

Washington and Brussels: Running in Reverse

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Washington and Brussels' response to foreign affairs challenges, as they face their own political and economic disasters and decline, has been to impose economic sanctions, boycotts and issue increasingly reckless military threats against rival nations. The ruling and main opposition parties in the US and EU have taken over the major media, turning '*news programs*' into propaganda campaigns promoting violent power grabs ('*regime change*') and self-defeating trade wars.

Washington's belligerency amounts to merely pounding on empty oil drums on behalf of the US oil giants. Overt hostility prepares for trade wars, military confrontations and possible regional conflagrations . . . where the US and EU will likely face even greater defeats.

Economic warfare is designed to impoverish nations and create a pretext for sowing internal discord and sabotage, especially through buying political candidates, organizing street mobs and recruiting military vassals.

Washington, hampered by its current internal divisions, is stumbling backwards and forwards towards major catastrophes. The oligarchs in Brussels face complex internal splits and even open rebellion, especially from the EU's new members.

The referendum around 'Brexit' revealed a popular rebellion against decades of deepening class inequalities and the blatant financial power grab by the speculator-banker elite.

Central and Eastern European authoritarians are challenging the Brussels oligarchy. Powerful national bosses in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia have embraced Israel's thuggish Prime Minister Netanyahu in a common move to weaken Brussels.

The break-up of internal cohesion in Washington and Brussels has led to more frantic efforts to externalize their problems, through warfare, in order to retain state power – a kind of '*building capitalism for a few countries*'.

In summary, the on-going break-up of the US-EU bloc has led to increasing reliance on economic warfare, with sanctions, boycotts and tariff walls to confront international trade competitors and regional rivals.

Washington and Brussels have targeted four major countries: Russia, China, Iran and Venezuela. The build-up for waging economic warfare includes daily hysterical demonization of these nations in the mass media, accompanied by the recruitment of regional clients, in order to buttress economic sanctions. The campaign of economic and ideological warfare is designed to provoke internal political divisions in the targeted country in the lead-up to a violent seizure of political power.

Russia: Economic Sanctions and Peripheral Wars

Washington and the European Union have pursued a two-pronged strategy against Russia: On the one hand, they have encircled Russia with NATO and US bases, ships, missile installation, cyberwar centers and communications/spy outposts and troop exercises from the Baltics to Ukraine, Georgia and beyond. On the other hand, they slapped draconian trade sanctions on Russian import and export of military and civilian technology, energy and mining

companies, machine goods, agriculture and other commodities, as well as sanctioning individuals, their family members and confiscating Russian property. The openly stated strategic goal is to create such chaos and deprivation that the Russian people will violently overthrow the Putin presidency and restore Russia to vassal status. With a new pliable set of puppet oligarchs in the Kremlin, the West would resume pillaging the country's resources and wealth, as it did so brazenly during the 1990's.

The sanctions and military threats have so far boomeranged back onto the West, with the possible exception of the US-EU organized coup in the Ukraine. Economic sanctions have convinced the Russian government and people to redirect their resources to reindustrialize and diversify the economy, substituting local production and increasing agricultural self-sufficiency: In other words, expanding and stabilizing the internal market.

Furthermore, Russia increased its trade and strategic linkages to China and Iran, while retaliating against the EU by cutting off agricultural imports from Poland and Georgia, thereby punishing those farm export sectors. The US-NATO effort to encircle Russia boomeranged: Moscow incorporated the ethnic Russian-majority Crimea (with its strategic Black Sea naval bases) back into Russia via a well organized popular referendum and expanded its military bases and strategic cooperation with the government of Syria, leading to Damascus victory over the terrorist Wahhabi mercenaries. The EU's own energy companies, especially in Germany and Italy, where millions are dependent on cheap Russian oil and gas imports, have repeatedly violated the US-imposed sanctions.

The brutal power grab in Ukraine brought a weak, decadent oligarch-regime to power, surviving on Western handouts. The putsch-regime in Kiev oversees an increasingly fractured nation – the new face of ‘*Western Democracy*’.

