

# A Matryoshka of Psyops: And Why General Armageddon Is Not Going Anywhere

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*The main problem faced by Russia is not the Hegemon and NATO: it's domestic, Pepe Escobar writes.*

The secret of a perfect psyop is that no one really understands it.

A perfect psyop accomplishes two tasks: it renders the enemy dazed and confused while achieving a set of very important goals.

It goes without saying that sooner rather than later we should see the real goals emerging out of the strategic play in Russia I described as [The Longest Day](#).

The Longest Day may or may not have been a larger than life psyop.

To clear the fog, let's start with a roundup of the usual "winner" suspects.

First one is undoubtedly Belarus. Due to the priceless mediation of Old Man Luka, Minsk is now gifted with the most experienced army in the world: the Wagner musicians, masters of conventional (Libya, Ukraine) and non-conventional (Syria, Central African Republic) war.

That is already inflicting the Fear of Hell in NATO, which is suddenly facing in its eastern flank a super pro army, very well equipped, and de facto uncontrollable, and on top of it hosted by a nation now equipped with nuclear weapons.

Simultaneously, Russia props up dissuasion on its western front. Like clockwork that is leading NATOstan to invest in ballooning military budgets (with funds it doesn't have). That process happens to be a key plank of Russian strategy since at least March 2018.

And as an extra bonus Russia creates a 24/7 threat to the whole of Kiev's northern front.

Not bad for a "mutiny".

## The Dance of the Oligarchs

Way more complex is Russia's internal dynamics. Putin's current and subsequent difficult decisions may entail loss of popularity coupled with loss of internal stability -depending on the manner Kremlin-defined strategic victories are presented to Russian public opinion.

Whatever 24/7 NATOstan mainstream media spin may come up with, the Kremlin's official explanation for June 24 boils down to a Prigozhin demonstration: he was just trying to shake things up.

It's way more complicated than that. There were strategic gains, of course, and Prigozhin seems to have followed a very risky script that in the end favors Moscow. But it's still too early to tell.

A key sub-plot is how the Dance of the Oligarchs will proceed. Independent Russian media was already expecting some – treasonous – players, including state functionaries, to buy their one-way ticket when the going got tough (or to say they were "ill", or refuse to answer important calls). The Duma – fed by Bortnikov's FSB – is already working on a hefty list.

The Russian system – and Russian society as well – see people like these as supremely toxic: in fact much more dangerous than the *demshiza* (a term that mixes "democracy" and "schizophrenia", applied to globalist neoliberals).

On the military front, it gets even more complicated. Putin has charged Defense Minister Shoigu to compile the list of Generals to be promoted after The Longest Day. To put it mildly, for quite a few people, from many different persuasions, Shoigu has become a toxic element in Russian politics.

Wagner – rebranded, and under new management – will continue to serve Russia's interests via Minsk, including in Africa.

Old Man Luka, wily as ever, has already firmly stated there won't be any provocations against NATO via Wagner. Wagner recruiting bureaus will not be opened in Belarus. Belarussians may join Wagner directly. As it stands, most of Wagner fighters are still in Lugansk.

For all practical purposes, from now on the Russian government won't have anything to do, militarily and financially, with Wagner.

Additionally, there are no heavy weapons to be confiscated. Already on Monday, June 26, Wagner had moved their heavy weapons to Belarus. What remains – and had not been moved during The Longest Day – was returned to the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

### **The Dance of the Generals**

A clear winner in the whole process is Russian public opinion: they made that graphically clear in Rostov. Everyone was supporting Putin, Russian soldiers, Wagner and Prigozhin – at the same time. The overall objective was to improve the Russian army to win the war. It's as straightforward as that.

The purge inside the MoD will be tough. Under the pretext of repression or “rebellion”, operetta Generals” (as defined by Putin himself) that did not train their soldiers properly, did not organize the mobilization properly, or were incompetent in battle, will definitely be axed.

The problem is that they're all part of Gerasimov's circle. To put it diplomatically, he needs to answer a lot of serious questions.

