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MESSAGE:

Kidnapping as a tool of imperial statecraft?

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[This column was written [for the Unz Review](#)]

There is nothing new about empires taking hostages and using them to put pressure on whatever rebel group needs to be reminded “who is boss”. The [recent arrest in Italy of Alexander Korshunov](#), the director for business development at Russia’s United Engine Corporation (UEC), is really nothing new but just the latest in a long string of kidnappings. And, as [I already mentioned in distant 2017](#), that kind of thuggery is not a sign of strength but, in fact, a sign of weakness. Remember [Michael Ledeen’s immortal words](#) about how “*Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business*”? Well, you could say that this latest spat of kidnappings is indicative of the same mindset and goal, just on a much smaller, individual, scale. And, finally, it ain’t just Russia, we all know about the [kidnapping of Huawei’s CFO Meng Wanzhou by the Canadian authorities](#).

By the way, you might wonder how can I speak of “kidnapping” when, in reality, these were legal arrests made by the legitimate authorities of the countries in which these arrests were made? Simple! [As I mentioned last week](#), **words matter** and to speak of an “arrest” in this case wrongly suggest that 1) some crime was committed (when in reality there is **ZERO** evidence of that, hence the talk of “conspiracy” to do something illegal) 2) that this crime was investigated and that the authorities have gathered enough evidence to justify an arrest and 3) that the accused will have a fair trial. None of that applies to the cases of [Viktor Bout](#), [Konstantin I aroshenko](#), [Marina Butina](#) or, for that matter, [Meng Wanzhou](#) or [Wang Weijing](#). The truth is that these so-called “arrests” are simple kidnappings, the goal is hostage taking with the goal to either 1) try to force Russia (and China) to yield to US demands or 2) try to “get back” at Russia (and China) following some humiliating climb down by the US Administration (this was also the real reason behind the uncivilized seizure of Russian diplomatic buildings in the USA).

This is not unlike what the Gestapo and the SS liked to do during WWII and their kidnapping of hostages was also called “arrest” by the then state propaganda machine. By the way, the Bolsheviks also did a lot of that during the civil war, but on a much larger scale. In reality, both in the case of the Nazi authorities and in the case of the imperial USA, as soon as a person is arrested he/she is subjected to solitary confinement and other forms of psychological torture

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(Manning or Assange anybody?!) in order to either make them break or to at least show Russia and China that the US, being the World Hegemon gets to seize anybody worldwide, be it [by a CIA kidnapping team](#) or by using local colonial law enforcement authorities (aka local police forces).

US politicians love to “send messages” and this metaphor is used on a daily basis by US officials in all sorts of circumstances. Here the message is simple: *we can do whatever the hell we want, and there ain't nothing you can do about it!*

But is that last statement really true?

Well, in order to reply to this we should look at the basic options available to Russia (this also applies to China, but here I want to focus on the Russian side of the issue). I guess the basic list of options is pretty straightforward:

- Use official and confidential diplomatic channels to protest and demand a release
- [Publicly protest and denounce these kidnappings as completely illegal](#). (and immoral to boot!)
- Retaliate by using legal means (sanctions, cancellation of agreements, etc.)
- Retaliate by using extra-legal means (counter-kidnappings, not unlike what China allegedly decided to do in [the case of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor](#))

Frankly, in the case of the USA, options one and two are useless: the AngloZionist leaders have long given up any hope of not being hated and despised by 99% of mankind and they have long dropped any pretense of legality, nevermind morality: they don't give a damn what anybody thinks. Their main concern is to conceal their immense weakness, but they fail to do so time and time again. Truly, when wannabe “empires” can't even bring an extremely weakened country such as Venezuela to heel, there ain't much they can do to boot their credibility. If anything, this thuggery is nothing more than the evidence of [a mind-blowing weakness](#) of the Empire.

But that weakness in no way implies that Russia and China have good options. Sadly, they don't.

Russia can engage in various types of sanctions, ranging from the petty bureaucratic harassment of US representations, diplomats, businessmen and the like to economic and political retaliations. But let's not kid ourselves, there is very little Russia can do to seriously hurt the USA with such retaliations. Many would advocate retaliation in kind, but that poses a double problem for the Kremlin:

- Once a country has gone down the road of illegal brute force, there is no way back. The examples of the US, Israel or, for that matter, the Ukraine show that once primitive thuggery becomes part of your political arsenal you will forever remain a thug and everybody will see this (whether everybody will have the courage to openly state this is a different issue altogether).
- The reality is that double and triple standards have long become the essential key feature of all western ideological systems, from the Papacy to modern capitalism. The Kremlin fully understands that in the AngloZionist Empire “*some are more equal than others*” and that that which is “allowed” to the World Hegemon is categorically forbidden to everybody else. Thus if Russia retaliates in kind, there will be an explosion of hysterical protests not only by the western legacy corporate and state ziomeia, but also from the 5th columnist in the Russian “liberal” press.

