



THE WEST'S ADDICTIVE DANCE WITH DEATH

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In 1963 when the James Bond spy thriller, *From Russia With Love*, came out, just a year after the Cuban missile crisis, which pushed us to the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, if anyone had predicted that one day I'd be taking a boat to Moscow, I'd have said they were crazy.

And if I'd been told that I'd find centuries-old, stunningly beautiful Russian Orthodox cathedrals within the Kremlin, which we'd been led to believe was home only to the Soviet government and KGB, I'd have thought they were hallucinating.

Yet, there we were standing in the great red-brick-walled Kremlin (originally constructed of wood in the 12th century), thanks to a riverboat cruise sponsored by the Albuquerque International Association with its Russian ex-pat director, Marina Oborotova. We toured the grounds before entering the Assumption Cathedral, where all of the Russian czars and emperors had been crowned.

But stop the camera right there, to add that it was due to my travel in Cuba 2001-2, which included a visit to the site of the U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion of the island in April 1961, where I discovered that the U.S. invasion, not the subsequent Soviet defense of Cuba, had provoked the '62 nuclear missile crisis (complete with Americans frantically building bomb shelters in their basements!). In fact, the invasion had been planned during President Eisenhower's administration, then carried out by the young, insecure President Kennedy, who was afraid to cancel it. Thus, the following year, his ominous warning to Soviet President Krushchev to "Withdraw the missiles or else!" was actually a response to the Soviets coming to the defense of Cuba by installing missiles on the island to prevent yet another U.S. military attack... likely including bombers! Yet even after negotiations with Russia, which resolved the confrontation peacefully, Kennedy still sought to assuage his humiliation over the Bay of Pigs debacle by ordering the CIA to assassinate Cuba's President Fidel Castro. But that, too, failed; and to hide their half-cocked attempts (such as exploding cigars and flesh-eating powder in Fidel's scuba suit), the evidence was hidden in classified documents. Thus, lacking an authentic investigation, endless speculations re: possible Cuban connections with Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 have circulated ever since.

So, with the history of the '62 brink of nuclear war still being distorted by our media and shelved in next-to-never-read books in the stacks of university libraries... today, we are once again on the brink of nuclear suicide. This time it's due to Russia's refusal to surrender to Western hegemony and aggression. Instead she's defending herself against a repeat of our 90's-style rape, when she was

prostrate after the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by 30-some years of U.S.-NATO abuse and provocation ever since... including our installation of missiles right on Russia's borders... despite our promise to Gorbachev in 1990: "to not move NATO one inch east of a unified Germany," if the Soviets would peacefully remove their troops, which they did. But we broke our word. This, in contrast with Krushchev, who heeded Kennedy's ultimatum and negotiated the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba in exchange for the removal of our nuclear missiles in Europe threatening the Soviets. Instead, we and our docile European "allies" have disregarded all of Russia's warnings over the years, including their last December's ultimatum, up to the eve of their "Ukraine intervention" in February. Instead, we blindly launch sanctions, which boomerang as food and fuel shortages with inevitable inflation, even as we insanely* pour billion\$-worth of weapons into our proxy war against Russia and sacrifice the very Ukrainian lives, we pretend to be protecting.

But enough of the West's current dance with death: this time orchestrated by the Viagra Generation and their desperately-seeking sisters such as Hillary, the former 1964 Goldwater Girl waving that warrior's presidential campaign banner: "Bomb Vietnam Back to the Stoneage!" And after that folly , we watched her metamorphosis into an East Coast Liberal Yale Law School grad and marriage to her classmate, Bill, thereafter-to-become Governor of Arkansa then President. But as First Lady, she was apparently so humiliated by her husband's antics in the Oval office closet with Monica that she vowed to become the first female President: "break the glass ceiling," and pantsuit-clad, to be tougher than Obama or even her husband, who'd been reluctant to put "boots on the ground"... and instead cowardly bombed a pharmaceutical plant in the Syrian desert (to distract the press and public from his troubles with Monica?), and Serbia... where he enraged the Chinese by "mistakenly" bombing their Belgrade embassy. But after Hillary was defeated by Trump, another compromised New Yorker, who was so humiliated by Obama at his White House correspondents dinner that he swore to replace him as President... Hillary cravenly blamed Putin, the Military-Industrial-Media-Complex's Favorite Fabricated Enemy.

