



*And must have whiskey
Oh, you know why*

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September 19, 2022

Putin's Press Conference On Ukraine, Terrorism, Fertilizer, Europe's Energy Crisis

Last week the Head of States Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization met in Samarkand. The meeting was not very remarkable. It was business as usual. Iran will soon join the organization and several other states want association agreements with it.

An important side event was a non-scripted press conference President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation held. There is a [video with English subtitles](#) that covers it and the Kremlin provides as usual [an English language transcript](#). Putin made some important points that were not reflected in 'western' news coverage as they contradicted the propaganda positions the 'western' media have taken. Below I excerpted parts and added a few comments.

On the SCO:

Vladimir Putin: The most important thing always and everywhere is economic development. And the SCO, cooperation with the SCO countries, creates conditions for the development of the Russian economy, and thus for the social sphere and for resolving the tasks related to improving the living standards of our citizens.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation includes countries whose population, as has been said many times, comprises almost or even slightly more than half of humanity. It is 25 percent of world GDP. And, most importantly, **the national economies in the region, those of the SCO member states, are developing much faster than others in the world.**

The SCO markets are where global economic growth is happening. But the 'west' is excluding itself from those regions. 'Western' policies are hostile towards many of the big SCO members. Those policies build up barriers that hinder 'western' industries to profit from that growth. These are self-defeating measures.

There is a question about military strikes within Russia. Putin didn't seem bothered too much about those.

There is nothing new about this. Frankly, I find it even a bit strange to hear your question because Western countries have cultivated the idea of the collapse of the Soviet Union and historical Russia and Russia as such, its nucleus.

I have already cited these statements and studies by some figures in Great Britain during World War I and after it. I cited excerpts from Mr Brzezinski's writings in which he divided the entire territory of our country into specific parts. True, later he changed his position a bit in the belief that it was better to keep Russia in opposition to China and use it as a tool to combat China. It will never happen.

...
But they have always been seeking the dissolution of our country – this is very true. It is unfortunate that at some point they decided to use Ukraine for these purposes. [...] This is what some US-led Western countries have always been seeking – to create an anti-Russia enclave and rock the boat, threaten Russia from this direction. In essence, our main goal is to prevent such developments.

...
In the course of this, we are seeing attempts to perpetrate terrorist attacks and damage our civilian infrastructure.

Indeed, we were quite restrained in our response, but that will not last forever. Recently, Russian Armed Forces delivered a couple of sensitive blows to that area. Let's call them warning shots. If the situation continues like that, our response will be more impactful.

On Saturday the Russian military destroyed electricity distribution systems at a power plant in Slaviansk. Dima of the [Military Summary channel](#) showed two open source pictures provided by NASA that demonstrate problems with the Ukrainian electricity network. Especially in the east the lights are going out.

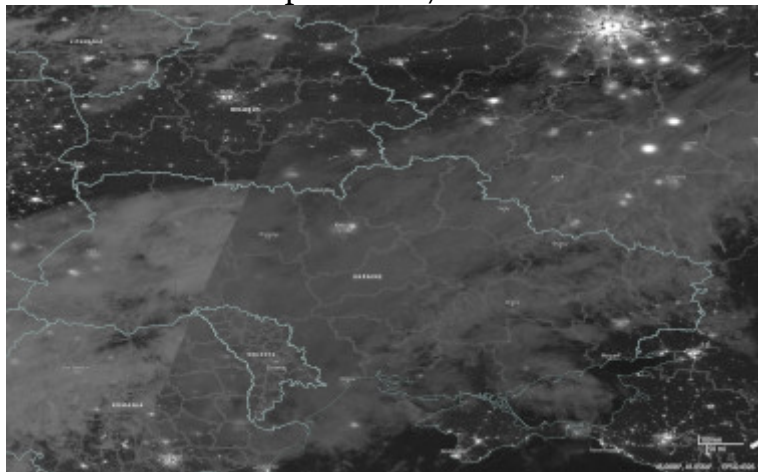
September 17 2021



Source: [NASA](#) - [bigger](#)

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September 17 2022



Source: [NASA](#) - [bigger](#)

The attack on Slaviansk followed after several Ukrainian attacks on electricity infrastructure in Russia and in areas under Russian control.