The resort to weird propaganda ploys, accusing Vladimir Putin of ‘*rigging*’ the US Presidential elections, has paralyzed US domestic policy, turning Washington into an insane asylum of continental dimensions. Major domestic crises, like the opioid addiction epidemic, which has killed over 500,000 Americans since 1999, go unaddressed, as the politicians and media froth at the mouth in a display of synchronized *Russophobia*.

US and EU Sanctions and China: Biting the Hand that Feeds

Washington and the EU have repeatedly threatened to impose sanctions on China’s manufacturing exports and retaliate harshly for Beijing’s state policy of financial controls.

Under Obama and Trump, Washington installed anti-missile radar systems in South Korea, clearly aimed at China. The Pentagon sent a naval armada to harass Chinese vessels in the South China Sea. They sold a billion dollars worth of offensive military hardware to the government in Taiwan, while backing separatists in Hong Kong and Tibet, as well as the violent *ihadis* in western China. US planes have flown over Chinese military airbases and port installations on the islands claimed by China in the South China Sea. Currently, Washington is threatening to invade North Korea, one of China’s trading partners.

Economic sanctions and saber rattling notwithstanding, China continues to advance with giant steps: expanding its economic links through its global investment agreements with sixty countries. It has successfully launched the multi-hundred-billion dollar ‘*Silk Road*

Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road’ project of railways, roads, ports and other vital infrastructure linking China with its markets in Southeast and Central Asia through to the Middle East, Russia, Europe and beyond. This massive project is currently transforming entire regions and creating millions of jobs and thousands of markets.

Despite Obama and Trumps’ threats, hundreds of US and EU multi-nationals, especially auto manufacturers, are anxious to increase their investments in China and sign lucrative new joint ventures.

Chinese multi-nationals continue to invest and buy firms in the US, EU, South America and Oceania. Chinese imports of the most advanced technology have strengthened its links with Silicon Valley and Germany.

In contrast, the US trade deficits with China are more a result of the parasitic *financialization* of the US economy, than any lack of Chinese reciprocity.

Faced with US military encirclement, China has doubled its military spending in recent years, building its first-ever overseas base in Africa, while strengthening its military co-operation with Russia – including massive joint exercises.

In a word, the blowback of this sanction mania has mainly damaged US and EU import-export companies and investors while marginalizing UE-EU capitalists from participating in China’s enormous global infrastructure projects and the emerging regional markets.

While the newly elected government in South Korea has made tentative moves toward de-escalating tensions with the North, attempting to freeze the US THAAD-missile program

aimed at China and installed unilaterally while South Korea was undergoing a major constitutional crisis, and mend economic fences with China, the US (with the California coast over 5800 miles to the east) is fomenting war on the peninsula.

With China's estimated annual growth of 6.7% for 2017 (compared to 2% in the US), it is clear that policy of sanctions and military encirclement is failing.

US-EU Sanctions and Iran

The US is openly violating its nuclear agreement with Iran by imposing new economic sanctions despite the absence of any evidence that Iran has been un-cooperative. The US threatened US, EU and Chinese oil and banking interests, and pushed policies promoted by the militaristic Israel Firsters who dictate Washington's Middle East policy. The US has joined with Israel and Saudi Arabia in labeling Iran and its allies in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine as 'terrorists'.

The sanctions policy has not worked: Iran continues to sign oil exploration and export agreements with the Chinese, EU and Russian oil companies. It is increasing trade with China and plays a major role in OPEC.

Aggressive Israeli and US-Zionist threats have pushed Iran to expand its long and middle range (non-nuclear) missile program while strengthening its military alliance with Russia and Syria.

Iran's humanitarian aid for Yemen, working to assist millions of Yemenis faced with mass starvation and a horrific cholera epidemic deliberately caused by Saudi Arabia with US and Israeli complicity, has won worldwide admiration and exposed the barbaric nature of the Saudi monarchy throughout the Muslim world.

