

Who Will Weed Out the Warmongers?

Exclusive: Progressive Democrats are gearing up to fight Wall Street appointees to a Hillary Clinton administration, but there is no similar campaign to weed out neocon/liberal-hawk warmongers, writes Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

If Hillary Clinton hangs on to win the presidency, liberal Democrats have vowed to block her appointment of Wall Street-friendly officials to key Cabinet and sub-Cabinet jobs. But there has been little organized resistance to her choosing hawkish foreign policy advisers.

Indeed, Washington's foreign policy establishment has purged almost anyone who isn't part of the neoconservative/liberal-interventionist "group think." That's why pretty much everyone who "matters" agrees about the need to push around Russia, China, Syria, Iran, etc.

Reflecting that attitude, Sunday's lead editorial in the neocon Washington Post hailed the broad consensus within the Establishment for more warlike actions once President Obama is gone, taking with him what the Post calls Obama's "self-defeating passivity."

The Post praised a new report from the liberal Center for American Progress which calls for bombing the Syrian military and getting tough to "counter Iran's negative influence" in line with what all the neocons – as well as Israel and Saudi Arabia – want the next President to do.

The absence of any significant counter to this neocon/liberal-hawk "group think" represents one of the greatest dangers to the future of the human species, since this new hubris comes with a cavalier assumption that nuclear-armed Russia and China will simply accept humiliation dished out by the "indispensable nation."

If they don't, we can expect Official Washington to ratchet up tensions in a game of nuclear chicken with the expectation that the leaders in Moscow and Beijing will bow down to U.S. "exceptionalism" and slink away with their tails between their legs.

Surely, that is what the armchair warriors at The Washington Post will demand and they have, of course, a spotless record of infallibility, such as their certainty that Iraq was hiding stockpiles of WMD in 2003. Editorial-page editor Fred Hiatt was so sure of that he wrote it as flat fact.

Given the Iraq War catastrophe and the failure to find the WMD, you might have assumed that Hiatt was summarily fired and has never worked in journalism again.

But, of course, you'd be wrong. He is still the editorial-page editor of The Washington Post continuing to ladle out his extraordinary wisdom and brilliant insights.

The New McCarthyism

And, if you dare question those new certainties or note the risks of stumbling into a nuclear conflagration, the Post's editorial pages label you a Moscow stooge repeating Russian propaganda.

That is what Post columnist Anne Applebaum wrote about Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump when he warned about the risks of World War III if a President Hillary Clinton starts shooting down Russian planes over Syria.

Rather than acknowledge the genuine risk of getting into a shooting war with Russia, neocon Applebaum declares such concerns unacceptable and offers a whiff of McCarthyism toward anyone who thinks such a thing.

"Why is Russian state media using such extreme language?" she asks darkly. "And why is Trump repeating it?"

Then, with the typical perceptiveness of a neocon ideologue, Applebaum determines that the Kremlin is warning its citizens about the growing risks of nuclear war to scare them into line amid a recession that the U.S. helped create as part of its "regime change" strategy to destabilize Russia by making its economy scream.

A thoughtful person might stop here and wonder if the use of economic sanctions and other means to destabilize nuclear-armed Russia is such a good idea, but no mainstream person is allowed to raise such questions inside Official Washington. That would just make you a Russian puppet, in Applebaum's view.

Applebaum then rants on with some wild conspiracy theories about Russian plans to exploit the U.S. presidential transition:

"Whatever the outcome on Nov. 8, political uncertainty will follow: the months of transition, a change of White House staff, perhaps even the violent backlash that Trump may incite. This could be an excellent moment for a major Russian offensive: a land grab in Ukraine, a foray into the Baltic states, a much bigger intervention in the Middle East – anything to 'test' the new president.

"If that's coming, Putin needs to prepare his public to fight much bigger wars and to persuade the rest of the world not to stop him. He needs to get his generals into the right mind-set, and his soldiers ready to go. A little nuclear war rhetoric never fails to focus attention, and I'm sure it has."

Reckless Drivel

Perhaps the more immediate question here is why a major American newspaper runs such crazy and reckless drivel from one of its regular columnists. But the fact that the Post does so indicates how dangerous the moment is for humanity. For those of us who read the Post regularly, such insane rhetoric barely registers since we see similar nuttiness on a daily basis.

But the “group think” that the Post and other mainstream publications create and then enforce explains why there is such unity among the Establishment as it presses ahead with these dangerous policies in much the same manner that almost the same cast of insiders “group thought” their way into the disastrous Iraq War.

So, the wannabe insiders at the Center for American Progress and the more established pooh-bahs at the Brookings Institution and other preeminent think tanks know they have to promote “regime change” strategies and other forms of warmongering to appease Hiatt and his fellow neocon editorialists and columnists.

In Washington, this “group think” has moved beyond the usual careerist and conformist “conventional wisdom” into something more akin to totalitarianism, at least on foreign policy issues.

That is why it is hard to even come up with a list of sensible people who could survive the onslaught of character assassinations if they were to be proposed as senior advisers to a President Hillary Clinton.

That is also why the attention of progressives, such as Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, only on vetting domestic officials in a prospective Hillary Clinton administration is so insufficient.

If a hawkish President Clinton surrounds herself with like-minded neocons and liberal hawks, the costs of their warmongering would surely swallow up the tax dollars necessary for domestic priorities – on infrastructure, education, health care, the environment and other pressing concerns.

And, if the McCarthyistic intolerance of The Washington Post influences or infects her administration, the genuine risks of World War III will dwarf any other worries.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).
