
Russians Look at Strategic Meaning Of Historical Alliance With U.S.A.

by Konstantin Chermnykh and Rachel Douglas

Accompanying the refrain of Russian President Vladimir Putin and members of his circle, over the past year, that the outlook of Franklin Delano Roosevelt bears revival in a range of policy areas, from economic reconstruction to anti-imperial cooperation in international affairs, there is growing attention in Russia to the historical, and current, role of British financial interests in targetting Russia for destabilization.

As we go to press, this pattern came out dramatically in the case of the poisoning death of Russian ex-spy Alexander Litvinenko, who died in London last year. Andrei Lugovoy, another ex-intelligence operative, who is being scapegoated by British authorities in the murky Litvinenko case, declared at a May 31 press conference, that he had proof of British Intelligence involvement in the murder. “I cannot get away from the thought that Litvinenko was an agent who had gone out of control, and they got rid of him,” said Lugovoy, having made clear that by “they,” he meant MI6, the British foreign intelligence service.

In a forthcoming article, *EIR* will report on the role of London-centered networks, and their stooges in the U.S. government, in what Moscow officials increasingly speak of as an attempt to encircle their country with wars and destabilization.

In the present article, we summarize another of the recent, promising attempts by Russian figures to take a fresh look at history, and see the potential for Russian-American collaboration—if the U.S.A. would revert to foreign policies that are in its genuine national tradition and interests—to lead the world against the British imperial policies of permanent war and financial looting of nations.

A 200th Anniversary

“Russia and the U.S.A.—A Forgotten Friendship,” was the headline on an article published March 30 in the weekly *Moskovskiy Novosti*. It was the first installment of a three-part series by Alexander Fomenko, a member of the State Duma, who was originally elected on the Rodina (Mother-

land) slate in 2003. As a representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and various “Dialogue of Civilizations” conferences, Fomenko has had ample opportunity to interact with parliamentarians from other European countries, as well as visiting U.S. delegations.

Fomenko’s article was occasioned by the 200th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Russian Empire and the United States of America, which falls in September of this year. He brought forward an array of high points in the rich history of diplomatic and strategic interaction between these two great powers, including events that were rarely recalled during the Cold War, or were interpreted in a distorted way.

The article began with a quotation from Thomas Jefferson, in the year 1807, when relations were opened: “Russia is the friendliest of the existing countries; we’ll need its service in the future as well, and first of all, we need to win its sympathy.”

Nearly 30 years earlier, during America’s War of Independence from Britain, Russia, under Tsarina Catherine the Great, had taken leadership of the League of Armed Neutrality. The League’s defense of neutral shipping, and the

refusal of its several European member-states to come to the defense of the British monarchy, contributed to the American victory.

Fomenko recalled that the first ambassador of the United States to Russia was John Quincy Adams, later the sixth President of the U.S.A. (As a teenager, Adams had accompanied an American delegation to Russia in 1781, quickly mastering the Russian language and serving as translator. The discussions he had with Russian Minister Count Rumyantsev as ambassador during the Napoleonic Wars, as recounted in Adams’ diaries, are a record of the great potential that existed at the outset of the 19th Century for a world of sovereign nation-states, had the oligarchical system of the 1815 Congress of Vienna not prevailed.)

Fomenko wrote about friendly Russian-American relations during the 19th Century, going beyond just economic mutual benefit. During the Crimean War of 1853-1855, “when Russia found itself alone against the Ottoman Empire and all of Europe”—and under attack by England—the United States not only sold arms to Russia, but was “prepared to dispatch volunteers to help Russia to defend Sevastopol” against the British.