US violations of its agreements have strengthened Iranian nationalists and weakened pro-Western, neo-liberal currents. No '*color revolution*' to install a Persian puppet is possible under the daily threat of attack from the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

In sum, Iran has more than overcome US sanctions by forging new alliances while reducing US influence regionally and domestically. Iran's support for Syria has undercut Saudi-US-Israeli backed Wahhabi-terrorists-mercenaries and strengthened the cause of secular, non-sectarian Arab nationalism. Washington's hardline anti-Iranian policies have backfired. Iran has diversified its economic ties and strengthened its military defenses. Meanwhile the US remains isolated and subject to the dictates of the Jewish state and its hysterical incompetent agents in Washington.

US and Sanctions on Syria

While US and EU sanctions and proxy-military interventions have devastated Syria with the murder of hundreds of thousands Syrians and the displacement of millions of refugees, it clearly failed to achieve its stated strategic goal – '*regime change*' and the imposition of a client government in Damascus.

Indeed, millions of uprooted, desperate Syrians have fled to the EU, creating a massive refugee and security problem.

Terrorists, including thousands of EU and US citizens, were recruited and trained by the security forces of the EU-US to overthrow the Syrian government. They have been driven from Syria and are increasingly turning their deadly skills against targets in Western Europe.

Syrian defense ties with Russia have consolidated the long-term Russian presence in the Middle East and strengthened strategic ties with Iran and the powerful Hezbollah Party (Lebanon's ruling coalition partner).

The miserable defeat and retreat of the US bankrolled *Wahhabi* terrorists convinced President Trump to cut-off military, financial and training support for such a '*lost cause*' and seek a viable joint US-Russian sponsored cease-fire agreement in southern Syria. US sanctions inflicted a murderous burden on the Syrian people and society but left the government in Damascus intact. After spending scores of billions of dollars equipping and training ISIS and Al Qaeda mercenaries, the proxy military intervention has not resulted in its stated goal of *regime change* – it has extended and expanded Syria's alliances with Russia, Iran and Lebanon, and exposed the brutal incompetence of US-EU-Saudi-Israeli Middle East policy.

EU and US intervention ruined Syria but failed to rule the targeted nation. Paradoxically, it inflamed tensions with the Turkish government and military by choosing to back the Kurdish secessionist militias on its borders. It intensified domestic anti-immigrant and rightist movements in the EU and US, threatening their own 'clubby' governing coalitions.

In the end, military intervention and economic sanctions provoked global nuclear tensions without securing any of the stated strategic goals in the Middle East.

Sanctions and Intervention: Venezuela

For the past 15 years, the US, with support from the EU, has waged covert and overt political and military campaigns to overthrow the *Chavista* government. Prior to the collapse of the global oil price, this was met with little success. Now, the fall of regional allies, the rise of rightist regimes and the economic vulnerabilities of the Venezuelan mono-economy are threatening the government in Caracas.

In 2002, Washington and the EU backed a failed military-business coup. This was followed by a failed bosses oil lockout in 2003. Washington then supported a failed electoral boycott in 2005 and backed a series of unsuccessful presidential candidates and opposition congressional parties – until 2015.

Meanwhile, US has backed cross-border attacks by Colombian gangster-paramilitary groups against Venezuelan towns and land reform settlements. Its '*Democracy*' NGO's have promoted the terrorist sabotage of oil fields, power plants and public transport systems, as well as clinics and police stations.

Repeatedly, the *Chavista* forces successfully defeated US-backed terrorist sabotage and referendums. However, the oil price crash over the last three years has changed the socio-

economic correlation of forces. Declining income from its oil exports have cut Venezuela's imports of vital food, medicine and manufactured goods.

The US escalated its special operations, providing financing and training via self-styled 'non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) to opposition parties and violent '*pro-democracy*' gangs.

The private retail, banking and transport sectors have paralyzed production and consumption through artificial shortages (hoarding), black market activity, speculation and massive overseas transfers of foreign currency.

Unlike other successful governments targeted by the US and EU with sanctions and sabotage, Venezuela has remained incapable of substituting production and diversifying its economy. It did not clamp down on hostile NGO groups, nor did it effectively confront violent street protests and capture the terrorists who attacked and assassinated police and military officials, government workers and civilian supporters of the *Chavista* government.