Putin mentions such attacks and calls them terrorism:

Terrorist attacks are a serious matter. In fact, it is about using terrorist methods. We see this in the killing of officials in the liberated territories, we even see attempts at perpetrating terrorist attacks in the Russian Federation, including – I am not sure if this was made public – attempts to carry out terrorist attacks near our nuclear facilities, nuclear power plants in the Russian Federation. I am not even talking about the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant.

We are monitoring the situation and will do our best to prevent a negative scenario from unfolding. We will respond if they fail to realise that these approaches are unacceptable. They are, in fact, no different than terrorist attacks.

In early August some Ukrainian commandos had destroyed high power lines from the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant.

In the Kursk region of Russia, Ukrainian saboteurs blew up power transmission lines that feed the Kursk nuclear power plant, the press service of the Federal Security Bureau of Russia said.

According to the agency, on August 4, 9 and 12, six explosions took place in the Kurchatov district of the Kursk region. The explosions were conducted targeting high-voltage power lines.

...

A criminal case was filed into the incident under Part 2 of Article 205 (Terrorist Attack) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. Security forces are looking for saboteurs. The National Guard have strengthened the security of nuclear facilities.

Back to Putin's press conference.

He gets asked about some negotiation paper Ukraine had put out. He has not seen it but he explains what happened with negotiations in late March/early April:

Frankly, I am not familiar with what they have come up with this time. We, in fact, started with this when we were negotiating with the incumbent Kiev authorities and, in fact, completed this negotiating process in Istanbul with the well-known Istanbul agreement, **after which we withdrew our troops from Kiev in order to create the proper conditions for concluding this agreement.** Instead of concluding an agreement, Kiev immediately turned down all agreements, shoved them into a box and said they would not seek any agreement with Russia, but instead would pursue victory on the battlefield. Let them try.

The Ukrainian turn about came in early April after then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson threatened Kiev with withholding all 'western' support.

Putin says the Special Military Operation will continue without a change in the plans.

Putin later remarks on the deal to let Ukraine export its grains:

As of today – as of yesterday or the day before – 121 ships left Ukrainian ports. Only three of the 120 ships headed for the poorest countries under the UN food programme. Some 35 percent, maybe a bit more, of the grain exported from Ukraine went to European countries, to non-poor countries, and definitely not to the world's poorest countries. And only 4.5 percent of the shipments were sent to the poorest countries under the UN programme.

...

The same applies to our fertiliser exports. This is something unprecedented. I would say this has been an outrageous and shameful decision by the European Commission to lift the ban on the purchase of Russian fertilisers – but solely for their countries, for EU member states. But what about the world's poorest countries?

...

So they have lifted sanctions on our fertilisers. The Americans were actually the first to lift them, since they are generally pragmatic people.

...

[B]ut there are still issues as regards freight and insurance plus the existing ban on entering our ports where our fertilisers are exported from, as well as on financial transfers and settlements. **They are aware of this all and keep saying this problem will be solved, but no one is actually doing anything about it.**

To be fair, the UN Secretary-General is taking efforts to solve these issues.

This scandal was news to me:

You have probably heard about 300,000 tonnes of Russian fertiliser stuck in European ports; our companies are saying they are ready to provide it for free – just unblock and release it, and we will donate it to the poorest countries and to developing markets. But they are still holding it, and this is absolutely astonishing.

They do not want Russia to earn money – but we are not making a profit by giving away fertiliser. I just do not get what they are doing. What is the purpose of all this? There has been so much talk about providing help to the poorest countries, but exactly the opposite is actually happening.

I have the impression – and this is particularly true for European countries – that **these former colonial powers are still living in the paradigm of colonial philosophy, and they are used to living at the expense of others.** They still fail to get rid of this paradigm in their daily policies. But it is time to draw certain conclusions and act differently, in a more civilised manner.

There follow questions on China, the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict, U.S. sanctions against certain persons and their kids and about the G-20.

Then follows a last question about the energy crisis in Europe about which Putin had a lot to say:

The energy crisis in Europe did not begin with the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, in Donbass; it actually started much earlier, a year before or even earlier. As strange as it may seem, it started with the green agenda.

...

