

# Putin's Tough Response to the Magnitsky Act

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**The**  **Moscow Times**

President Vladimir Putin chided German Chancellor Angela Merkel during a meeting last week for supporting Pussy Riot members, especially considering that "one of them had hanged a Jew in effigy and said Moscow should get rid of such people."

It soon came out that Putin's advisers had given him bad information. One Pussy Riot member did hang a Jew in effigy — along with figures of an immigrant worker and a homosexual — but the motive was the exact opposite: to protest the widespread prejudice against them. Putin really thought he was telling Merkel the truth because that was what he had been told.

During his live call-in show in December 2011, Putin gave his version of how former Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi died. "Drones ... hit his column, and then they gave the order for soldiers and opposition forces to move in."

Such statements seem to indicate that Putin and his inner circle live in a treacherous world — one in which the U.S. stages "color revolutions," the State Department finances the Russian opposition, and U.S. Special Forces personally assassinate disagreeable presidents.

In addition, Putin and Co. say U.S. elections are unfair. As Putin told a French journalist in January 2011, "I once told my American colleague, 'How is it that a majority of the population can vote for one person but a different person becomes president?'"

What's more, we are told, U.S. democracy is one big sham in which the ruling elite divvy up the country's wealth among themselves and also give big chunks of it to their friends and colleagues. In the same interview, Putin said, "A French politician once told me, 'Without a sack full of money, it would be impossible to get elected to Congress or especially the presidency. It's futile to even try. What sort of democracy is that? It is a democracy of the wealthy.'"

In reality, however, Russia is organized just like the U.S. It is led by political elites who use so-called elections as cover for embezzling state funds. And it is obvious that Washington does not want to let Putin join its prestigious Bilderberg Club for the sole reason that the U.S. wants to seize all Russia's wealth for itself, using its secret agents to foment orange revolutions and sending in its Special Forces to eliminate uncooperative leaders.

A person living in such a world reacts not to objective reality but to his paranoid version of it. And that is exactly how the Kremlin interprets the motives behind the support of the Magnitsky Act in the U.S. House of Representatives.

At first glance, it would seem that the "tough response" to the Magnitsky bill the Foreign Ministry is threatening is pointless. What reaction could follow if the U.S. freezes assets that Russian officials have stolen from the state budget and deposited in overseas banks? Will Moscow freeze money that U.S. politicians have embezzled from their country and deposited in Russian banks?

The root of the problem lies in Putin's distorted worldview. What are those Yankees really up to? Obviously, they want to make a grab for Russia's natural resources, finance the opposition and knock off Putin as they did Gadhafi. The Magnitsky act is just the latest in a series of Yankee provocations.

What would be a tough response to the Magnitsky act? Most likely, Putin will order the arrests of Alexei Navalny, Sergei Udaltsov and other opposition leaders who are really agents of the State Department. That would explain why Investigative Committee head Alexander Bastrykin is believed to meet with Putin several times a week nowadays.

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