As the crisis deepened, the US and EU mass media repeatedly called for a military coup or '*regime change*' backed by '*strong international (sic) efforts*', thinly coded language for a US-led invasion in collaboration with the far right regimes of Colombia, Brazil and Argentina.

US-funded street thugs have intimidated bus company owners, small business people, and professionals - and especially targeted public employees who lived in neighborhood with a strong opposition presence, forcing them to close businesses or flee.

Economic sanctions have escalated with open US government threats to seize Venezuelan refineries located in the US (CITGO) and freeze its overseas assets.

CIA and Pentagon operatives have attempted to penetrate the military to ‘turn them’ against the constitutionally legitimate government through bribes and threats against their families.

The prospects of civil war is reaching a crescendo in late July 2017, as the government fought back convoking and winning free elections for a constituent assembly to elect representatives, based on class and community interests, to counter the US-business-controlled Congress, which has been at war with the Presidency. The US and its local and overseas collaborators threaten a total blockade with the seizure of overseas assets leading to a possible civil war and invasion.

Any US-backed war in Venezuela will bring the most retrograde racist oligarchs to power and will result in mass slaughter of the poor and lower middle classes who had benefited from the *Chavista* social programs, the assassination of their leaders, teachers, intellectuals, artists and activists, the destruction of the economy and wide-spread hunger and disease, in other words, a nightmarish ‘*Libyan solution on the Caribbean*’. The US may turn back social democracy, but Venezuelan revolutionaries will fight on for their very lives.

Conclusion

The US and the EU have launched major economic and military attacks against Russia, China, Iran and Venezuela. With the exception of Venezuela, imperialist aggression has been defeated and overcome, and the three have registered substantial strategic gains.

Sanctions have boomeranged on their imperialist authors and led to new partnerships and alliances, the diversification of these dynamic economies and stronger defense systems.

The US has taxed and spent well beyond the capacity of its own future generations and yet has lost on the key battlegrounds in Asia and the Middle East. China's monumental Eurasian infrastructure program stands in stark contrast to the spectacle of lonely US battleships circling rock piles in the South China Sea and US fighter jet parked on isolated airfields of northern Australia. We can pity poor schizophrenic Australia, whose chief trade partner is China, kowtowing to the militarists in Washington while hoping Beijing will look the other way.

The US Congress imposed additional economic sanctions against Russia to drive a wedge between the US and the EU (Germany) as Putin's economic recovery takes off and the vast Russian market attracts Berlin's industrialists.

The Zionist-dictated Congressional sanctions against Iran may satisfy Israel's appetites for another US-Middle East war (to be fought with more American blood and treasure), but the US military command and the vast majority of US citizens are staunchly against another quagmire.

It should be crystal clear to any rational observer: Sanctions do not work against powerful global powers with diversified economies, strong leaders, world markets, resources and skilled workers. Military threats of aggression are turned away by developing defensive strength, including nuclear weapons and intercontinental missiles. However the US policy-making elite, especially in the Democratic Party, is anything but rational.

Iran has formidable regional allies and its battle-hardened armed forces possess medium range missiles capable of striking US regional allies, especially Israel and Saudi Arabia and US bases in the Gulf.

None of these three regional or global powers are susceptible to internal subversions via ‘*color revolutions*’, NGO sabotage, mass media propaganda or thug-led street violence.

Only Venezuela is vulnerable because the *Chavista* government did not take the opportunity to diversify its oil dependent economy when oil prices were at a historic high. Furthermore, it tolerated the activities of US funded NGO, which worked with violent coup-fomenting ‘political’ parties and gangs. It kept its reserves and assets within the US and failed to take control of the commanding heights of its national banking system. Despite its mass popular support, the *Chavista* government allowed the entry of corrupt opportunists into the government and saw the rise of a new class of capitalist speculators diverting oil profits to overseas private accounts.

In summary, US sanctions and military threats can be defeated and converted into victories. Vulnerability, when recognized, can be converted into strength, provided the political leadership has the vision, capacity, resources and strategy to do so.