To pursue momentary political considerations, they chose to completely close down the hydrocarbon energy programmes in their countries. Banks stopped extending loans, ...

...

Now, we see that prices, say, for natural gas in the United States have risen and production is growing, but not as fast as they would like it to – and the reason is that banks are afraid to issue loans.

...

These are erroneous reference points in the green agenda, rushing things, and the green energy being unprepared to meet to the demand for huge energy resources to support economic and industrial growth. **The economy is growing while the energy sector is shrinking.** This is the first drastic mistake.

The second mistake concerns natural gas.

We made attempts to persuade the Europeans to focus on long-term contracts rather than solely on the market. Why? I said it before and will repeat it once again: Gazprom needs to invest billions in development but it must be confident that it will sell gas before making investments. This is what long-term contracts are about.

Mutual obligations are incurred by the sellers and the buyers. They said, "No, let the market regulate itself." We kept telling them, "Don't do it or it will lead to drastic consequences." But in fact, they forced us to include a significant share of the spot price in the contract price. They forced us to do this, and Gazprom had to include both the oil and oil product basket but also the spot price in the gas price. The spot price began to grow, causing the increase in the price envisaged even in long-term contracts. But what does it have to do with us? This is the first thing.

Putin is right with this. The privatization and 'liberalization' of the European gas and electricity markets has never made sense and has indeed had very negative consequences.

Second, I told them many times. "Gazprom is not supplying gas." Look, are you normal people or what? Poland chose to impose sanctions against the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline and shut off the route. I told Mr [German Chancellor Olaf] Scholz: "Why are you calling me? Call Warsaw and ask them to reopen the route." That is all there is to it. That's the first.

Scholz is really that dumb?

Second. Two lines of the gas pipeline run through Ukraine. Ukraine is being supplied with weapons, but it went ahead and closed one of the lines for them. They also shut off another line that supplied 25 billion cubic metres of gas – I will not talk about the exact amount, but they shut off the entire route. What for? Call Kiev and ask them to reopen the second line.

And finally, Nord Stream 1. One turbine goes out of order after another.

Siemens has the maintenance contract for the turbine pressure pumps but sanctions are prevent it from fulfilling it.

There is of course a solution for the lack of natural gas in Europe.

After all, if they need it urgently, if things are so bad, just go ahead and lift sanctions against Nord Stream 2, with its 55 billion cubic metres per year – all they have to do is press the button and they will get it going. But they chose to shut it off themselves; they cannot repair one pipeline and imposed sanctions against the new Nord Stream 2 and will not open it. Are we to blame for this?

Let them think hard about who is to blame and let none of them blame us for their own mistakes. Gazprom and Russia have always fulfilled and will fulfil all obligations under our agreements and contracts, with no failures ever.

It is indeed a sign of cowardice that European politicians blame Russia for problems they themselves have caused. They try to hide it but the facts are all there to point that out. Should Europe really run into energy problems during the winter the political punishment they will receive will be remorseless.

Posted by b on September 19, 2022 at 17:10 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

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I still don't understand why there's no tit for tat in the Russian responses, or even a more proactive approach to the SMO. If they took out the electricity network in Western Ukraine, would it not have choked off the weapon and hardware supplies months ago? Taking out the rail network would have made quite a difference. It seems like by far the most obvious choice.

Posted by: V87 | Sep 19 2022 17:27 utc | [1](#)

@b

It is not a question of **if** there will be energy problems in Europe this winter.

It is a question of **how bad** the problems are.

Will it just be the de-industrialization of Germany via mass bankruptcy of the Mittelstadt and large companies in Germany? The small ones are already dying. Plus a few hundred poor pensioners?

Or will it be thousands of Germans dying?

Posted by: c1ue | Sep 19 2022 17:33 utc | [2](#)

I pay around 80 to \$90 {converted} for a 1000 C M of Ru gaz in my flat . What do others pay ? Last I read , Russia was giving Serbia 1000 C M for \$400 per 1000 CM and they made a good deal. Say that a normal flat in Serbia would use 200- 250 C M a month, I wonder if the government subsidises some of the cost of that, like Ukraine did before the IMF took over.