And yes, unlike the USA, Russia does have a vibrant, diverse and pluralistic media and each time when Putin agrees to a press conference (especially one several hours long) he knows that he will be asked the tough, unpleasant, questions. But since he, unlike most western leaders, can intelligently answer them he does not fear them. As for Dmitrii Peskov and Maria Zakharova, they have heard it all a gazillion during the past years, including often the most ridiculously biased, mis-informed and outright ridiculous “questions” (accusations, really) from the western presstitute corps in Russia.

So yes, Russia could, in theory, retaliate by arresting US citizens in Russia (or by staging Cold War type provocations) or by kidnapping them abroad (Russia does have special forces trained for this kind of operation). But this is most unlikely to yield any meaningful results and it would create a PR nightmare for the Kremlin.

The truth is that in most of these cases we always come down to the fundamental dichotomy: on one hand we have a rogue state gone bonkers with imperial hubris, arrogance and crass

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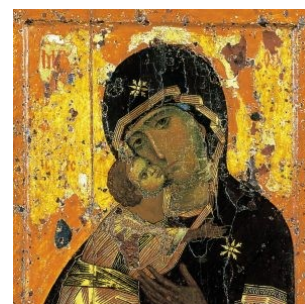
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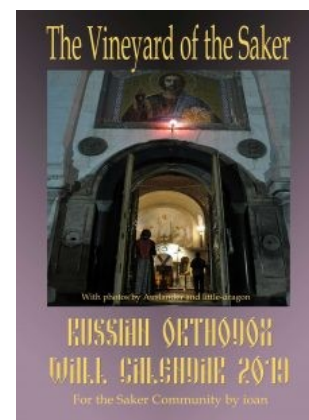
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ignorance (say, the USA and/or Israel) while on the other we have states which try to uphold a civilized international order (Russia, China, Iran, etc.). This is by logical necessity a lop-sided struggle in which the thugs will almost always have the advantage.

[Sidebar: here I want to address a logical fallacy which I regularly hear in the West: when one political system proves stronger, or more capable of survival, than another one, this supposedly proves that the stronger state is also somehow “superior”. This is the argument used by those who claim that the Soviet Union “lost the Cold War” and that “Capitalism has proven much more sustainable/efficient than Communism”. This is utter nonsense for at least two reasons: first, the USSR did not “lose” the Cold War – the CPSU and the Soviet ruling *Nomenklatura* decided to break-up the USSR (against the will of the people!) and, second, the fact is that the Soviet Union was squandering its wealth all over the planet while the USA was robbing the entire planet blind. How can we compare the two? Finally, allow me this metaphor to make my point: if we would lock up a human being and a hyena in a small empty cell to see who will survive we can be pretty darn sure that the hyena will immediately and very “effectively” kill the human and eat him. Does that “victory” somehow prove the hyena’s “superiority”? Of course not! For one thing, capitalism implies *infinite* growth in a *finite* environment, which is exactly what a *malignant tumor* does for a living and which is *self-evidently non-sustainable*. So are we going to compare one political system – Communism – which does not rely on growth and which is therefore sustainable, and which spread its wealth all over the planet with one based on (international) “highway robbery” (don’t take my word for it, take it from Paul Craig Roberts himself who unambiguously stated recently that “American Capitalism is Based on Plunder”). Yes, the Soviet system was fundamentally rotten, profoundly dysfunctional and ineffective (only imbeciles or ignoramuses would deny that!), but it was not in any way “defeated” by the West nor is Capitalism any “better” or “superior” (whatever you want that to mean) than Communism (more on this [here](#) if you are interested).]

For all these reasons, there is really nothing much Russia (or China) can do about this situation besides publishing an official warning to the Russian people saying that if they travel abroad they should realize that “US intelligence agencies continue their current hunt for Russians around the world”. They also made public the list of countries which have extradition treaties with the USA : Australia, Austria, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bolivia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Hungary, Canada, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Dominica, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Guatemala, Germany, Honduras, Greece, Israel, India, Jordan, Iraq, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Monaco, Myanmar, Nauru, Nigeria, Netherlands, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, El Salvador, San Marino, Swaziland, Seychelles, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Turkey, Uruguay, Philippines, Finland, France, Czech Republic, Chile, Switzerland, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Estonia, South Africa, South Korea, Jamaica and Japan.

