

‘We Don’t Trust You in the Least ... We Have To Find Ways To Revitalize Our Relations’

July 18—Sergey Karaganov is the head of the Russian Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, as well as the Dean of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at Moscow’s Higher School of Economics. He is also the past Deputy Director of the Institute of Europe at the Russian Academy of Sciences, and he served on the International Advisory Board of the Council on Foreign Relations from 1995 until 2005. Karaganov was a close associate, some might say protégé, of former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, and has been Presidential Adviser to both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin.

It would be a mistake to blindly attribute Karaganov’s views to Russian President Putin, but he is a senior policy maker of the highest order in Moscow, and what he presents below is clearly indicative of the current outlook among many Russian leaders. Those in Europe and the United States who believe that Russia can be made to “bend” to the will of the trans-Atlantic alliance should pay close attention to what Mr. Karaganov says here.

What follows includes excerpts which are taken from an interview with Mr. Karaganov conducted by Christian Neef. The interview appeared in the German publication Der Spiegel, on July 13, 2016.

War Provocations in Europe

The interview begins with a series of questions pertaining to the ongoing escalation of NATO military deployments into Eastern Europe, and Karaganov is explicit that actions emanating from the West now pose an



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Sergey Karaganov

existential threat to the Russian nation, that the posture and decisions being taken by European leaders are driving the situation toward war. He says:

The situation has worsened considerably. We warned NATO against approaching the borders of Ukraine because that would create a situation that we cannot accept. Russia has stopped the Western advance in this direction and hopefully that means that the danger of a large war in Europe has been eliminated in the medium term. But the propaganda that is now circulating is reminiscent of the period preceding a new war. . .

What is the West doing?

It is doing nothing but vilifying Russia; it believes that we are threatening to attack. The situation is comparable to the crisis at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. . .

Now, fears in countries like Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are to be allayed by NATO stationing weapons there. But that doesn’t help them; we interpret that as a provocation. In a crisis, we will destroy exactly these weapons. Russia will never again fight on its own territory.

NATO Policy

The interview with Sergey Karaganov comes only weeks after “Operation Anakonda 16,” a U.S.-Polish exercise that served as a conduit to bring in the forces of 19 NATO and 5 NATO partner countries, in Poland,

which together with simultaneous NATO military maneuvers in the Baltic nations, represents the largest deployment of hostile military forces on Russia's western border since the Nazi invasion of 1941. These NATO "war games" have been denounced by Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as other German and European leaders, as provocations which will solely have the effect of heightening war tensions.

On the subject of NATO, Karaganov declared:

Why is NATO stationing weapons and equipment there? Imagine what would happen to them in the case of a crisis. The help offered by NATO is not symbolic help for the Baltic states. It is a provocation. If NATO initiates an encroachment—against a nuclear power like ourselves—it will be punished...

NATO is no longer a legitimate body. Plus, NATO has become a qualitatively different alliance. When we began the dialogue with NATO, it was a defensive alliance of democratic powers. But then, the NATO-Russia Council served as cover for and the legalization of NATO expansion. When we really needed it—in 2008 and 2014—it wasn't there...

NATO is now 800 kilometers (497 miles) closer to the Russian border, weapons are completely different, strategic stability in Europe is shifting. Everything is much worse than it was 30 or 40 years ago.

The Eurasian Solution

Karaganov is explicit in the interview, that if Europe abandons its current hostile economic/military actions against Russia and seeks instead to find a path for cooperation and mutually beneficial relations, such an option exists. But no progress is possible unless there is a change of thinking in Europe.

The pathway out of the current confrontation was recently indicated at the July 25-26 Berlin Conference of the Schiller Institute, "A Common Future for Mankind and A Renaissance of Classical Culture." (See *EIR* issues July 1, July 8, and July 15). The proceedings of that historic event demonstrated that the idea of a community of nations acting on "the common goals of mankind" is indeed not a romantic chimera, but precisely what is already emerging in the form of the new Eurasian reality.

The dynamic expansion of economic investment through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Chinese One Belt-One Road initiative, and the Eurasian Economic Union are all components of this new potential, and the presence and participation of Western European leaders in the recent [St. Petersburg International Economic Forum](#) is yet another sign that at least some of the European leadership recognizes this war avoidance path.

With regard to Russia's relations with Europe, Karaganov has this to say:

We currently find ourselves in a situation where we don't trust you [Europe] in the least, after all of the disappointments of recent years. And we are reacting accordingly. There is such a thing as tactical surprise. You should know that we are smarter, stronger, and more determined...

Many of my colleagues view our European partners with derision and I always warn them not to be cocky and arrogant. Some among the European elite have sought out confrontation with us. As a consequence, we won't help Europe, although we could do so when it comes to the refugee question. A joint closure of borders would be essential. In this regard, the Russians would be 10 times more effective than the Europeans. Instead, you have tried to make a deal with Turkey. That is a disgrace. In the face of our problems with Turkey, we have pursued a clear, hard political line—with success...

In Europe, you have a different political system, one that is unable to adapt to the challenges of the new world. The German Chancellor said that our president lives in a different world. I believe he lives in a very real world...

We believe that Russia is morally in the right. There won't be any fundamental concessions coming from our side. Psychologically, Russia has now become a Eurasian power—I was one of the intellectual fathers of the eastward pivot. But now I am of the opinion that we shouldn't turn away from Europe. We have to find ways to revitalize our relations.

The [full interview](#) with Sergey Karaganov can be found at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/interview-with-putin-foreign-policy-advisor-sergey-karaganov-a-1102629.html>