In its turn, Russia under Tsar Alexander II (r. 1855-1881)

and his Foreign Minister Prince Alexander Gorchakov “supported President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, and not only morally,” Fomenko continued. “In 1863-1864, the Russian Naval Ministry dispatched two squadrons to the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines of the U.S.A., under the command of Admiral A.A. Popov and Admiral S.S. Lesovsky, respectively.... In 1866, U.S. President Andrew Johnson conveyed congratulations to Emperor Alexander II over the happy outcome of a [failed] attempt on his life. In the same year of 1866, Alexander II received a delegation of public figures, which included the writer Mark Twain. Despite his democratic views, Mark Twain co-signed an address to the autocratic Emperor, saying, in particular: ‘America owes much to Russia, in many respects, especially for the firm friendly assistance at the moment when we required it most of all.’”

The North Pacific

Fomenko especially noted how Russian and American interests along the Pacific rim were worked out in mid-century. It was an area of potential conflict between them, but the arrangements that were reached were guided not only by each side’s desire for territory and resources, but also by mutual hostility to the British desire to keep this strategic area locked up.

“Already in the Spring of 1853, on the eve of the Crimean War,” wrote Fomenko, “the legendary Governor General of Eastern Siberia, Nikolai Muravyov-Amursky, prepared a report for the Emperor Nicholas I on strengthening Russia’s position along the Amur River and on Sakhalin Island,” insisting, in this context, on a stronger relationship between Russia and the U.S.A. “The U.S. dominance over North America is as natural as the Russian dominance ... along the Asian coastline of the Eastern Ocean,” wrote Muravyov-Amursky.

Fomenko reminded readers that the original project for a railway link, circumventing Lake Baikal on the northern side (it was built in the late 20th Century, and today is called the Baikal-Amur Mainline), was originally introduced in 1857 by P.M. Collins, a U.S. economist. According to Fomenko’s interpretation, the Russian side rejected the U.S. proposal of assistance in this effort “for strategic reasons, as at that time, the railway connection between Moscow and Irkutsk did not yet exist, and the Emperor feared too close an involvement of Russia in foreign markets.”

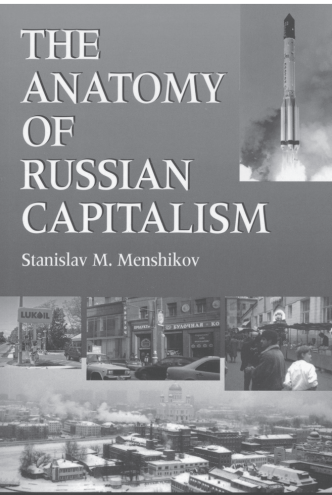
Nonetheless, those considerations were not an insurmountable obstacle to the 1867 agreement on the sale to the U.S.A. of Russia’s colonies in North America: the Aleutian Isles, Alaska, and the strip of coastline southward to Juneau. As Fomenko emphasized, the negotiations “were kept top secret until the deal was signed.”

“Both Britain and France were caught by surprise with this agreement, which helped the United States to surround the British-owned lands in North America from all sides,” noted Fomenko. He quoted a London *Times* commentary of the day, expressing worry over “a strange sympathy between Russia and the United States.”

Not only was Britain caught by surprise, but the pro-British faction of the Russian establishment was as well. Minister of Internal Affairs P.A. Valuyev complained, “Silently selling a part of our territory [to the North American States], we are doing a bad service to England, whose Canadian lands are now even more alone in their defiance of the Monroe doctrine.”

The very acknowledgement, that the Monroe Doctrine really was aimed at blocking European imperial control of parts of the Americas, and that its opponents were the friends of the British Empire, is practically a revolution in Russian historiography. In the Soviet period, the Monroe Doctrine was consistently interpreted as the U.S.A.’s own “imperial” thrust to dominate the Western Hemisphere.

The second and third installments of Fomenko’s series dealt with little-remembered episodes of 20th-Century history, in which America diplomacy acted against British attempts to exploit its assets in the Baltic littoral countries, for strategic aims against Russia. The Duma member’s historical investigation is relevant to the recent tensions in and around Estonia, and will be reported in a forthcoming article.



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