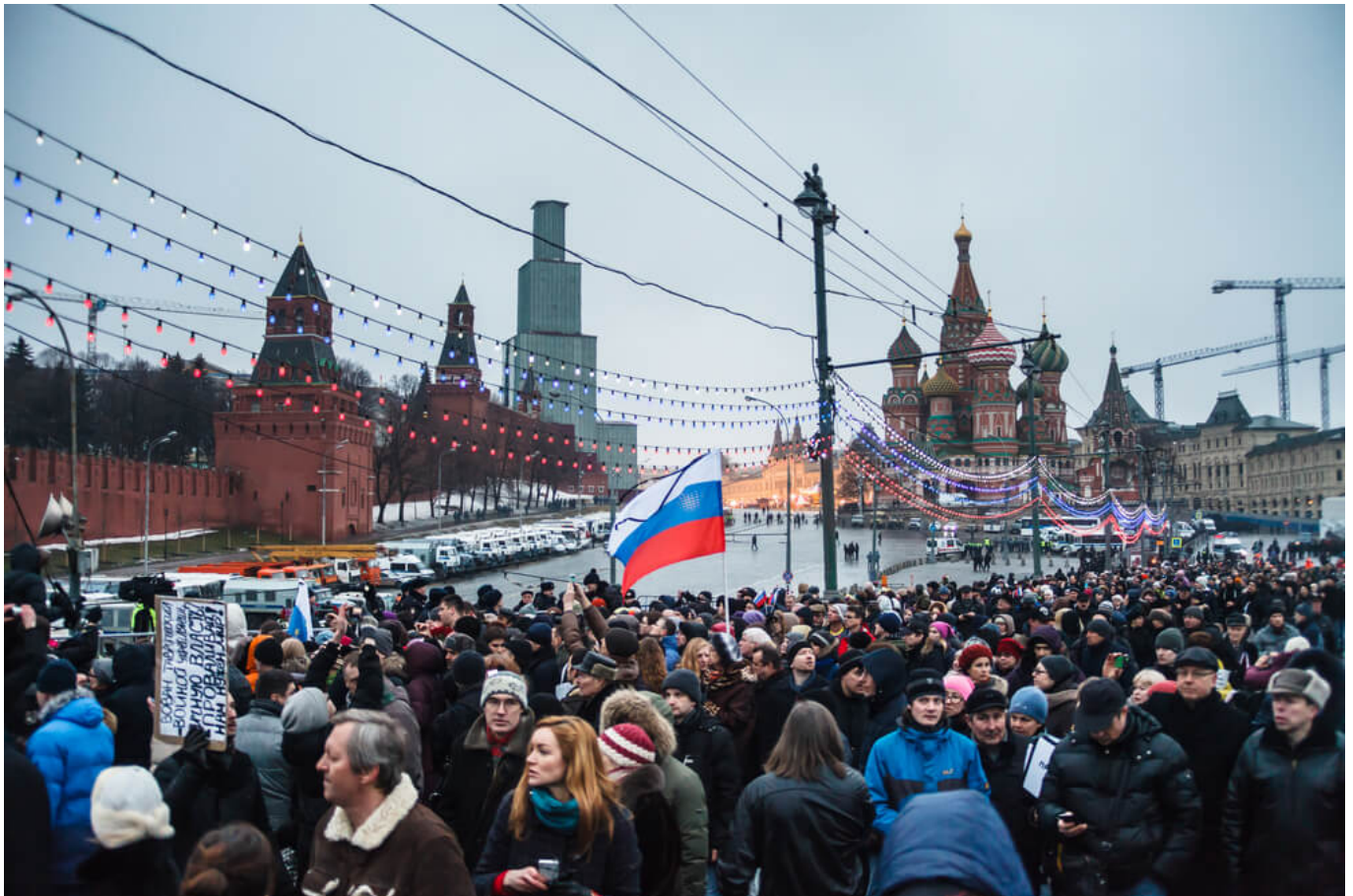




By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

Pain among Russian dissidents, joy in the Russian government



Russia is enthusiastically mocking America and the American people while at the same time patting America patronisingly on the back in the hope that it will continue breaking off ties with its former allies.

