



The Stupid Arrogance of Ted Cruz: Opposes Peaceful Diplomacy While Fomenting Economic War

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Sometimes really smart people are really stupid. Not just stupid, but malign. Such is the case of Sen. Ted Cruz.

The presidential wannabe joined many seemingly principled Republicans in opposing Donald Trump in 2016, but then did the ritual political pirouette and kowtow, submissively embracing Trump's presidency. Little is more dangerous than burning ambition in someone both unscrupulous and intelligent.

Now Cruz is attempting to prevent the State Department from doing business with the world in response to the Biden administration's sensible decision not to wreck relations with both Germany and Russia. Simultaneously reckless and arrogant, his actions demonstrate that he would be a fool as president.

The U.S. Senate has collapsed as a functioning legislative body. The Founders imagined a group of statesmen who would share in the difficult task of charting America's journey in a dangerous and unpredictable world. Today the chamber is made up of 100 wannabe presidents, or at least secretaries of state, who seek to demonstrate their chops by incompetently meddling around the world.

Such is Cruz, a Texan widely recognized as bright but equally widely reviled for his reckless pursuit of self, which he puts before all else, including country. Using the Senate's antiquated rules, he has single-handedly prevented the Biden administration from filling out the State Department.

Not, thankfully, because he believes Martians or whoever else stole the last presidential election for Biden, which Donald Trump claims to have won by tens (or was that hundreds?) of millions of votes. Rather, because Cruz believes that he has been anointed by Martians, or whoever else, to regulate world commerce and impose his will on foreign nations. Certainly no one on earth would give him such responsibility!

As of last week only four of Biden's ambassadorial nominees have been approved. And that's because they were former senators or senators' widows – Senate privileges hold even in death!

Some other nominees were reportedly prepared to move to the Senate floor, but Cruz was thought to be impeding action on at least three dozen appointees.

He also has been blocking nominees to the State Department, 87 of whom await action, which leaves foreign policy in the hands of career employees, who lack democratic legitimacy, or the White House, which has limited resources and knowledge. As attractive as it might at times seem to do away with the Foggy Bottom bureaucracy, even most anarchists realize that sometimes someone must deal with foreign affairs. Not Cruz, apparently.

Ultimately one Senator, even if acting like "a terrorist," as Sen. Chris Murphy characterized Cruz, cannot forever prevent approval of Biden's picks. However, Cruz has bogged down the process and left US foreign policy without much direction from the top. Months into his administration and Biden doesn't have even a minimal complement of foreign policy decisionmakers.

Although grandstanding is a Cruz specialty, that doesn't appear to be why he is attempting to immobilize the Biden administration. Rather, he is upset that Biden reversed one of the Trump administration's many failed attempts to run the world with economic sanctions.

Russia recently completed construction of an undersea natural gas pipeline to Germany. Although that would seem like an issue between the two governments, Cruz and Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisc.), believing they had the mandate of heaven to govern the entire globe, authored congressional sanctions against the Nord Stream 2 project, which the Trump administration imposed. The German government angrily rebuffed U.S. interference, which Germans suggested was calculated to promote the sale of higher priced Texan liquefied natural gas, which would surprise no one. Determined to avoid a clash with an ally of seven decades, the Biden administration reached an agreement with Berlin, waiving US penalties in return for some German commitments to Ukraine.

Which has Cruz upset. Says the wannabe secretary of state, either implement sanctions or trigger a congressional vote to override, or you won't get all your ambassadors approved until your last day in office, if that. However, the biggest problem is not the fact that the Texas Senator is putting his ego before his country.

Rather, his actions are terribly counterproductive. Cruz's arrogance has blinded him to the pernicious impact of his policy. Overuse of sanctions has limited their effectiveness. The Trump administration launched multiple sanctions campaigns, some denominated as "maximum pressure," and *none* achieved the desired political results: North Korea is still building nukes, Iran rejected Washington's surrender demands, the Communists still rule Cuba, Bashar al-Assad remains president of Syria, Nicolas Maduro and the Chavistas still hold Venezuela hostage, and China continues to oppress Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and the rest of the Chinese population. Finally, Moscow still rejects US military hegemony along Russia's border. America 0-America's geopolitical opponents 7. The latter enjoyed a perfect season!

Yet the promiscuous use of sanctions, and willingness to punish friends no less than foes, has created a growing international coalition considering alternative payment systems to avoid

reliance on the US dominated financial system. Today China and Russia, Iran and North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela, and Germany and the rest of Europe, all have strong incentives to develop special markets, denominate trade in local currencies, and/or promote alternative mechanisms to thwart Washington's promiscuous use of sanctions. The US is likely to slowly but steadily lose its financial hegemony and the influence which naturally results. Ultimately Washington's overreach might put the dollar's status as the global reserve currency into question.

