

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:52 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Ioffe piece

Check it out.

From: McFaul, Michael A
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 1:14 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: FW: Ioffe piece

From: Jason Flippen [redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 17, 2012 9:07 PM
To: McFaul, Michael A
Subject: Ioffe piece

B6

Jake,

When we coming in from airport, I talked with Secy Clinton about how all-powerful the Russian government sees her . She seemed quite interested. This piece captures the sentiment quite nicely. This quote is an especially good one:

“If you were to believe the official Russian press, it is not Vladimir Putin running the country, but Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.”

Pass on or summarize for her as you see fit.

<http://www.tnr.com/blog/plank/107349/russia's-wild-fantasies-all-powerful-state-department#>

Russia's Wild Fantasies of an All-Powerful State Department

Julia Ioffe

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When journalist Arkady Mamontov aired his television exposé on Pussy Riot last week, the central question was who was behind their riotous performance? Mamontov's investigation yielded two culprits: oligarch-in-exile Boris Berezovsky, and "some Americans" who hired Pussy Riot and choreographed their act in order to corrupt the souls of Russian youth. Mamontov didn't need to spell out who those Americans were; everyone watching got the message anyway. It was the State Department.

If you were to believe the official Russian press, it is not Vladimir Putin running the country, but Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The Russian public has been lead to believe that penny-pinching Foggy Bottom is a sleek and furtive machine with money to burn, one that can topple leaders on a whim and choreograph elaborate street protests at a far remove.

The State Department's plots against Russia were initially unveiled by none other than Putin himself, who, in December, accused Clinton of "giving the signal" to Russia's opposition to go out and protest after last year's parliamentary election. Then there was talk that the State Department paid tens of thousands of Muscovites to come out and rail against the Kremlin. (In case you were wondering about the true origins of America's national debt.) Then newly-appointed Ambassador Michael McFaul arrived, and he was accused in state media of having been sent by the State Department to foment revolution in Russia via his Twitter account. State television has aired chilling documentaries about how the State Department was behind everything from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the economic chaos of the 1990s, because its ultimate goal is "to bring Russia to its knees." One such expose even accused the State Department of deviously luring people to opposition protests with—wait for it—cookies.

To anyone who knows anything about how Foggy Bottom actually works, its Bondian image in Russia is nothing short of hilarious. "The conspiracy theories are all 100 percent correct," quipped a Hill staffer who works on foreign policy. "The Russians cracked the code on this one. The State Department really is the center of a conspiracy so vast that it boggles the imagination." People inside the State Department hardly recognize the organization that the Russian government describes. "The Russians see the State Department as this pseudo-mystical, omniscient, omnipotent organization," explained one State Department employee in Moscow. "Little do they know that we live from budget to budget, and that, at times, we're even worried about our salaries!"

Whence comes this ill-fitting lionization of a rather unwieldy, bureaucratic ministry? Aside from the obvious propaganda benefit of having an external enemy, a large part of it is rooted in the Russian proclivity to see puppeteers and conspiracies everywhere. In Russia, as in many societies with closed systems of government, nothing is as it seems, even when the counter-intuitive becomes the counter-factual. Archives filled with documents proving mass repressions in the 1930s? Forged. People coming out to demand democratic freedoms on their own? Please. (A couple years ago, a Russian opposition leader went on the television show of Margarita Simonyan, editor in chief of Kremlin English-language channel Russia Today. He happened to mention that he didn't think that the State Department engineered the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. In fact, he called it "insanity" and "propaganda." She shot back sarcastically: "So you really believe that they did this themselves? Thought all this stuff up on their own?")

In part, it comes from the fact that Russians, just like Americans, think that the rest of the world is just like them. In Russia, one man decides everything -- including who gets to edit a small scientific journal. It's hard for Russians to understand, for example, that America does not have a monolithic political system—or even a monolithic foreign ministry—and that President Obama, for example, can't just tell Congress to go and do

something, the way Putin can with his parliament. And because there's been no real change at the top for over a decade, it's hard for Russians to grasp that the foreign policy of Obama may differ substantively from that of George W. Bush, and that the appearance of change is not a canard. "Russian public opinion is given to seeing the world not as diverse but as a whole," says Sergei Markov, a pro-Putin hawk and former parliamentarian. "In the Russian mass consciousness, the American side is a very strong power, so there must be a secret room where people engineer these things."

Moreover, the man who does decide everything in Russia has a background—however spotty and apparently second-rate—in espionage and subterfuge: He served as a KGB officer in Dresden. Today, he is surrounded by foreign policy advisors who, according to several sources who have sat in on such meetings, are a fairly paranoid bunch. "Even during the reset, the bureaucracies of the two countries have never gotten along well," says Cliff Kupchan, who heads up the Russia division in the Eurasia Group. "Even when the top gets along well, as they have during Obama era, it's hard to penetrate down into the ranks, especially when many are products of the Cold War."

And, to be fair to the Russians, the State Department has expressed a clear interest in democracy promotion around the world. In Russia, those efforts are mostly conducted through USAID and NDI, as well as by grants to local NGOs. These efforts, of course, are officially unwelcome and seen not as a strain of quixotic American idealism, but as meddling. In fact, there was talk recently of the Russian government shutting down USAID on its turf. "Of course, no one pays them to organize protests, but they pay them for years to promote 'democratic values,'" explains Markov, who, ironically, spent a decade working for NDI in Moscow. "I think the State Department itself participates very little in what is happening on the ground, but they are happy that these protests are happening, no doubt." ("Many Russians really think NDI can cause color revolutions," says Kupchan. "Empirically, I don't think that's the case. They have a lot of very young people running around in these countries.")

And yet, it's hard for American officials not to see a bit of humor in it, like the old joke about a Jewish man reading an anti-Semitic paper because it's brimming with good news: Jews have all the money, Jews have all the power. Says the Hill staffer: "They still believe in American power and American influence, probably more than Americans do. It's probably the last place in the world where people still think we can engineer anything effectively. It's very refreshing."

Sent from my iPad