Posted by: GMC | Sep 19 2022 17:35 utc | 3

And then is this:

<https://www.rt.com/news/563075-german-governor-nord-stream-fate/>

""The loss of trust is so fundamental that there will never again be a situation in which a German federal government can rely on energy from Russia,"

As a German ex-pat, I am ashamed of the level of idiocy that is displayed by politicians at all levels of government.

Those morons slap sanctions on their main supplier, wonder why they no longer are supplied with essential sources of energy, and blame the victim of those sanctions for obviously reacting and not willing to give away for free, or declining to receive sensitive equipment that is treated in violation of stipulated delivery contracts?

This fellow is a prime example of what the political class in Germany after giants like Brandt, Wehner, Schmidt, and even Adenauer or Erhardt has come to. Garbage that only deserves to be "entsorgt" as a biohazard.

Posted by: Peter M | Sep 19 2022 17:36 utc | 4

V87 | Sep 19 2022 17:27 utc | 1

The RF is teaching compassion...As the classic bujutsu say, "A warrior's compassion is true compassion."

Posted by: donten | Sep 19 2022 17:38 utc | 5

@V87

There are many reasons why attacking Ukrainian infrastructure is counterproductive:

1) the trains are bringing Ukrainian troops to the artillery that is demolishing them. Why interrupt? Otherwise it would be required to go to where the troops are.

2) destroying the infrastructure kills lots of civilians and causes mass suffering for the remainder. Even for those Ukrainians who are neither Russian speaking nor rabid Atlanticists - creating mass civilian suffering does not help the SMO cause.

Children, amateurs and NATO think shock and awe is enough.

The Russian military believes in Clausewitzian destruction of opposing militaries and inculcating the firm belief that fighting Russia gets you killed to no real effect. Nobody remotely sane in Ukraine will believe that they "could have won" when this is all over.

Posted by: c1ue | Sep 19 2022 17:40 utc | 6

@V87 | Sep 19 2022 17:27 utc | 1

For sure, what you say make sense if they don't want hardware, weapons and manpower to come to the frontline.

But what if they DO WANT them to come (but not too fast) so that they can destroy them progressively ?
(Demilitarization)

Posted by: UncleTom | Sep 19 2022 17:41 utc | 7

As Michael Hudson said a few times, the politicians are not serving their countries in Europe, they are serving the elite bankers and super rich families who are in a club of super-elites and are all invested in American energy companies, American tech companies, American green energy companies, and

American investment companies like Blackrock, etc. This is about forcing them to buy more from America at higher prices. The industrialists in the EU are going along with it because they depend on the banking system which is controlled by the elites, still how long till they resort to using other means to put pressure on the politicians to change? Will they hire saboteurs to pressure the elites, or gangsters to threaten them? How long can this go on without them turning to violence? As we have seen, [everything the elites do to control the world backfires spectacularly eventually.](#)

Posted by: Kali El | Sep 19 2022 17:42 utc | [8](#)

I know five people who are planning trips to Europe this winter. Two couples and a single. All of them have friends in Europe, Germany and Spain to be specific. What they believe and what they are told is absolutely nothing is happening. The status quo ante is immutable. And naturally Russia is losing the war, is at end of the road. All cite supporting Ukraine by supporting Europe via tourist spending.

When hitting them upside the head with a 2x4 makes no impression just be patient, reality will arrive with a 6x6 upside the head. Not sure if even that will ever remove them from slumber.

Posted by: oldhippie | Sep 19 2022 17:42 utc | [9](#)

So everyone in Europe will end up paying more for their energy, thus giving countries like China and India a competitive advantage, as they buy cheaper Russian energy that Europe won't buy because the Americans have ordered them to commit economic suicide.

Institutionalised self-harm from European governments. It really is bizarre to watch it unfold.

Posted by: D J G | Sep 19 2022 17:43 utc | [10](#)

@UncleTom

That doesn't really sound reasonable. NATO simply has a much larger production capacity and deeper pockets to replace losses than Russia does. Even if Russia is good at destroying supplies, those missiles and planes still cost millions to fire and operate. There is no situation in which allowing a consistent influx of weaponry works in Russia's favor - it's not like Russia will wait Western Europe out and then just drive to Berlin once they're done with Ukraine and EU discovers that it ran out of bullets.

