

**PRESIDENT VLADIMIR VLADIMIROVICH PUTIN:
CAN HE BE DEFROCKED ?**

History dictates that one cannot bury the truth, forever, for truth is the existence of the real; it is correspondence with the facts; it is an agreement with reality.

And the truth refuses to be hidden.

If one attempts to bury truth, its spears will sprout through the most hardened of sod, looking for the warmth of the sun where it can prosper best.

Thus, it must come to pass that the *raison d'être* in respect of the recent actions of the President of The Russian Federation in causing, obliquely, the annexation of The Crimea by stating that the 1.50 million, Russian-speaking population of the territory have to be protected by '*Mother Russia*,' will, eventually, come to be known.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin cannot hope to keep the truth of his most-recent actions concealed for an indefinite period of time because, eventually, '*the length of truth will out*', as William Shakespeare wrote in about 1597 in his famous play: '*The Merchant of Venice*'.

The application of multiple sanctions by Western Powers and by the United Nations will have but a limited, immediate effect on The Russian Federation and, ironically, the sanctions could do as much harm to the countries, applying the sanctions, as were intended to do harm to the Russian economy.

Thus far, it is held that the sanctions will attack the financial fabric of Russia at a time that the country is suffering from a declining economic growth rate.

There is a great deal of truth to this as became only too obvious, just last Monday.

Mr Andrei Nikolayevich Klepach, the 55-year-old, Deputy Economics Minister of The Russia Federation, who has held this post since 2004, gave a briefing to the Press, last Monday, at which time, he released some statistics with regard to the economy of Russia.

Deputy Minister Klepach, who, also, holds the post of Director of the Macroeconomic Forecasting Department of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of The Russian Federation, stated that between \$US65 billion and \$US70 billion of the value of assets were expected to be channeled out of Russia in the present quarter, ending March 31.

He said that he expected Russia's economic growth in the first quarter to be '*around zero*'.

In 2013, he said that Russia's economy grew by about 1.30 percent.

The message that this learned man sent to the world was that international investors are getting increasingly worried about putting fresh money into Russia, or keeping valuable assets in the country.

Clearly, he is saying that his country is facing a crisis of confidence with international investors along with domestic investors.

Regardless as to whether or not the sanctions, imposed by the West and the United Nations, are to be considered as having been successful – and, in the opinion of **TARGET** (), they are unlikely to be much more than a pinprick as far as President Putin and many Russian citizens are concerned – there are far-better ways to bring Russia and President Putin to heel.

President Putin makes the claim that the majority of 144 million-odd Russians of the country, over which he is the ultimate arbiter elegantiarum as well as being the dispenser of truth and justice, support his Presidency and strongly believe that the annexation of The Crimea was the correct and proper act of a responsible government.

He made mention of his popularity only a week ago when addressing the delegates of the Duma, on Tuesday, March 18, in explaining the reason for the country's aggressive acts in sending in about 20,000 Russian soldiers, wearing unmarked uniforms, in order to pave the way for The Crimea to become part of The Russian Federation.

He told the Duma delegates, among other things:

'Some Western politicians are already trying to frighten us not only with sanctions, but with the prospect of worsening internal problems. I would like to know what they mean by this: The actions of some kind of fifth column, various types of national traitors, or do they expect that they can worsen Russia's socio-economic situation and thereby trigger people's discontent. We regard such statements as irresponsible and obviously aggressive and will respond appropriately.'

The above statement is testament to the fact that President Putin does, in fact, have an Achilles' Heel: He fears triggering his people's discontent.

He is correct to have concerns in this regard.

Four days earlier, on March 14, from London, England, US Secretary of State John Kerry gave a Press Conference from a swank London hotel, at which time he said, inter alia:

'I was clear with Foreign Minister (Sergey) Lavrov (of The Russian Federation) that the President (US President Barack Hussein Obama) has made it clear there will be consequences if Russia does not find a way to change course. And we don't say that as a threat, we say that as a direct consequence of the choices that Russia may or may not choose to make here. If Russia does establish facts on the ground that increase tensions or that threaten the Ukrainian people, then obviously that will beg an even greater response, and there will be costs ...

