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## **Russia's Remarkable Renaissance**

By F. William ENGDAHL\*

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**Something remarkable is taking place in Russia, and it's quite different from what we might expect. Rather than feel humiliated and depressed Russia is undergoing what I would call a kind of renaissance, a rebirth as a nation. This despite or in fact because the West, led by the so-called neo-conservatives in Washington, is trying everything including war on her doorstep in Ukraine, to collapse the Russian economy, humiliate Putin and paint Russians generally as bad. In the process, Russia is discovering positive attributes about her culture, her people, her land that had long been forgotten or suppressed.**

My first of many visits to Russia was more than twenty years ago, in May, 1994. I was invited by a Moscow economics think-tank to deliver critical remarks about the IMF. My impressions then were of a once-great people who were being humiliated to the last ounce of their life energy. Mafia gangsters sped along the wide boulevards of Moscow in sparkling new Mercedes 600 limousines with dark windows and without license plates. Lawlessness was the order of the day, from the US-backed Yeltsin Kremlin to the streets. "Harvard boys" like Jeffrey Sachs or Sweden's Anders Aaslund or George Soros were swarming over the city figuring new ways to rape and pillage Russia under the logo "shock therapy" and "market-oriented reform" another word for "give us your crown jewels."

The human toll of that trauma of the total collapse of life in Russia after November 1989 was staggering. I could see it in the eyes of everyday Russians on the streets of Moscow, taxi-drivers, mothers shopping, normal Russians.

Today, some two decades later, Russia is again confronted by a western enemy, NATO, that seeks to not just humiliate her, but to actually destroy her as a functioning state because Russia is uniquely able to throw a giant monkey wrench into plans of those western elites behind the wars in Ukraine, in Syria, Libya, Iraq and well beyond to Afghanistan, Africa and South America.

Rather than depression, in my recent visits to Russia in the past year as well as in numerous discussions with a variety of Russian acquaintances, I sense a new feeling of pride, of determination, a kind of rebirth of something long buried.

### **Sanctions Boomerang**

Take the sanctions war that the Obama administration has forced Germany, France and other unwilling EU states to join. The US Treasury financial warfare unit has targeted the Ruble. The morally corrupt and Washington-influenced Wall Street credit rating agencies have downgraded Russian state debt to "junk" status. The Saudis, in cahoots with Washington, have caused a free-fall in oil prices. The chaos in Ukraine and EU sabotage of the Russian South Stream gas pipeline to the EU, all this should have brought a terrified Russia to her knees. It hasn't.

As we have earlier detailed, Putin and an increasing number of influential Russian industrialists, some of the same who a few years ago would have fled to their posh London townhouses, have decided to stand and fight for the future of Russia as a sovereign state. Oops! That wasn't supposed to happen in a world of globalization, of dissolution of the nation-state. National pride was supposed to be a relic like gold. Not in Russia today.

On the first anniversary of the blatant US coup in Kiev that installed a hand-picked regime of self-professed Neonazis, criminals, and an alleged Scientologist Prime Minister Andriy Yansenyuk, hand-picked by the US State Department, there was a demonstration in downtown Moscow on February 22. An estimated 35,000 to 50,000 people showed up—students, teachers, pensioners, even pro-Kremlin bikers. They protested not against Putin for causing the economic sanctions by his intransigence against Washington and EU demands. They protested the blatant US and EU intervention into Ukraine. They called the protest “Anti-Maidan.” It was organized by one of many spontaneous citizen reactions to the atrocities they see on their borders. Internet satirical political blogs are making fun of the ridiculous Jan Paski, until last week the fumbling US State Department Press Spokesperson.

Not even an evident False Flag attempt in the London Financial Times and Western controlled media to blame Putin for “creating the climate of paranoia that caused” Boris Nemtsov’s murder is being taken seriously. Western “tricks” don’t work in today’s Russia.

And look at US and EU sanctions. Rather than weakening Putin’s popularity, sanctions have caused previously apolitical ordinary Russians to rally around the president, who still enjoys popularity ratings over 80%. A recent survey by the independent Levada Center found 81 percent of Russians feel negatively about the United States, the highest figure since the early 1990s “shock therapy” Yeltsin era. And 71 percent feel negatively about the European Union.