The MoFA concluded by warning that “*The Russian foreign Ministry strongly urges all Russian citizens planning trips abroad to carefully weigh all the risks, especially if there is reason to assume the possibility of claims against them by American law enforcement agencies*”.

Some *caveat emptor* before buying your airline ticket, right?!

Conclusion: it will get a lot worse before it gets better

First, we need to always remember that kidnappings are just the latest manifestation of an overall pattern of thuggery by the USA. The attitude is pervasive, and US citizens are not free of this climate of thuggery. Another good example are the outright bribes offered to the ships captains of Iran , to sail their crude carriers to somewhere where the US can literally pirate the carrier. Remember the amazing confession by Pompeo himself: “*We lied, we cheated, we stole.... it reminds you of the glory of the American experiment*”?

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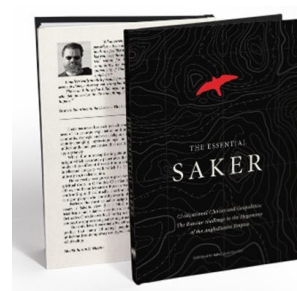
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It can almost be rewritten and expanded like this: *We lie, we cheat, we steal, we kidnap, we bribe, we extort, we pirate, then we threaten, and then we tell everyone how exceptionally morally superior we are.*

Yet a certain limit has been crossed. It is as if their own belief in their own moral superiority has inverted to the extent that their own moral superiority is so big, and so certain, that any small actions of thuggery is allowed to them. This will not change any time soon and even the most innocent traveler must have awareness of this. This is why [the Chinese are now openly wondering if sending Chinese students to the USA is such a good idea after all](#).

So the first thing we have to accept is that **this pattern of thuggery will not stop**, if anything – it will expand.

Second, we have to also realize that there are no good options for the Russians or the Chinese. In fact, **this is normal**: civilized actors often find themselves "out-gunned", so to speak, by thugs, sociopaths and criminals. Over time, however, thuggery is always self-defeating because it is inevitably linked to a **delusion of impunity**. As for civilized states, while it is true that they are at a fundamental disadvantage when faced by uncivilized thugs but, again, over time they eventually prevail if only because everybody always ends up fed up and disgusted with the thugs. Finally, while thuggery can seem attractive to people with sociopathic inclinations, most human beings need a higher ideal than just unbridled consumption to inspire them. Communism had (and I would argue, still has) this ability. Capitalism does not.

For the foreseeable future, however, we can only expect more of the same. Thanks to the ceaseless efforts of Obama and Trump the Empire is collapsing even faster than it normally would and we can expect that the current sequence of humiliating defeats for the USA (and, of course, Israel which has [its own humiliating wounds](#) to lick!) will continue and that the USA (and, of course, Israel!) will have to find more small targets (be it kidnapped Russian nationals or empty buildings in Syria) to kidnap or destroy and feel powerful again.

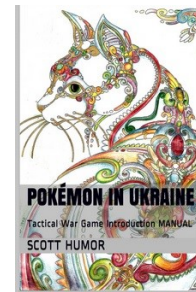
This will be revolting, disgusting and simply plain stupid.

But there is nothing Russia (or China) can do to stop it, at least not for the foreseeable future.

The Saker

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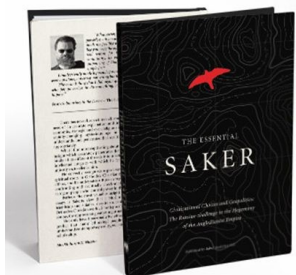
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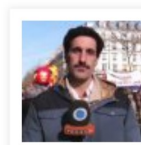


Larchmonter445 on September 06, 2019 · at 10:31 pm EST/EDT

American businessmen should be kidnapped the same way the US does it. One-for-one. Have a "current" list of Americans traveling, and snatch them. When the Russian citizen is freed, the American is freed. That's the symmetrical approach.

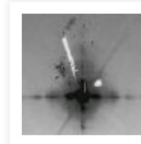
The asymmetrical approach is to take US officials for the barter deal.

What one or two of these "answers" to the US thuggery will generate is total awareness in the Media and the minds of US citizens that their government is a thug and response will be equal.



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Bully behavior is best met with a baseball bat. Nothing much to think about. Bullies count on the shocked, no response. When you bust their knee caps, they stop the bullying.

China acted the right way to defend Ms. Meng Wangzhou. They took two hostages.

