Breaking Up the Bad. Part II

Continued. Read Part I here

Too many countries of South America, Asia and Africa continue to be the “clients” of that nation. They carry on with trade and nourish political connections for their own reasons. Turkey is making billions of dollars by openly breaking the embargoes. Countries of the Middle East are happy to receive stolen Ukrainian wheat transported to them by the Russian ships. China and India are buying Russian oil and gas in huge quantities. Among Russia’s “friends” these days are Iran, Syria, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea. Mexico is calling for the ceasefire in Ukraine, preserving land-grabbing status-quo for Russia. Russia belongs to a BRIC trade group of nations. Instead of kicking Russia out, several nations are looking to join that body right now. Even the EU can’t stop buying Russia’s gas just yet. Isolating Russia is hard. There is no unity among the nations when it comes to the Russian Federation. Perhaps in time, the USA and the wiser Europeans would apply enough pressure to close these gashing spigots, yet they remain open as the war perpetrated by that country is going on.

There is a layer of population over there that would be mostly immune to any western sanctions. These are the people who live “hand to mouth” in small villages and towns all over the country. To them heat comes from wood, cooking – from coal and wood-fired ovens – but not gas. Toilet facilities are outhouses. They have no running water. Food is what you forage in the forest or gather from your own garden plot. They earn little money. Western sanctions mean nothing to them. They have no or limited access to the internet, TV is their primary source of information. A lot of Russians live like that.

Containment must be used to isolate that nation from the rest of the world, until major irreversible changes are enacted. Containment may work, but it hides its own peril – without political engagement it is hard to expect changes from the other side. Like anything in politics, it’s about making deals. Yet we have our doubts. Russia has “firm” political traditions. That country (as USSR until 1991) broke most treaties it signed with other nations. Russia remains predictable in one way only – like a wild animal, it can turn against us in a second. Sadly, we cannot trust them.

So, what other “recipes” can we try to deflate the danger?

Break up the big bad Russian Federation.

This path is truly full of risks. Russia is a country of many peoples, several of which have their own nationalist and even separatist aspirations. Then you have regional powers – governors who rule huge territories as their own fiefdoms on behalf of the central Moscow government. Russia started the war in Ukraine to gradually bring back the old USSR it lost when the country fell apart in 1991. Now seeing its own territory break up into a multitude of independent nations would be viewed as a complete disaster by the central powers. This is probably their biggest fear.

Promoting regional independence of nations moving towards self-governing may start the process. If done correctly, boosting independence trends among Russia's 21 republics, one autonomous region and 11 autonomous areas would give major headaches to the federal government. At this time almost none of them are looking to become fully independent. But with Russia's troubles multiplying, some of these entities may at some point decide they are better off fending for themselves. And what a mess it would be. As small independent territories they can no longer be a threat to anyone but the closest neighbors, and you can be sure local military and political skirmishes would follow. Plus, China would most certainly attempt a land grab in the Russian Far East. They have been eyeing, waiting and dreaming of bringing back territories that were once theirs and perhaps add a few extra juicy land morsels in the process. It will become a feeding frenzy among various political leaders who can assemble military forces to defend their own "territories".

Russia is a nuclear power. If it breaks apart, who would retain control of these weapons? They are scattered all over the country. How can this danger be neutralized for the rest of us? The West will have to make sure nuclear weapons do not become a pawn in this power struggle of various players

The war in Ukraine is opening up the gates of hell for the Russian Federation. We don't know what the future holds, but what we are witnessing is the process of empire disintegration, with all the trimmings and historical parallels to the past. It takes years, but it is about to rapidly accelerate. Losing war is an unforgivable sin in the eyes of the country's population and they will make it known to the government, at least it has been the case in the past. Powerful security agencies are likely to suppress any popular revolt, but the potential is there.

There are many unanswered questions. We're only scratching the surface here.

If you ask us of how the world is to deal with post-war Russia, we think it will

take a combination of all three elements, so to “de-fang the dragon”. The three elements would only be partially successful individually, but will help bring the end to that country’s savage behavior, curtailing its ability to wage wars; spread its rabid poisonous ideology and live in complete disregard for international law.

We can’t have that, can we? Your answer, of course, depends on how you view the above

Stay safe out there.