'What was made clear today in the context of President Putin being unwilling to make any decisions regarding the next steps until the vote has been taken – what was made clear is that he has said that once that referendum vote is taken, he will make a decision with respect to what will happen. And I would say to him today, as I said to Foreign Minister Lavrov, that is a decision of enormous consequence with respect to the global community. We believe that a decision to move forward by Russia to ratify that vote officially within the Duma would in fact be a backdoor annexation of Crimea, and that it would be against international law, and frankly, fly in the face of every legitimate effort to try to reach out to Russia and others to say there is a different way to proceed, to protect the interests of Crimeans, to protect Russia's interests, and to respect the integrity of Ukraine and the sovereignty of Ukraine.

'We hope President Putin will recognise that none of what we're saying is meant as a threat. It's not meant as a – in a personal way. It is meant as a matter of respect for the international multilateral structure that we have lived by since World War II and for the standards of behavior about annexation, about secession, about independence and how countries come about it.'

US Secretary of State John Kerry, in the above three paragraphs, on two occasions used the term that that which was stated was not meant to be construed as ‘*a threat*’.

He made these statements, once with regard to The Russian Federation and once with regard to President Putin, himself.

The usage of this word must have been carefully considered and, obviously, it was meant to suggest that the US does not fear the military might of Russia, or of President Putin, himself.

If that were not the case, for what reason was the word, ‘*threat*’, used twice within the relatively short space of time that US Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to the international Press.

After all, he could have used any number of words other than ‘*threat*’, if it were his intention to placate the President of The Russian Federation.

Also, he knew that his statements would be transmitted, round the world, following the Press Conference.

But Secretary of State John Kerry preferred to plant a seed in the mind of President Putin of ‘*a threat*’ instead of suggesting, perhaps, the presaging of a future event that could be painful – without, in fact, going to the brink of closing the door on diplomatic relations between Russia and the US.

So What Does President Putin Fear?

President Putin is one of the cleverest politicians that has ever been anointed to sit on Russia’s throne.

He rules The Russian Federation by dint of his large power base. He is a very able leader of men.

Those people, who might consider trying to usurp his position, are quite likely to feel his wrath, if discovered, in a way that is most unpleasant.

However, without the power of the people, President Putin would be lost, try as he might.

He is today’s President of The Russian Federation, one of the strongest military nations in the world, but, if a large portion of the people of Russia were to turn against him, for whatever reason, President Putin would have to consider, very seriously, whether or not, for the sake of maintaining his position as the most-powerful leader of Russia and, certainly, one of the most-powerful leaders of the world, was worth the while.

He could very easily retire to a life of luxury and respect – assuming that he has done nothing that might have been considered contrary to the laws of the country – and could rest with his laurels, still atop his balding head, pondering William Shakespeare’s immortal play, ‘*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*’, Act Three, Scene One:

*Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them?*

Today, however, President Putin is determined to stay in power. Of that, there can be no question of veracity.

The delegates of the Duma appeared to have been captivated, one and all, by his rhetoric when he explained his reasoning for the annexing The Crimea.

The only thing that could possibly unseat him would be a pocket of surreptitious unrest among some leading members within his clique, those who feel that they are not getting their just deserts – or are not getting as

much as some of the other oligarchs of the country.

Today, there seems to be no evidence that President Putin is likely to be given the old heave-ho; and, there appears to be no credible evidence to suggest that anybody has any incentive to take him to task.

This is because, inter alia, the people, who are closest to President Putin, have too much to lose if they should fail in any determination, aimed at trying to defrock him.

Rest assured, the reward for real (or suspected) treason against the President of The Russia Federation is a bullet in the back on the neck on a dark night.

But when tens of billions of dollars are wiped off the value of stocks and shares, listed on The Micex Stock Index, industry leaders can, very quickly, become extremely nervous.

So far, this year, The Micex Stock Index has fallen by about 14 percent, Year-On-Year.

International investors as well as Russian-based businesses have sold about \$US5.50-billion worth of Russian stocks, shares and bonds so far this year to March 20, according to statistics.

To many people, money is the most important thing in life, more important than the taking of another's life.

To some people, fame is the spur: That is President Vladimir Putin's Achilles' Heel.

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