Posted by: V87 | Sep 19 2022 17:46 utc | [11](#)

As Europe plunges into the winter season unprepared, will there also be a corresponding 'surge' in immigration (ie. caused by famines, etc.) from the Global South into the EU?

This could be cause for further tension and increased poverty.

Posted by: Mummer | Sep 19 2022 17:47 utc | [12](#)

I have to disagree with B here:

"It is indeed a sign of cowardice that European politicians blame Russia for problems they themselves have caused. They try to hide it but the facts are all there to point that out. Should Europe really run into energy problems during the winter the political punishment they will receive will be remorseless."

I don't think that European politicians will receive any punishment whatsoever. They will be rewarded with company directorships, think tank posts, well-paid sinecures with the UN or the World Bank, etc. They fail remorselessly upwards. There is no penalty, no matter how utterly incompetent or corrupt they are. See Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, or any number of euroscoundrels.

Posted by: JulianJ | Sep 19 2022 17:51 utc | [13](#)

@GMC #3

The price you pay is far below what market price is at the moment.

Even in the US: \$8 per mcf (1000 cubic feet)(roughly market price today) equals \$210 per mcm (1000 cubic meters).

In comparison: Gasprom was selling natural gas for \$30-\$50 per mcm prior to 2021.

However, the consumption number you post seem really high. 1st world natural gas consumption per capita is in the 1200 cubic meters per year. 200 cubic meters per month seems high.

Posted by: c1ue | Sep 19 2022 17:53 utc | [14](#)

The US gas bubble has already burst.

Fracking is a temporary thing. It's like shaking a soda bottle and then opening it, there is a burst of gas and then only small bubbles.

It takes more fossil fuel energy to frack than you get in return, so fracking is more about the money speculation than actually producing gas (which is why you can see them flaring it off into the atmosphere so many times).

Posted by: wagelaborer | Sep 19 2022 17:56 utc | [15](#)

@oldhippie9: Same here. My wife remains "blissfully" ignorant and objects when I attempt to illuminate. The underlying reason for USAns is actually really simple. We have lived in a post WW2 era with unprecedented prosperity for a great many people and a so called middle class which is withering as we type. Like the song by FZ and The Mothers: It Cant Happen Here. "Oh thats only happens in places like Argentina or Lebanon, surely there are beneficent overlords that would prevent that." Silly as it may sound that is the prevailing perspective. It does not matter that there is decent and compelling evidence that the ruling North Americans get the 2X4 upside the head, they will not fuggin listen because it is painfully inconvenient. "Oh well I may just nip off to Italy in a few months". Really and do what? Document the rallies that may very well degenerate into riots complete with burning and looting? Pay 5 times the price? Get locked down when SPARS 2025-2028 gets triggered early? Much in the way they glaze over and get a 100yrd stare at the mere mention of 'Suddenly & Unexpectedly from Unknown Causes', so to do my fellow citizens respond to what appears to be a tsunami on the horizon.

Posted by: Chevrus | Sep 19 2022 18:04 utc | [16](#)

Putin: "let none of them blame us for their own mistakes."

As that great American philosopher Forrest Gump said: "Stupid is as stupid does."

Posted by: Gt Stroller | Sep 19 2022 18:07 utc | [17](#)

Posted by: c1ue | Sep 19 2022 17:33 utc | [2](#)

*Mittelstand

Posted by: v | Sep 19 2022 18:23 utc | [18](#)

@ oldhippie | Sep 19 2022 17:42 utc | [9](#)

@ Chevrus | Sep 19 2022 18:04 utc | [16](#)

Reality will fall somewhere between the Pollyannas and the Doomsdayers for most of us, as it usually does. I would not fault these people for going to Europe, there will be fewer lineups and more deals to be found in hotels etc.

We postponed our planned trip to Russia this year, and still plan to go next year. Friends who just returned from visiting family in Rostov and Crimea said everything appears normal except for more military flights overhead.

Posted by: Opport Knocks | Sep 19 2022 18:32 utc | [19](#)

It is interesting that Russia has not run "Arc Light" type grid-erasing bombing runs, which they have demonstrated in Syria, especially when the Ukraine Army was out in the open. Could be that Ukraine