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Kicking Sand In Russia's Face

by [Eric Margolis](#)

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Last week's utterly useless and hugely expensive G8 summit in Japan was at least a welcome comic relief after all the bombast and threats flying back and forth between the US, Israel and Iran.

The world leaders dined on caviar as they earnestly discussed hunger and the global food crisis. They agreed to do something about global warming by 2058. That's real courage and leadership.

"Yo Harper," called out President George Bush, beckoning Canada's prime minister to come meet the president of Nigeria. Stephen Harper now joins Britain's late, unlamented former PM Tony Blair in being treated like a White House car jockey. Bush's arrogant public behavior towards two of his most faithful followers says a great deal about the importance of America's "key" allies to Washington.

Bush and Harper, who had just come from a session blasting Zimbabwe's ruler, Robert Mugabe, as a wicked, corrupt tyrant, glad-handed with Nigeria's President Umaru Yar-Adua who won office last year in one of Nigeria's most spectacularly rigged elections. That's saying a lot, since Nigeria is without doubt the world's most corrupt nation. But Nigeria has oil, and may supply up to 25% of America's future requirements. The US is also building bases in West Africa to oversee the region's growing oil exports.



Mugabe's Zimbabwe, which I fondly remember when it was prosperous, beautiful Rhodesia, is now dirt poor and bankrupt thanks to Afro-socialism and expulsion of its white minority.

Obedient western-backed dictators who rig elections are hailed as "statesmen." Insubordinate rulers who don't cooperate are branded "dictators" or "tyrants."

Good for old crocodile Mugabe for refusing to be pushed around by the hypocritical western powers who are screaming about his electoral fraud while blessing worse fraud and oppression in the Arab, Central Asian, and African dictatorships they support.

Invited guests at the G8 summit included Ethiopia, which is inflicting wide-scale atrocities in Somalia and on its own Oromo minority, and is now facing another major famine. Oil and gas-rich Algeria, whose brutal military rulers, one of the world's most repressive regimes, proudly call themselves "the eradicators."

One of Bush's official briefing books fell into media hands. It described Italy as "known for governmental corruption and vice," and called Bush's "best pal" PM Silvio Berlusconi a "political dilettante" who holds power thanks to his ownership of the media. "Are the courts still after you, Silvio," tactfully called out buddy Bush to Italy's embarrassed leader? Mama mia! Italians have a perfect expression for this: "bruta figura."

Adding to the surreal aura at the G8, and exposing the utter falsity of Washington's faux "war on terror," the Bush administration announced it was taking Nelson Mandela off its terrorist list. Who is next? The late Mother Theresa? Bambi?

While this farce was going on in northern Japan, Bush's girl Friday and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice flew to Prague to initial a truly daft plan to build a new US anti-missile system (ABM) in the Czech Republic and Poland.

Washington claims the system is designed to shoot down Iranian long-ranged missiles – which Iran does not have – carrying nuclear warheads – which Iran also does not have. "We are protecting Europe," chirped Rice. Of course, Condi. Those mad mullahs in Tehran are just itching to attack Belgium and Norway.

The only possible use for these ABM missiles would be to protect US military bases in Western and, more important, Eastern Europe, from some future missile attack by Iran. But Iran would only attack US bases, and thus court national destruction, if it were first attacked by the United States.

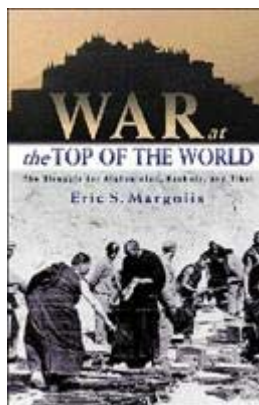
Predictably, Moscow went ballistic. It has been fuming for over a year over Bush's missile plan, and getting angrier by the month. The Kremlin actually threatened a "military-technical" response, whatever

that means, if the US installs an ABM system on its doorstep.

Nearly 70% of Czechs and Poles also oppose this crazy and unnecessarily provocative plan. Poland is demanding a \$3 billion air defense system from Washington as its price for basing the interceptor missiles. The clever Poles may be trying to sabotage the plan without having to say no to their protector and ally, the US. One wonders how much Czech politicians are getting paid to go along with Bush's little Central European Maginot Line?

If the White House is so determined to provoke Russia, why doesn't it just go and bomb Putin's country dacha or Lenin's tomb?

Bush and Rasputin Dick Cheney have broken a 1991 pledge made by President Bush Senior to Soviet chairman Michael Gorbachev. In exchange for Gorby's not using the Red Army to crush spreading revolts in East Germany and across the dying Soviet Union, Washington agreed not to advance NATO eastward toward Russia or into the old USSR. Gorbachev's courageous, humane concession averted a crisis that could have led to a nuclear war.



Gorbachev kept his side of the bargain, allowing the Soviet Union to implode. But the US, sneering at Boris Yeltsin's bankrupt, demoralized post-imperial Russia, quickly reneged and began advancing NATO ever closer to Russia's borders. Washington is currently mucking around in Georgia and Ukraine, both parts of Russia's back yard and considered seriously off limits to the western powers.

Small wonder Bush's foolish ABM system so outrages the Ruskis who have every right to moral outrage and being angry as hornets. Bush's paranoia and obsession with Iran is causing him to risk provoking a military clash with Russia. He is fast pushing Russia's new President Dimitri Medvedev and PM Vlad Putin to the wall.

John McCain is cheering Bush on. He recently called for Russia to be expelled from the G8 and vowed that if elected president, he would "confront" Russia. At least old crocodile Mugabe isn't threatening to start a war or two.

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Eric Margolis [[send him mail](#)], contributing foreign editor for Sun National Media Canada, is the author of [War at the Top of the World](#). See [his website](#).