

Childish Obama Rants While ‘Grown-Ups’ Meet

by William Jones

Aug. 12—President Barack Obama has again clearly manifested to the world the urgent need to heed the call by Lyndon LaRouche to immediately impeach the President for criminal activity. Speaking at one of his rare appearances before an increasingly hostile White House press corps on Aug. 9, prior to taking his annual foray to that haven of the rich and famous, Martha’s Vineyard, President Obama launched into a tantrum over Russia’s refusal to hand over fugitive whistleblower Edward Snowden to U.S. authorities.

Obama is obsessed with the Snowden revelations, which exposed the extensive police-state-like surveillance he has imposed on the American people. The President was in such a rage state that he placed the critical U.S.-Russia relationship in danger, by canceling his upcoming summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg next month. While the decision to grant Snowden a one-year asylum is totally consistent with both Russian and international law, Russia having no extradition treaty with the United States, the Russians are also aware that Snowden, whose revelations have become a great embarrassment to the President, could be tried for treason, a crime for which the death penalty can be imposed.

Obama unsuccessfully claimed that the Snowden affair was not his main concern: “I think the latest episode is just one more in a number of emerging differences that we’ve seen over the last several months around Syria, around human rights issues, where it is probably appropriate for us to take a pause, reassess where it is that Russia is going, what our core interests are, and calibrate the relationship so that we’re doing things that are good for the United States.”

Like an adolescent bully, Obama also took the occasion to ridicule the Russian President, quipping that Putin has “got that kind of slouch, looking like the bored kid in the back of the classroom.” Even the jaded White House press corps couldn’t help but express amazement at an American President characterizing the leader of another country, particularly Russia, in such a

derogatory manner. And pictures of the slouching Obama, in contrast to the athletic Putin, soon graced the Internet.

The ‘Grown-Ups’ Meet

If there were no countervailing forces at work here, such behavior might, in the current strategic context, lead to war—and still could. Nevertheless, at the same time as the Obama performance before the press corps, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was holding his own press conference at the Russian Embassy in Washington, at the conclusion of a one-day meeting between the Russian foreign and defense ministers and their American counterparts. No doubt aware of the contrasting atmosphere of these meetings with the antics of that *enfant terrible* in the White House, Lavrov commented that the ministerial meetings on Aug. 9 had been consistent with Secretary of State John Kerry’s earlier call to “work like adults.”

“When John Kerry became Secretary of State and we met for the first time, with him in his new capacity, we discussed in general how our relations would develop,” Lavrov said. “I well remember that at the conclusion of our conversation, he said he believed that we could achieve changes in Russian-American relations, and called for working like adults. And that is what we are trying to do, because if some little episodes become an obstacle to everything else, then this is completely the wrong policy.”

The discussion among the four ministers—besides Lavrov and Kerry, there were Defense Ministers Sergei Shoygu and Chuck Hagel—covered the gamut of the bilateral relationship, as well as the important international issues in which cooperation between Russia and the United States was absolutely key, in particular, with regard to the growing conflict in Syria. In their introductory remarks, the four made it clear that they were not going to be waylaid by the “controversy” over the Russian decision to grant Snowden temporary asylum.

“This meeting remains important above and beyond the collisions and the moments of disagreement,” Kerry told reporters at the beginning of the meetings. “It is important for us to find ways to make progress on missile defense, on other strategic issues, including Afghanistan, Iran, on North Korea, and Syria.” Kerry noted good-naturedly that both he and Lavrov were former hockey players, and that they therefore realized that, in diplomacy as in hockey, players would some-



State Department

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Kerry—"the adults"—confer on Aug. 9, at the State Department, as President Obama, on the same day, threw a temper tantrum over Russia's granting of temporary asylum to Edward Snowden.

times clash, but the game would still go on. Hagel had taken additional time in the morning to meet with his counterpart, Defense Minister Shoygu, their first meeting. Hagel pointed out the need for such 2+2 meetings in the context of a world situation, which he accurately described as "combustible."

Matters of Substance Discussed

The substantial agenda included missile defense, Syria, the Middle East peace initiative, the need to fight illegal drugs from Afghanistan, and Russian transport for U.S. forces leaving Afghanistan.

At his press conference at the Russian Embassy after the day's meeting, Lavrov was fairly up-beat. He announced that the two sides were committed to organizing a second Geneva conference on Syria, "no matter what." He had earlier praised Secretary Kerry for his recent initiatives on the Israeli-Palestinian front. While Kerry has been intent on making some headway on Geneva II, it is certainly not on the agenda of Obama's two grenade-throwers at the White House, National Security Advisor Susan Rice and her gal-pal at the UN, Samantha Powers. Little pressure has been brought to bear, therefore, on the Syrian "opposition" to bring them to the negotiating table in Geneva.

Lavrov also felt that there was more consideration now being taken by the U.S. side for Russian concerns about the planned missile defense architecture in West-

ern Europe. "The main thing that I saw and heard in the course of our discussions today was an understanding of the need to approach this topic in the context of all the other aspects, which one way or another influence strategic stability," Lavrov said. "We discussed the missile defense issue in a very substantial manner, in order to understand what risks it might or might not create for strategic stability, which both we and the American side are equally interested in deepening in every possible way."

Defense Minister Shoygu invited the United States to participate as observers at the upcoming Russia-Belarus military exercise, Zapad 2013. The two defense min-

isters also agreed to establish a video link between them, so as to maintain direct contact above the staff level. The U.S. was invited to participate in a "tank competition" with Russian forces next year. In his comments on the meetings, Shoygu said that Russia was not opposed to any country building up their defenses as long as it didn't infringe on the defense capabilities of Russia. In particular, he expressed concern about the planned deployment of anti-missile cruisers in the Baltic or Barents seas, a component of the U.S.-NATO missile-defense program in Europe.

Lavrov defended the decision taken by the Russian government in giving Snowden a one-year asylum. He reiterated the legality of the measure, but he also made clear his views about Obama's overreaction, noting that quite a few times, Russian citizens had been arrested in third countries and handed over to the U.S., in violation of international consultative agreements on such matters. "We draw attention to all of these cases but we never say, 'Until you do as we say, we won't talk to you about Afghanistan, or about missile defense, or about any other topic.'"

But the efforts by Kerry and Hagel to salvage the relationship, can only have a limited value while the President himself, surrounded by those mavens of madness, Susan Rice and Samantha Powers, continue to throw lit matches into this all-too "combustible" situation.