Ambassador Rogozin on NATO, Peace and the World

NATO Tochka RU
[ NATO dot RU]


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Yastreby Mira. Dnevnik Russkogo Posla
[ The Hawks of Peace. The Diary of a Russian Ambassador]


Reviews by Henry Plater-Zyberk
Ambassador Rogozin on NATO, Peace and the World

The first book, *NATO tochka ru* written by Dmitry Olegovich Rogozin, Russian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to NATO,¹ is a compilation of author’s statements, declarations and interviews between January 2008 and August 2009. Three of the interviews are given to Western media outlets² and the rest are for a Russian audience. The book is divided into two parts: “The Brussels Speeches. Statements of D.O. Rogozin at the NATO HQ”,³ and “Vital Questions. Interviews of D.O. Rogozin with the Russian and Foreign Media”.⁴ This division makes the book chronologically confusing, but this is not important as both parts are dominated by four frequently re-emerging subjects:

- The Russo-Georgian conflict.
- NATO’s enlargement plans.
- The Air Defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic
- Russia is not treated fairly by NATO

The emotional tone of the book is set by its cover, with a photo of a decisive looking US Ranger and the “banner” of the series in which it was published “If War Comes Tomorrow”, title of the Soviet patriotic song of 1938. When in September 2009 the book was signed to print, some of the issues Ambassador Rogozin was concerned with were already beginning to fade away. Tbilisi was the clear loser of the Russo-Georgian war: President Sakashvili did not look as innocent as originally presented by several Western leaders and a large section of the Western media. Today, the original project of the air defence system has been shelved, and NATO membership of Ukraine and Georgia is a question in the political long grass from which it is unlikely to re-emerge for years.

So, what of these statements? Rogozin’s statements and interviews in fact look like the portfolio of a diplomat with political ambitions – not surprising if one remembers that the author was a semi-successful politician before he became a high-profile, successful ambassador. Every argument in the book repeats those made by many Russian officials and here they are continually presented by the author in both parts of the book. If they were to be mentioned only once or twice this would be a brochure.

Nevertheless, the book includes snippets of style and information which professional watchers of Russia and those addicted to conspiracy theories in the Kremlin could learn from. His brief assessment of Russia’s two strongest assets, the Strategic Rocket Forces and Gazprom, is realistic although he specifically refuses to call them weapons. ‘For us’, Rogozin states, gas and oil are ‘instruments of integration’, with the European Union first of all.⁵ The author’s views about Putin and Medvedev are also clear. ‘I would say that there are

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¹ Dmitry Rogozin replaced General Konstantin Totsky as Envoy of the Russian Federation to NATO. He arrived in Brussels on 27 January 2008. The rank of ambassador was conferred to him by President Medvedev in April 2009.
⁴ ibid., 84-281.
⁵ ibid., p.206.
no two people more psychologically compatible’ than the two Russian leaders, writes Rogozin, and ‘so the claim that Medvedev is the more liberal politician – is just a journalistic ruse’.6

The author shows that the Russian team at NATO is well prepared to challenge any argument presented to them with which Moscow may disagree. They are watching and studying both opponents and partners very carefully using their historical and operational memory. Rogozin’s attacks may sometimes be crude, but he is well briefed and knowledgeable. This is reflected in his interview given in May 2008 to the Russian radio station “Ekho Moskvy” in which he spoke with knowledge and grudging respect about the reforms of the Georgian armed forces, stressing that they were ready to take Sukhumi.7 The ambassador was also well informed about the post Russo-Georgian war briefing given by the German military to its political leadership in Berlin, which he and the Russian leaders in Moscow regard as objective – contrasting it favourably with the position taken by many other NATO members.8 In vivid style typical of the author – and again in one that is likely to grate with a Western audience – he bluntly informs NATO that if it is not interested who attacked whom in August 2008, it is probably not really interested who attacked whom on 9/11.9

The Russian team in Brussels is well briefed about the situation in Afghanistan, although it is unclear whether its sources of information about the conflict come from Moscow, Brussels or Kabul. Rogozin’s description of some of the allied losses are purposely very detailed as if he tries to sum up what has gone wrong in Afghanistan.10 He also warns ‘If you hope that you would be able to teach the Afghans American democracy, you will fail, just like we failed when we attempted to impose communism on them.’11

The book was compiled well before the Ukrainian election of February 2010, in which the supporters of joining NATO were convincingly defeated, and it is understandable why Rogozin returns to the enlargement issue in almost every statement or interview. He argues that Ukraine and Russia are practically one nation,12 but then accepts in an interview with Der Spiegel the possibility that Ukraine may break up, an obvious admission that the two nations are not so homogenous.13

The author sees the USA as the main source of international discord and often reacts like a Soviet official, for instance when he states at a briefing on 17 September 2008, that the US government is investigating who among the US officials [sic] actually ordered Georgian troops to enter South Ossetia.14 He also blames Washington for the isolation of Belarus.15