[Reply](#)



Mulga Mumblebrain on September 06, 2019 · at 11:07 pm EST/EDT

I very much doubt that the Canadians are 'hostages'. No doubt Chinese intelligence follows smcores of Western subversives active in China spreading dissension and treachery among creatures like the scum in Hong Kong. Picking up one or two rather than following them and then rolling up their networks, is useful in this case. If Meng is renditioned to the US Gulag, I recommend a lengthy sentence for the Canadians and other measures to teach the Ukronazi and Zionazi regime in Ottawa a very stern lesson. Western fascists never learn, never change and are best kept isolated, where they soon turn on one another.

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Mulga Mumblebrain on September 06, 2019 · at 11:02 pm EST/EDT

A Zionazi manual and exercise in narcissistic self-glorification and psychopathic acting-out, 'Rise and Kill First', by Ronen Berman was published in 201 outlines how Israel has murdered more 'enemies', following both that ancient tet-book of hatred and murder, the Talmud, and Jabotinsky's infamous boast, 'We will kill anyone who gets in our way'. than any other Western state. And every interview I heard in the local and Western fakestream media sewer was a God-awful exercise in Sabbat Goy groveling and boot-licking, the presstitutes not daring to question this death-cult in any manner, lest, of course, they be denounced as an 'antisemite', which, for once, ironically, would have been partially true.

The wretched, unmentionable, secret is that Judaism is founded on eternal hatred and fear of the goyim, and Talmudic dogma and exegesis makes killing an actual sacred act, a religious observance. And the USA, particularly now that it is totally controlled in its ruling elites by Zionazis and Sabbat Goy stooges, has always followed the same doctrine. In the end these Evil swine will destroy all Life on Earth in their lust to dominate, kill and destroy.

[Reply](#)



Teranam13 on September 06, 2019 · at 11:52 pm EST/EDT

Well unfortunately people who act with impunity do not stop unless confronted with an implacable force or unless you refuse to play.

My father taught me this when one evening as the sun was setting he thundered at me when I would not agree with him. "Well then say I am right or get out of the car". Without hesitation as an eternal rebel was formed within I opened the door and stepped out of the car into a deserted industrial area of town . I Watched him drive off into the setting sun as I figured out the direction of the long walk home. And to this day I continue to do so.

These folks are brutal sadists. No surrender! He did drive back to pick me up later. I suppose he was afraid to answer to my mother or the police. But he never looked me in the eye as he did so.

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the pessimist on September 07, 2019 · at 12:13 am EST/EDT

I don't agree with this analysis. Russia did detain an American for spying after Maria was arrested. They did kick the Americans out of some diplomatic properties following the American seizure of the Russian ones and I believe they are pursuing this in

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American courts. The renditions and extradition requires cooperation of third parties. This is not always forthcoming and is not guaranteed, even in cases like Assange. Gibraltar released the Iranian tanker and its captain refused the offered bribe. Russia has taken disputes with Ukraine to international courts with some success. The situation is not so one sided as presented here.

[Reply](#)



TRM on September 07, 2019 · at 12:17 am EST/EDT

"there is really nothing much Russia (or China) can do about this"

You are forgetting asymmetrical warfare options. If someone hits you with a jab you could jab back or you could kick them in the knee.

USA kidnaps people (and tankers) they blow up a refinery with a track record of safety issues. Plausible deniability and all evidence burnt up. Remember that shooting up of a transformer station in California? That type of thing.

Lots of options. Just not obviously connected by design.

[Reply](#)



Serg on September 07, 2019 · at 1:23 am EST/EDT

Moreover, China and Russia would hurt themselves by sinking to this level in the long run way more, than whatever damage their wildest hopes a kidnapping would inflict.

The US is going down, the empire is failing on all fronts and Trumps behavior proves it. Every foreign policy action he takes, in one form or another, tries to siphon money from everyone else to sustain it. NATOs 2% goal... so the NATO countries buy US arms, just to name one of countless examples.

Once the death of the empire is official, someone will need to fill the power gap, at least for the foreseeable future. The reality is some US client states can not function without the US and will immediately look for someone else to fund and guide them. I'm not saying China and Russia seek to be the replacement nanny, but it's either that or chaos spots all over the globe. Other, smaller states who can not defend themselves, will look to the new big dog on the playground to do it for them. If that big dog is known to bite, provoked or not, they will look elsewhere.

Right now, anti – Russian sentiment is dying all over the world, in spite of the Wests best effort to ignite it. Officials from some western countries even apologize behind closed doors to Russian officials for the behavior the US makes them conduct publicly. In part because Russia does not retaliate, does not lash out, does not behave like a brute, which it has the strength to do, this "taking it" approach is not going by unnoticed and will be rewarded immensely down the road, in fact the reaping already started, albeit small.

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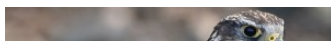
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