And that's what brings us to the “General Armageddon has been arrested” monster fake news gleefully parroted by the whole of the NATOstan info universe.

General Surovikin did receive Prigozhin in Rostov – but he was never an accomplice to the “rebellion”. Vice-Minister of Defense Yevkurov was also at the HQ in Rostov, and received Prigozhin alongside Surovikin. Yevkurov may have played the role of strategically-placed observer.

The Prigozhin rebellion soap opera de facto started back in February – and nothing was done to stop it. Regardless whether one shares the official narrative – or not.

What this implies is that the Russian state saw it coming. Does that make The Longest Day the Mother of All Maskirovskas?

Once again: it's complicated. Unlike the collective West, Russia does not practice or enforce cancel culture. Wagner was protected via martial law. Any insult against a “musician” fighting neo-nazi Banderistan would be met by as much as a 15-year jail term. Each Wagner fighter is officially a Hero of Russia – something Putin himself always stressed.

On the maskirovka front, there's no question the simmering tensions in Russian military circles before The Longest Day were manipulated, fog of war-style, to disorient the enemy. It worked like a charm. On the fateful June 24 itself, Surovikin was running a war, and not spending the day drinking brandy with Prigozhin.

The NATOstan axis is really clutching at straws. It took just a Surovikin-related rumor to send them into rapture – proving once again how deeply they fear General Armageddon.

A key vector is how Surovikin is regarded by public opinion compared to the surviving “operetta Generals”.

He built the now legendary three-layered defense which is already burying the “counter-offensive”. He introduced the wildly successful Shahed-136 Iranian drones in the battlefield. And he organized the meat grinder devastation in Bakhmut/Artemyovsk – which has already entered the military annals.

Way back in the Autumn of 2022, it was General Armageddon who told Putin that Russian forces were not ready for a large-scale offensive.

So whatever the 5<sup>th</sup> columnists fabricate, General Armageddon is not going anywhere – except to win a war. And Russia is not “leaving” Africa. On the contrary: a rebranded Wagner is there to stay, and remains on speed dial in several latitudes.

The trend, short term, seems to point to a – convoluted – draining of the Russian military swamp. The Longest Day seems to have galvanized Russians of all stripes into identifying who the real enemy is – and how to defeat it, whatever it takes.

### **“Nothing happens by chance”**

Historian Andrei Fursov, reviving Roosevelt, observed that “in politics, nothing happens by chance. If it happens, you bet it was foreseen.”

Well, maskirovska rides again.

Yet the main problem faced by Russia is not the Hegemon and NATO: it's domestic.

Based on conversations with Russian analysts, and their impressions from very sharp people who lived in Russia, Ukraine and in the West, it would be possible to identify basically four main groups trying to impose their idea of Russia.

1. The “Back to the USSR” gang. Includes, of course, some former KGB. Have some kind of support from the general population. A lot of educated specialists (old school pros, mostly pension age). This project suggests a revolution – a 1917 on steroids. But where is Lenin?
2. The “Back to the Tsar” people. That would imply Russia as the “Third Rome” and a prominent role for the Orthodox Church. Hefty funds behind it. A big question mark is how much popular support, especially in “deep” Russia, they really have. This group has nothing to do with the Vatican – which is sold to The Great Reset.
3. The Plunderers – as in robbing Russia blind in favor of the Hegemon. Congregates 5<sup>th</sup> columnists, and all manner of “totalitarian neoliberals” worshipping the “values” of the collective West. The remaining ones will soon get a knock on the door by the FSB. Their money is already blocked.
4. The Eurasianists. This is the most feasible project – in close collaboration with China, and aiming towards a multipolar world. There's no place for Russian oligarchs here. Yet the degree of collaboration with China is still highly debatable. The real burning question: how to really integrate, in practice, the Belt and Road Initiative with the Greater Eurasia Partnership?

This is just a sketch – open for discussion. The first three projects may hardly work – for a series of complex reasons. And the fourth still has not gathered enough steam in Russia.

What is certain is that all of them are fighting each other. May the current draining of the military swamp also serve to clear the political skies.

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