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Pushing Russia Into the Cold

by Patrick J. Buchanan ([more by this author](#))

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A year after taking power, in June 1934, Adolf Hitler made his first visit abroad -- to his idol Benito Mussolini in Venice.

Babbling on incessantly about "Mein Kampf "and the Negroid strain in Mediterranean peoples, the Fuhrer made a dismal impression.

"What a clown this Hitler is," Mussolini told an aide.

Two weeks later, Hitler executed the Roehm purge and murdered scores of old Stormtrooper comrades. In late July, Austrian Nazis, attempting a coup, assassinated Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, a friend of Mussolini whose wife and child were then his guests.

Il Duce ordered four divisions to the Brenner Pass and flew to Vienna to vent his rage and disgust with Hitler. He called a summit at Stresa with Britain and France to agree on military action should Hitler make any new move in violation of Versailles.

At the time, however, Il Duce was also plotting revenge on Abyssinia for a bloody border clash with Italian Somaliland.

Mussolini thought his Allies would understand if he invaded the Ogaden to add an African colony to his new Roman Empire, just as the British and French had so often done in previous decades.

Mussolini miscalculated. Morally outraged, Britain and France went before the League of Nations and had sanctions imposed on Italy that were too weak to defeat her but punitive enough to insult her.

Friendless, isolated and condemned as an aggressor by Europe, Italy and Mussolini had nowhere to turn now but Hitler's Germany.

Thus, over the fate of an Abyssinian slave empire, Britain drove her faithful World War I ally into the arms of a Nazi dictator Mussolini loathed and had wished to confront beside Britain. And Abyssinia was overrun.

Are we making the same mistake in the Caucasus?

Mikheil Saakashvili started this war with his barrage attack and occupation of South Ossetia. Russia's war of retribution was far less violent or excessive than the U.S. bombing of Serbia for 78 days over Kosovo, or our unprovoked war on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which has brought death to scores of thousands, or Israel's 35 days of bombing of Lebanon for a border skirmish with Hezbollah.

Yet, declared John McCain of Russia, "In the 21st century, nations don't invade other nations." Even Dick Cheney must have guffawed.

Russia must get out now, adds Bush, for South Ossetia and Abkhazia belong to a sovereign Georgia. But when did Bush demand that Israel get off the Golan Heights or withdraw from the birthplace of Jesus, which Israelis have occupied for 41 years, as he demands that Russia get out of the birthplace of Joseph Stalin, which Russia has occupied for two weeks?

As Israel was provoked in 1967, so, too, was Russia provoked.

Russians died in Saakashvili's attack, as American died in Pancho Villa's raid on New Mexico in 1916. We sent "Black Jack" Pershing, future Gen. George Patton and a U.S. army 300 miles into Mexico to kill Villa. Was this proportionate?

If we proceed on a course of isolating Russia from the West, keeping her out of the World Trade Organization, throwing her out of the G-8 and ending cooperation with NATO, where do we think Russia will go? Where did Il Duce go, when he was excommunicated from the West?

Condi Rice compares Vladimir Putin's action in Georgia to Leonid Brezhnev's crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968. She raced to Warsaw to ink a deal to put 10 anti-missile missiles and U.S. Patriot missiles manned by Americans into Poland.

Does the Stanford provost have any idea where the end of this road lies, upon which she

and Bush have started the United States?

What do we do if Russia responds to our Patriots in Poland with the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft system in Iran and Syria?

If the United States intends to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO and arm them to fight Russia, why should Russia not dissolve the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe and move her tank armies into Belarus and up to the borders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania?

Would we send U.S. troops into the Baltic republics to signal that we will fight Russia to honor our NATO war guarantees? Which NATO allies would fight alongside us against a nuclear-armed Russia?

If we bring Ukraine into NATO, what do we do if Russified east Ukraine secedes and Russia sends troops to back the rebels? Do we send warships into Russia's bathtub, the Black Sea, and commit to fight as long as it takes to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity?

In March 1939, Britain pledged to declare war and fight Germany to the death to guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Poland. How did that one turn out for Britain and Poland?

Before we start down the road of isolating and encircling Russia with weak NATO allies, let us think through Gen. Petraeus' question in 2003 about Iraq, "Tell me, how does this thing end?"

But, then, these folks never seem to think anything through.

Mr. Buchanan is a nationally syndicated columnist and author of [Churchill, Hitler, and "The Unnecessary War": How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World](#), ["The Death of the West,"](#) ["The Great Betrayal,"](#) ["A Republic, Not an Empire"](#) and ["Where the Right Went Wrong."](#)

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