de Benoist and Italy's Bepe Grillo, leader of the Five Star Movement, both of whom condemn the impact of modernity on the soul.

A recent book by a conservative French academic traces this outlook to Russian philosophers such as Berdyaev and writers such as Dostoevsky. In "Putin's Russia" Ivan Blot captures this attitude in a definition that is simple and succinct: "When man has ever more 'needs', he becomes their slave, killing fraternity as individuals turn ever more inward." This critique is echoed to a remarkable extent by secularists around the world who oppose Having to Being, as I suggest in my book 'A Taoist Politics: The Case for Sacredness'.

The upcoming American election pits an unpredictable businessman against a professional politician with a long history of deception. The former appears to flirt with fascism, which makes it very difficult for most American progressives who focus more on domestic issues than on foreign policy, to back him although he announces a 'realist' foreign policy of 'deals' and 'dialogue'. They are impressed by Hillary's international 'experience' refusing to see the danger inherent in her anti-Russian rhetoric, implying that its current population should pay for their grandparents' communist experiment.

If Hillary becomes president, American children too will pay for the old Neocon plan of nuclear war with Russia.