

173

разговоры России не помогут

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Отрывки из статьи

...Бывший президент Ричард Никсон объединил усилия с президентом Клинтонем во время необычной встречи умов, истеблишмент Вашингтона сплотился для поддержки своего человека. По их словам, Ельцин должен выжить любой ценой. "Если наш парень сумеет это сделать, переворота не будет", - такова была точка зрения Вашингтона в то время, как конфронтация между Ельциным и российским парламентом достигла апогея.

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(1) Газета "Москоу Таймс является основным ежедневным изданием для иностранных (в особенности американских) общин в Москве.

# Talk Won't Help Russia

McCombs 16/3/93

174

By Walter Russell Mead

"It's déjà vu all over again," as Yogi Berra might have said about current conditions in Russia. Another democratic leader in Russia is on the ropes, and the United States is rushing to his aid with too little, too late.

When it comes to Russia, Washington still doesn't get it: On Friday, a coalition of communists, fascists and opportunists stripped the first democratically elected leader in Russian history of the last rags of power. All last week Washington was opening the rhetorical spigots to support embattled President Boris Yeltsin.

As former President Richard Nixon joined forces with President Clinton in an unusual meeting of the minds, the Washington establishment rallied to stand by its man. Yeltsin, they said, must survive at all costs. "If our guy does it, it isn't a coup," was the general Washington line as Yeltsin and the Russian parliament approached high noon.

*The biggest question hanging over the Clinton presidency is whether this president can get ahead of events in Russia.*

Strobe Talbott, Clinton's coordinator for Russian policy, has yet to be sworn in, but with 62 percent of the American public opposed to increased aid to Russia, Clinton and Talbott have a tough row to hoe. The difference between Western proposals to aid Russia and the amount of money Russia needs would be comic if the consequences were less grave.

We have to go back 60 years to find the West acting this stupidly: to the aftermath of World War I, when Western governments turned deaf ears to pleas by German democrats for help in rebuilding their shattered economy. Instead the West saddled them with crippling debts, and enforced a peace that left millions of Germans stranded as ethnic minorities in newly independent, anti-German states. Sound familiar?

It should: This is precisely the policy mix with which the West has greeted Russia's democratic forces. Both Mikhail Gorbachev and Yeltsin looked West for help; both men learned too late that help would never come.

In Germany, the democrats were defeated by conservative nationalist forces nostalgic for the old regime. The conservatives briefly stabilized the German situation, but worsening economic conditions combined with widespread bitterness against the West to bring Adolf Hitler to power.

Even that wasn't the end of Western stupidity. When democrats ran Germany, the West insisted on debt repayment and refused to compromise on Germany's boundaries. When democrats asked politely, the West was harsh, but when Hitler threatened, the West appeased. Cancel your debts? Break disarmament treaties? Move into Czechoslovakia? No problem.

Surely, we like to think, we learned something from all that. Wrong. We are turning deaf ears to pleas from eastern democrats while appeasing eastern aggressors — like the Serbs. Let Yeltsin fall, and let the mixed bag of parliamentary figures now moving to center stage in Moscow yield to someone really terrible, and we are all too likely to see another round of dithering and appease-

ment. Just ask the Bosnians.

The biggest question hanging over the Clinton presidency is whether this president can get ahead of events in Russia instead of struggling lamely in their wake.

It won't be easy. The Second Russian Revolution is still in its early stages. The old Communist machine is still breaking down; this is an ugly and painful process that neither Yeltsin nor the Russian parliament can control. The Russian state is disintegrating as regions go their own way without regard to decrees from the faltering center. The new forces remaking Russia from the ground up — the businessmen and local leaders — are not yet represented at the national level. We do not

yet know where the Russian military stands, or whether the soldiers will obey their officers in the event of a coup.

Chaotic situations like these are the ultimate test of statesmanship. Washington should not, and cannot, put all its eggs in one basket. Governments and leaders come and go, Russia remains; and it is Russia, not Yeltsin or anyone

else, that must be the object of our policy.

Meanwhile, there is an odd gap between the desperate sense of crisis Washington feels over Russia and the minuscule levels of aid that the administration and Congress are prepared to provide. "A new Marshall Plan!" goes the cry — but this time it has to be done on the cheap.

That won't work. Russia needs more than the United States and the whole Western world combined can afford to hand out.

Paradoxically, Russia is rich. Its oil and gold deposits, its forests and its farmlands represent one of the Earth's greatest storehouses of natural wealth. The starting point for our Russia policy must be this: to enable Russia to use its long-term wealth to make the short-term investments and adjustments that can give the Russian economy a fighting chance.

This wouldn't be foreign aid. Western governments acting through international institutions like the World Bank could provide Russia with hundreds of billions of dollars based on its natural resources, and the assets could then be sold off to private corporations in order to service the loans. The Clinton administration needs to think big. The American people oppose a huge foreign-aid giveaway to Russia, but they understand the urgent need to keep Russia stable. If the administration gets a massive program of resource-backed lending under way — a kind of Lend-Lease for modern times — then it can put a floor under Russia's descent into chaos. Nothing could be more important; Russia's problems are growing daily more urgent and more dangerous. This is not a sideshow for the Clinton presidency; foreign policy is moving into the center ring — where is it likely to stay.

Walter Russell Mead is the author of "Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition." The article was written for the Los Angeles Times.

25 APR 1994 \* 01937