All of Russia's current problems and challenges, even the historical ones, now seem irrelevant to the Kremlin compared to the expectations of a massive division in the West.

The Kremlin is so preoccupied with events in the American administration that it has recklessly **neglected** to deal with the health of Ramzan Kadyrov, the head of the Chechen Republic and a Putin loyalist.

Chechnya, which has been so problematic for Russia in the past, can still effortlessly be ignited if Kadyrov is no longer able to use force to keep Chechnya subordinate to Moscow.

Russia is enjoying the moment when the entire world, especially America's allies, are angry about Trump's new tariffs on exports to the US, particularly because it is not **included** in this extensive list.

Russia is not distressed that it may be affected by Washington's new trade measures. It is pleased that the entire world, particularly Europe, will begin to suffer consequences because of America, and especially because the world will begin to retaliate against America.

Making fun of Americans

Delusional and short-sighted Americans—these are probably the most harmless of the biting insults that can now be heard about Americans everywhere in Moscow's business centres and government buildings.

No one in Moscow can understand why this administration has decided to facilitate exactly what the Kremlin has been trying to achieve since 1945— to cut off goodwill and cooperative relations between America and all

other major democratic countries.

Critics and even some Kremlin loyalists are puzzled that Kirill Dmitriev was welcomed this week by Trump's administration

Moreover, critics and even some Kremlin loyalists are puzzled that Kirill Dmitriev, a close associate of Putin, was **welcomed** this week by Trump's "anti-establishment" administration as "a new-style Russian representative, a businessman and not a career politician".

This is the first high-ranking Kremlin official to visit Washington since Russia's aggression against Ukraine began. He is considered a member of the Russian deep state, a Ukrainian national who has worked against Ukraine in past decades to promote Russian interests, and a person with family ties to the former Soviet Union communist nomenklatura who currently maintains a clear affiliation to Russian intelligence.

Why didn't the United States receive a warning about Putin?

While Russian critics of the Putin regime saw America as the only force preventing Russia's imperial contagion to other parts of the world, they now see the US turning its back on its friends while Kirill Dimitriev socialises with members of the Trump administration.

Despite the considerable burden of war on Russia, while the Kremlin is talking business with the Trump administration, it is pouring large amounts of money to fill the vacuum left by America's cancellation of USAID, VOA, and other initiatives.

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Why were we not able to properly convey our message to America about Vladimir Putin and Russia's true intentions - some representatives of the Russian opposition have been wondering.

The other, more radical part of the Kremlin critics claims that after the documented poisonings, rigged elections, suppressed freedoms, suppressed press, three wars, atrocities, purges and the more than obvious corruption of the Putin regime, there is nothing more to add about Russia and Vladimir Putin.

They are convinced that some people, like Tucker Carlson, may like this kind of ruthless leadership and want the same kind of person to rule over them with an iron fist.

Satisfied faces of Kremlin loyalists

Some Russians favour this new America because they themselves want to take over the countries abandoned by America. The other part of Russia is afraid that the world will be reshaped by Russia after America descends into isolationism.

These Russians know what to expect from Russia. After all, European history provides numerous examples of what Russia can do and is determined to do.



Many Russians expected unconditional American support for Ukraine, regardless of party affiliation. But now they see a different America

For many people living in Moscow, the most important and perhaps most offensive part of this new reality made possible by the new administration is to observe the satisfied grins on the faces of Kremlin loyalists and propagandists.

They admire this new America that wants to abandon Europe so that Russia can start bullying it again as it did in Soviet times.

Many Russians expected unconditional American support for Ukraine, regardless of party affiliation. But now they see a different America, fighting its allies and already planning to resume business between Russia and the United States as if the three years of terror had never happened.