



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on December 17, 2016

Will Trump Defy McCain & Marco?

When word leaked that Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson, a holder of the Order of Friendship award in Putin's Russia, was Donald Trump's choice for secretary of state, John McCain had this thoughtful response:

"Vladimir Putin is a thug, a bully, and a murderer and anybody else who describes him as anything else is lying."

Yet, Putin is something else, the leader of the largest nation on earth, a great power with enough nuclear weapons to wipe the United States off the face of the earth. And we have to deal with him.



McCain was echoed by the senior Democrat on foreign relations, Bob Menendez, who said naming Tillerson secretary of state would be "alarming and absurd ... guaranteeing Russia has a willing accomplice in the (Trump) Cabinet guiding our nation's foreign policy."

Sen Marco Rubio chimed in: "Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a Secretary of State."

If just three GOP senators vote no on Tillerson, and Democrats vote as a bloc against him, his nomination would go down. President Trump would sustain a major and humiliating defeat.

Who is Tillerson? A corporate titan, he has traveled the world, represented Exxon in 60 countries, is on a first-name basis with countless leaders, and is endorsed by Condi Rice and Robert Gates.

Dr. Samuel Johnson's observation — "A man is seldom more innocently occupied than when he is engaged in making money" — may be a bit of a stretch when it comes to OPEC and the global oil market.

Yet there is truth to it. Most businessmen are interested in doing deals, making money, and, if the terms are not met, walking away, not starting a war.

And here is the heart of the objection to Tillerson. He wants to end sanctions and partner with Putin's Russia, as does Trump. But among many in the mainstream media, think tanks, websites, and on the Hill, this is craven appeasement. For such as these, the Cold War is never over.

The attacks on Tillerson coincide with new attacks on Russia, based on CIA sources, alleging that not only did Moscow hack into the Democratic Party and Clinton campaign, and leak what it found to hurt Hillary Clinton, but Russia was trying to help elect Trump, and succeeded.

Why would Moscow do this?

Monday's editorial in *The New York Times* explains: "In Mr. Trump, the Russians had reason to see a malleable political novice, one who had surrounded himself with Kremlin lackeys."

Backed by Democratic leader Sen. Chuck Schumer, McCain has announced an investigation. The goal, said the *Times*, is to determine "whether anyone within Trump's inner circle coordinated with the Kremlin and whether Moscow spread fake news to hurt Mrs. Clinton."



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What is going on here? More than meets the eye.

The people who most indignantly condemned Trump's questioning of Obama's birth certificate as a scurrilous scheme to delegitimize his presidency, now seek to delegitimize Trump's presidency.

The *Times* editorial spoke of a "darkening cloud" already over the Trump presidency, and warned that a failure to investigate and discover the full truth of Russia's hacking could only "feed suspicion among millions of Americans that ... (t)he election was indeed rigged."

Behind the effort to smear Tillerson and delegitimize Trump lies a larger motive. Trump has antagonists in both parties who are alarmed at his triumph because it imperils the foreign policy agenda that is their *raison d'être*, their reason for being.

These people do not want to lift sanctions on Moscow. They do not want an end to the confrontation with Russia. As is seen by their bringing in tiny Montenegro, they want to enlarge NATO to encompass Sweden, Finland, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

They have in mind the permanent U.S. encirclement of Russia.

They want to provide offensive weapons to Kiev to reignite the civil war in the Donbass and enable Ukraine to move on Crimea. This would mean a war with Russia that Ukraine would lose and we and our NATO allies would be called upon to intervene in and fight.

Their goal is to bring down Putin and bring about "regime change" in Moscow.

In the campaign, Trump said he wanted to get along with Russia, to support all the forces inside Syria and Iraq fighting to wipe out ISIS and al-Qaida, and to stay out of any new Middle East wars — like the disaster in Iraq — that have cost us "six trillion dollars."

This is what America voted for when it voted for Trump — to put America First and "make America great again." But War Party agitators are already beating the drums for confrontation with Iran.

Early in his presidency, if not before, Trump is going to have to impose his foreign policy upon his own party and, indeed, upon his own government. Or his presidency will be broken, as was Lyndon Johnson's.

A good place to begin is by accepting the McCain-Marco challenge and nominating Rex Tillerson for secretary of state. Let's get it on.

Patrick J. Buchanan is the author of the new book "The Greatest Comeback: How Richard Nixon Rose From Defeat to Create the New Majority." To find out more about Patrick Buchanan and read features by other Creators writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators website at www.creators.com.

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