The renaissance I detect is evident in more than protests or polls, however. The US-instigated war in Ukraine since March 2014 has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, one which the US-steered German and other western media have blocked out of their coverage. More than one million Ukrainian citizens, losing their homes or in fear of being destroyed in the insane US-instigated carnage that is sweeping across Ukraine, have sought asylum in Russia. They have been welcomed as brothers according to all reports. That is a human response that has untold resonances among ordinary Russians. Because of the wonders of YouTube and smart phone videos, Russians are fully aware of the truth of the US war in eastern Ukraine. Russians are becoming politically sensitive for the first time in years as they realize that some circles in the West simply want to destroy them because they resist becoming a vassal of a Washington gone berserk.

Rather than bow to the US Treasury’s Ruble currency war and the threat that Russian banks will be frozen out of the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) international interbank clearing system, something likened to an act of war, on February 16, the Russian government announced that it had completed its own banking clearing network in which some 91 domestic credit institutions have been incorporated. The system allows Russian banks to communicate seamlessly through the Central Bank of Russia.

That is inside Russia among banks that otherwise were vulnerable even domestically to a SWIFT cut. Russia joined the Brussels-based private SWIFT system as the Berlin Wall crumbled in 1989. Today her banks are the second largest users of SWIFT. The new system is inside Russia. Necessary, but not sufficient, to protect against SWIFT cutoff. The next step in discussion is joint Russia-China interbank clearing independent of SWIFT and Washington. That is also coming.

The following day after Russia's "SWIFT" alternative was announced as operational, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping said China will build up its strategic partnership with Russia in finance, space and aircraft building and "raise trade cooperation to a new level." He added that China plans to cooperate more with Russia in the financial area and in January Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said that payments in national currencies, de-dollarization, were being negotiated with China. China realizes that if Russia collapses, China is next. Failing empires try desperate measures to survive.

Russians also realize that their leaders are moving in unprecedented ways to build an alternative to what they see as a morally decadent and bankrupt American world. For most Russians the disastrous decade of poverty, chaos and deprivation of the Yeltsin era in the 1990's was reminder enough what awaits should Russia's leaders again prostitute themselves to American banks and corporations for takeover, Hillary Clinton's infamous "reset" of US-Russian relations she attempted when Medvedev was President. Russians see what the US has done in neighboring Ukraine where even the Finance Minister, Natalia Jaresko, is an American, a former State Department person.

Russia and its leaders are hardly trembling behind Kremlin walls. They are forging the skeleton of a new international economic order that has the potential to transform the world from the present bankruptcy of the Dollar System. Moscow and Beijing recently announced, as I discussed in a previous posting, their project to create a joint alternative to the US credit rating monopoly of Moody's, S&P and Fitch.

President Putin's travel agenda in the past year has been mind-boggling. Far from being the international pariah Washington and Victoria Nuland hoped for, Russia is emerging as the land which has the courage to "just say No!" to Washington.

Russia's president has been in Cyprus where possible basing for the Russian navy was discussed, in Egypt where General al-Sisi warmly welcomed the Russian leader and discussed significant economic and other joint cooperation. Late last year Russia and the BRICS states agreed to form a \$100 billion infrastructure bank that makes the US-controlled World Bank irrelevant. The list grows virtually every day.

### **The special human side**

For me, however, the most heartening feature of this Russian renaissance is in the generation which is today in their late thirties to early forties—young, highly intelligent and having experience of both the depravity of Soviet communist bureaucracy but as well of the hollow world of US-led so-called "free market capitalism." I share some examples from the many Russians I have come to know in recent years.

What is unique in my mind about this generation is that they are the hybrid generation. The education they received in the schools and universities was still

largely dominated by the classical Russian science. That classical Russian science, as I have verified from many discussions with Russian scientist friends over the years, was of a quality almost unknown in the pragmatic West. An American Physics professor from MIT who taught in Moscow universities in the early 1990s told me, "When a Russian science student enters first year university, he or she already has behind them 4 years of biology, 4 of chemistry, of physics, both integral and differential calculus, geometry...they are starting university study at a level comparable to an American post-doctoral student."

They grew up in a Russia where it was common for young girls to learn classical ballet or dance, for all children to learn to play piano or learn a musical instrument, to do sports, to paint, as in classical Greek education of the time of Socrates or Germany in the 1800s. Those basics which were also there in American schools until the 1950s, were all but abandoned during the 1980s. American industry wanted docile "dumbed-down" workers who asked no questions.