Heck'uva job, Teddy-boy! Just think of all the harm you could do if elected president!

How does Cruz justify his latest jihad? With a simpleton's understanding of US foreign policy, [he told the Washington Post](#): "This surrender to Putin won't just impact today or tomorrow or next year, 10 years from now. Thirty, 40, 50 years from now, there will be Russian dictators, earning tens of billions of dollars from Nord Stream 2 and using it to fund military aggression against America and our allies and using it to hold Europe subject to energy blackmail."

This sounds like an interesting plot for another "Red Dawn" movie, but why does he assume Russia will be ruled by a dictator, hostile to America, and on the march 50 years from now? If that happens, it will likely be so because Cruz and other inveterate hawks had treated Moscow as an enemy for a half century.

Vladimir Putin is no friend of liberty, but he is not a natural enemy of the US KGB operatives tended to be worldly and cynical, and Putin demonstrated no ill will toward America when he became president. Indeed, he was the first foreign leader to reach out to the George W. Bush administration after 9/11.

Unfortunately, US policy post-Cold War threatened and deceived Moscow. The consequences were predictable. Washington [promised Soviet](#) and [Russian officials](#) that they would not expand NATO, then did so anyway. The US and NATO dismantled Serbia, a longtime Russian ally and friend. The allies denigrated Moscow's efforts to be consulted over Balkans events. Washington encouraged the overthrow of governments allied with Russia, including in Georgia and Ukraine. The US sought to further encircle the Russian Federation by expanding NATO membership. America also threatened other traditional Russian interests, such as in Syria. Washington alleged Russian involvement in US elections after routinely and promiscuously interfering in democratic election around the globe, including unashamedly and ostentatiously in Russia's 1996 contest. In this way America has pushed [Russia towards China](#), a geopolitical error almost as stupid as invading Iraq.

Imagine if the Soviet Union or Russia had underwritten a street putsch against the elected, pro-American president of Mexico. Then Moscow officials had descended on Mexico City to demonstrate their support for the new government. And had invited Mexico to join the Warsaw Pact.

Texas Teddy and most everyone else in Washington would have gone bat-sh*t crazy. There would have been wailing and gnashing of teeth, whining and screaming, and threats of sanctions and war. Roving bands of Neoconservatives would have ranged up and down Pennsylvania

Avenue doing the Maori Haka and demanding war. The US would have threatened both Mexico and Russia if they consummated their affair. All of which would have been presented as defending America from an outrageous violation of America's sphere of interest denominated by the Monroe Doctrine, which two centuries ago affirmed that America, and only America, was entitled to dominate, beat up, invade, and control its neighbors.

Contra Cruz's hysterical claim that Russia is an enemy, Moscow is behaving like a traditional pre-1914 great power, demanding international respect, seeking secure borders, and expecting reasonable consultation over issues of interest. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the successor Russian Federation has no essential conflicts with America over territory or interests. There is no ideological competition, just proud nationalistic societies maneuvering to seize any advantages presented.

Differences remain – over Syria, for instance, in which Moscow has had bases and troops for decades – but are bounded. Europe is divided over Russia, but that is for the Europeans, not Americans, to resolve. With 11 times the GDP and more than three times the population of Russia, Europe is capable of defending itself. Why does Cruz expect the American people to forever subsidize that continent's generous welfare state? If Europeans don't want to do more militarily, that should be their decision. However, there's no reason for America to then do it for them, turning defense into a form of welfare.

In what is believed likely to be America's greatest struggle this century, against China, most US policymakers believe that Moscow should lean West, given its own vulnerability toward a rising China. Yet demonstrating the ignominious strategic judgment which marked his crusade against Nord Stream 2, Cruz has done everything possible to encourage Beijing and Moscow to consummate an alliance, reversing Richard Nixon's geopolitical masterstroke nearly a half century ago. Such is the quality of Cruz's judgment and consequence of Cruz's performance.

The Biden administration was right to minimize the blowback from Cruz's foolish legislative handiwork. Whether or not he pushed sanctions as a political payoff to America's energy industry, he succeeded in harming allied relationships and making a modus vivendi with Russia even less likely. And reinforced Washington's arrogant reputation.

The president should stand firm against punishing an American ally for a common policy difference. Congress should drop the penalties on Nord Stream 2. And the Senate should break Cruz's stranglehold over State Department appointments. Unfortunately, Murphy is right – the irresponsible Texas blowhard is the diplomatic equivalent of a terrorist. At a moment when the world desperately needs more diplomacy, not less.

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