But not to forget another prominent war-witch, Victoria Nuland, the former Assistant Secretary of State under Hillary, who now, under Biden is determined to redeem the \$5 billion they invested in Ukraine, while he was VP, in covert sabotage then cookies and sandwiches to celebrate the February 2014 Ukraine coup they'd concocted in her little State Department kitchen.

But enough of that suicidal soap opera, let's return to the relatively peaceful days (when the only "visible" U.S. wars playing on back stage marquees were "Afghanistan" in its 10th year and "Iraq" in its

9th). This was a couple of years before the Snowden-Manning-Assange revelations set off the explosive chain reactions, which continue today, including the slow, would-be crucifixion of Julian for his "sin" of speaking truth to power: our very own 21st century "Roman Empire," with Assange on the cusp of extradition to a cross in Washington, D.C., 2022 A.D.

Flashback to July 2011 after... we'd just flown to St. Petersburg and were immediately transferred to our ship, the M/S Maxim Litvinov, docked on the Neva River. Founded by Peter the Great in 1707, this elegant city with its river and canals, sometimes called "the Venice of the north," is 100 years younger than Santa Fe and almost the opposite: with its waterways vs. the desert, its baroque stone architecture vs. adobe and only 60 sunny days per year compared to Santa Fe's 283.

The highlight of our St. Petersburg visit was the State Hermitage Museum, the former winter palace of the czars. However, we had time to see only a small portion of the vast art collections displayed in the extraordinarily lavish rooms in which the former rulers had lived and entertained. Then there were the summer palaces: Catherine the Great's in the village of Pushkin, 15 miles south of St. Petersburg and Peter the Great's, known as Peterhof, 18 miles west of the city, on the Gulf of Finland. In Pushkin, we toured Catherine's glittering blue, white and gold palace, while at Peterhof, we bypassed the palace, in favor of the dazzling gardens and fountains inspired by those of Versailles just outside of Paris (evidence of Peter's desire to emulate Europe and modernize Russia).

Finally, we had to leave this fairy tale city. So, along with 200-some other American, British, German and Chinese fellow travelers on our boat, we headed for other intriguing destinations along the rivers and lakes, where one of my favorites was tiny Kizhi Island. Described as an open-air Museum of Architecture, it's comprised of a unique collection of ancient wooden structures gathered from around the country, then set amid wild flowers and grasses, fields of rye and flax all connected by foot paths. Walking beneath a brilliant blue sky, we were enchanted by this idyllic island and touched by the tales of the families who had lived and worked in the rugged two- and three-story homes, with their livestock on the ground floor, through the long, harsh winters.

And contemplating the Church of Transfiguration with its 22 onion-top domes, constructed in 1714, of aspen shingles without any nails, we were reminded of Santa Fe's Loretto Chapel, with its mysterious wooden spiral staircase, also created without nails.

As we continued our cruise, we enjoyed changing vistas: great expanses of forests dotted with little

clearings for farms, dachas or country homes, monasteries and occasional sawmills loading logs onto barges, as we leaned on the railings of our floating "observation" decks, from which we also watched with wonder as we transited some 20 locks.

James Bond, with all of his beautiful women and death-defying missions, never had it so good as we did, basking in our all-too-brief love affair with an old-new, pre- and post-Soviet Russia, which is transforming itself into a democracy and a mighty economic power.

"There is no truth where there is no love," according to Alexander Pushkin.

**Diagnosis: [Superpower Syndrome: America's Apocalyptic Confrontation With the World](#) by Robert Jay Lifton, M.D.-psychiatrist in 2003, for which he received the National Book Award, his, after his renowned research into Nazi doctors' killings, interviews with Hiroshima survivors, study of Chinese thought reform under Mao's revolutionary regime, then the violent extremist Japanese cult, Aum Shinrikyo, plus the Vietnam War experience and veterans. And yet in 2022, the West's American-led Dance With Death continues.*

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[Featured](#): "An Allegory of Death and the Rich Man," by Frans Francken the Younger, ca. 1601-1642.