Russian biology, Russian math, Russian physics, Russian astrophysics, Russian geophysics—all disciplines approached their subject with a quality that had long before disappeared from American science. I know, as I grew up during the late 1950's during the "Sputnik Shock," where we were told as high school pupils we had to work doubly hard to "catch up to the Russians." There was a kernel of truth, but the difference was not lack of American students working hard. In those days we worked and studied pretty hard. It was the quality of Russian scientific education that was so superior.

Teaching of the sciences especially, in Russia or the Soviet Union, had been strongly influenced by the German education system of the 1800s, the so-called Humboldt Reforms of Alexander von Humboldt and others.

The strong ties in Russian education with classical 19th Century German culture and science went deep, going back to the time under Czar Alexander II who freed the serfs in 1861, following the example of his friend, Abraham Lincoln. The ties were deepened to German classical culture later under Czar Alexander II prior to the 1905 Russo-Japanese War when the brilliant Sergei Witte was Transport Minister, then Finance Minister and finally Prime Minister before western intrigues forced his resignation. Witte translated the works of the German national economist Friederich List, the brilliant opponent of England's Adam Smith, into Russian. Before foreign and domestic intrigues manipulated the Czar into the disastrous Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907 against Germany a pact which made England's war in 1914 possible, the Russian state recognized the German classical system as superior to British empiricism and reductionism.

Many times I have asked Russians of the 1980s generation why they came back to Russia to work after living in the USA. Always the reply more or less, "The US education was so boring, no challenge...the American students were so shallow, no idea of anything outside the United States...for all its problems, I decided to come home and help build a new Russia..."

Some personal examples illustrate what I have found: Irina went with her parents to Oregon in the early 1990s. Her father was a high-ranking military figure in the USSR. After the collapse he retired and wanted to get away from Russia, memories of wars,

to live his last years peacefully in Oregon. His daughter grew up there, went to college there and ultimately realized she could be so much more herself back in Russia where today as a famous journalist covering US-instigated wars in Syria and elsewhere including Ukraine, she is making a courageous contribution to world peace.

Konstantin went to the USA to work as a young broadcast journalist, did a master's degree in New York in film and decided to return to Russia where he is making valuable TV documentaries on dangers of GMO and other important themes. Anton stayed in Russia, went into scientific and business publishing and used his facility with IT to found his own publishing house. Dmitry who taught physics at a respected German university, returned to his home St Petersburg to become a professor and his wife also a physicist, translates and manages a Russian language internet site as well as translating into Russian several of my own books.

What all these Russian acquaintances, now in their late 30s or forties share is that they were born when the remnants of the old Soviet Russia were still very visible, for better and for worse, but grew to maturity after 1991. This generation has a sense of development, progress, of change in their lives that is now proving invaluable to shape Russia's future. They are also, through their families and even early childhood, rooted in the old Russia, like Vladimir Putin, and realize the reality of both old and new.

Now because of the brazen open savagery of Washington policies against Russia, this generation is looking at what was valuable. They realize that the stultifying bureaucratic deadness of the Soviet Stalin heritage was deadly in the USSR years. And they realize they have a unique chance to shape a new, dynamic Russia of the 21st Century not based on the bankrupt model of the now-dying American Century of Henry Luce and FD Roosevelt.

This for me is the heart of an emerging renaissance of the spirit among Russians that gives me more than hope for the future. And, a final note, it has been policy among the so-called Gods of Money, the bankers of London and New York, since at least the assassination in 1881 of Czar Alexander II, to prevent a peaceful growing alliance between Germany and Russia. A prime aim of Victoria Nuland's Ukraine war has been to rupture that growing Russo-German economic cooperation. A vital question for the future of Germany and of Europe will be whether Germany's politicians continue to kneel to the throne of Obama or his successor or define their true interests in closer cooperation with the emerging Eurasian economic renaissance that is being shaped by President Putin's Russia and by President Xi's China.

Ironically, Washington's and now de facto NATO's "undeclared war" against Russia has sparked this remarkable renaissance of the Russian spirit. For the first time in many years Russians are starting to feel good about themselves and to feel they are good in a world of some very bad people. It may be the factor that saves our world from a one world dictatorship of the bankers and their military.

\* **F. William Engdahl** is strategic risk consultant and lecturer, he holds a degree in politics from Princeton University and is a best-selling author on oil and geopolitics, exclusively for the online magazine "New Eastern Outlook".