Okay! The US Does Not Want the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway

If you live in the United States the mention of a country like Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan probably only registers on a subconscious “movie memory” level. Or, you assume all those countries with “stan” at the end are the same - foreign, off this world, and too far distant to matter. Unless, of course, you work in the intelligence community or at the US State Department. In this case, there is a job to do. The following is a crucial primer on what the term “national interest” really means.

If you want to know what’s “in the interest” of those who control the United States of America, all you need do is pay attention to Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Take the story “Kyrgyzstan The Missing Link In China’s Railway To Uzbekistan...And Beyond,” for instance. As I said, those “stan” countries do not even ring a bell for 99 percent of America, but the part “China and Beyond?” Well, several administrations in Washington have fanned the flames of fear over China’s dominance. Most Americans these days, they look on with suspicion as the local Chinese restaurant owner in Atlanta prepares their Peking Duck. So, a China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan (CKU) railway story on the US State Department propaganda channel seems like Beijing might be preparing for sending a troop train to Hoboken soon.

No, this is not the case, but you get the idea. America’s intelligence and foreign policy arms want to disconnect anything that unites “anybody” with “anybody else” but Washington. The story by Bruce Pannier tells of problems with the first freight train leaving the Chinese city of Lanzhou bound for the Uzbek capital, Tashkent. One link of the hookup is not completed yet. The author concludes:
Yes, there have been years of planning and negotiations about the best way to build the railroad. Most of the problems are about routes, funding, and so forth. But back in April Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Russia might participate in the completion of the CKU railway. The problem now, though RFE/RL did not emphasize, is that Kyrgyzstan is gripping by a resurgence of cases of COVID-19. The logistics and financing apart, the problem the United States has everything to do with China and other Russian neighbors hooking up Europe. In particular, Kyrgyzstan delivering more coal, gold, aluminum, iron, and other resources to China and the rest of the world might help Asians, but it won’t help US interests. Then there’s Line D of the Turkmenistan-China natural-gas pipeline, which is another “stan” story most Americans could care less about.

My point here is to show a facet of the world order of things we don’t often focus on. Our central observation in researching almost all the stories involving either China or Russia should not be geopolicy without geography. Think about this for a moment. Kyrgyzstan is 10,653 km from Washington, D.C. Culturally, the country is light-years apart from what Americans experience.

Kyrgyzstan sits at the crossroads of several great civilizations and was part of the Silk Road and other commercial and cultural routes that have been existence for thousands of years before the United States came to be. Formerly part of the USSR, resource-rich country has two official languages, one of which is Russian.

These “stan” countries are all close neighbors of Russia, just as Canada and Mexico are close neighbors of the United States. The country only has 6.5 million people living in an area of 199,951 square kilometers. Theoretically, with the mineral wealth beneath their country’s soil, the people there could one day become one of the most prosperous societies on Earth. This won’t happen if the US State Department gets its wish. While Washington bellyaches about despotism and corruption at the far reaches of the globe, the real message is about who profits. Naturally, Russia maintains close relations with Kyrgyzstan.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was just on the phone with President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov discussing how Russia could help with the recent resurgence of COVID-19 cases, and topical bilateral cooperation issues in trade and the economy. I haven’t read about the United States offering anybody assistance or advice on the pandemic. Furthermore, I’ve not heard anybody ask the Trump administration for anything lately. The US president has tried building a wall between the US and Mexico, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau won’t even meet with Trump because of the latter’s impetuousness and nasty attitude toward the neighbor to the north. If turnabout were truly fair play, Russia’s Putin and China’s Xi Jinping would build a railroad to Canada over the Bering Strait.

The paper “Kyrgyzstan, the US and the Global Drug Problem: Deep Forces and the Syndrome of Coups, Drugs, and Terror”, shows us the darker side of “US interests” so far from home. This is about CIA clandestine efforts from Laos to Kyrgyzstan (let’s not forget the Tulip Revolution of 2005) and other countries. This is the side RFE/RL betrays when authors make predictions or say prayers that anything associated with Russia or China will fail. It’s common knowledge the thinkers in Washington have been trying to create another Afghanistan for Moscow for years now. In Moscow, the term for US policy in these “stan” countries is “narco-aggression” because of the US strategy of funding and setting up narcotics traffic and addiction in Afghanistan. Think about it. While state-run RT of Sputnik may spotlight some blunder in America or other parts of the western hemisphere, the channel is not hoping that Canada will erupt in violence or that railroads will be blocked by avalanches. We have no evidence that Russia or China are developing new narcotics and trafficking networks to poison Americans with.

The rhetoric, the narrative, even the market analyses we have today show us the United States and the UK still hell-bent on colonial affairs. Read this market assessment of Latin American mineral wealth and investment potential. The author brings up Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro as if he were a hero, and then proceeds to tell us about US/UK investors - not Chinese or Russian ones. Here’s the gist:

“Of course, profiting from mined metals is a risky business - Pizarro ended up being hacked to death, spending his final moments daubing himself with a cross in his blood. But from solid, London-listed majors producing a steady flow of earnings, to aspirational explorers looking for that next big find, Latin America has plenty to offer MoneyWeek readers.”

Now, imagine a propaganda machine and a clandestine spy machine aimed at disrupting every American effort in the
western hemisphere. What if every other word or wish out of the mouths of foreign diplomats was some dagger aimed at national collaboration in the west? What if every entity in China or Russia were so steadfastly accusative and dirty dealing under the table in these affairs? Now that would be a New York Times story! We would not need “unnamed intelligence sources” to reveal how the Russians were meddling. The proof would be an unfinished railroad or a Mexican uprising.

Just for those unfamiliar, the “stan” suffix is Persian. It appears in the names of many regions in Afghanistan, Iran, and Central and South Asia, as well as in the Caucasus and Russia. It means “land”, or sometimes the place of sand, garden, desert, flowers, and so on. It depends on the use. What’s important is that people with rich traditions and cultures live in these countries and that where understanding them and dealing with them is concerned, neighbors would seem to have more common interests than politicians, business people, and strategists a world away.

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