Rogozin robustly rejects what he calls the revision of the events of World War II, particularly the equation of the USSR and fascist Germany. He defends Radovan Karadzic and the old Soviet Stalinist executioners.16 For him they are simply patriots. However, he has no time for the patriotism of the Poles, Czechs or Slovaks, whom the Russians at NATO call “NATO komsomoltsy” (members of the Communist Union of Youth in the USSR, known for their blindly enthusiastic support of all plans and decisions of the ruling Communist Party of the

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6 Rogozin, ibid., p.88.
7 ibid., p.175.
8 p.27. Rogozin spoke about the German Army briefing at the NATO press conference on 10 September 2010.
9 ibid., p.31.
10 ibid., pp.32-33.
11 ibid., p.139.
12 ibid., p.152.
13 ibid., p.138.
14 ibid., p.30.
15 ibid., p.187.
16 ibid., p.178-180, 211 & 212.
Soviet Union) for supporting the USA and for pushing the enlargement agenda.\textsuperscript{17} The Poles are accused of wearing soccer boots during a friendly soccer match and, after “gathering courage”, breaking the author’s leg (he was a goalkeeper).\textsuperscript{18}

When emotions overtake him, Dmitry Rogozin is ready to compare NATO enlargement eastwards to Hitler’s drive in the same direction,\textsuperscript{19} or to suggest at the European Centre of International and Strategic Research that his audience would be well advised to study Russian.\textsuperscript{20} Perhaps Ambassador Rogozin’s most unusual initiative is a painting commissioned by him which he would like to display in the NATO hall. The painting depicts a break in a battle between Russian heroes [sic] and the crusaders. As both sides are ready to resume the battle, some of them notice approaching Tatar Mongolian hordes.\textsuperscript{21} This is the author’s vision of the future world.

Rogozin’s grandstanding is about Russia, but it is mainly about him. He is young, successful, telegenic, educated and, he believes, much better not only than his NATO opponents but also than many of his colleagues in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A direct criticism of his Russian colleagues (‘I am afraid that many of my colleagues do not know how to turn a computer on, let alone how to go online and blog. For them it’s the dark woods’) was apparently discovered at the meeting of the Russian ambassadors in Moscow. This is puzzling and certain to upset at least some of them.\textsuperscript{22} But the author evidently is not concerned; he apparently does not need his colleagues. He is a one-man foreign policy PR machine and as long as he has Medvedev’s and Putin’s support, he does not seem to care much about anyone else in his camp.

His straight, aggressive talk is revealing, since it is perfectly in line with the guidelines issued to Russian ambassadors by President Medvedev in 2008: in and amongst the talk are points that NATO would benefit from listening to, as they reflect the under-currents of Russian foreign policy thinking. His hyper-nationalism may raise many eyebrows in the West, but very few in Russia would dare to criticise him, where such a tone chimes. The author’s most important message is that we (by which he means Russia and NATO) do not have to like each other, but we have to live in peace. He is convinced that NATO and Russia will not fight a war, but only if Russia is strong and independent.\textsuperscript{23}

The book ends with the author’s short CV and several brief appraisals of his performance by the foreign media.\textsuperscript{24} Photos in a book of this type would have perhaps been unusual, but an index would certainly have been helpful, especially if Ambassador Rogozin is planning a political career.

Indeed, this is very much the tone of his other, more recently published book, \textit{Yastreby Mira. Dnevnik Russkogo Posla}. The somewhat ambiguous title of the book is not just a sound-bite – Ambassador Rogozin is an accomplished linguist. The Russian word “mir” means both “peace” and “the world”. On the first page of the preface the author argues that hawks are better peacemakers because doves are profound cynics who only portray themselves as peacemakers. In our brutal and dangerous times hawks should take care of world (peace) affairs, as they are ‘...the high flying people of firm principles, civic views, strong will and inexhaustible energy’. ‘Only then will our children be able to sleep in peace, since hawks

\textsuperscript{17} ibid., Pp. 166,167. He specifically mentions the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid., p.255
\textsuperscript{19} ibid., p.46.
\textsuperscript{20} ibid., p.48.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p.120.
\textsuperscript{22} ibid., p.253.
don’t pick hawks’ eyes’, insists the author.\(^{25}\) He therefore appears to consider himself a hawk of peace and feels entitled to swoop randomly on his Russian and foreign opponents.

In another reflection of Rogozin’s literary and linguistic stylistics, he entitles each chapter with references to Russian literature. However, it is difficult to describe the book as a diary of an ambassador, as the title claims, because Rogozin’s ambassadorial career, though scattered across the text, begins in earnest only on page 395, when he was sent by then President Vladimir Putin to NATO, leaving him just 40 pages or so. It is unlikely to be by accident that Rogozin entitles the subsequent chapter “The Duel”.\(^{26}\)

**Yastreby Mira** begins with a nine-page mini-calendar of events in the history of the Soviet Union and Russia which are considered by the author to be particularly important. The starting point is March 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The next entry is more than five years later, June 1990, when the Russian Parliament, enacted, according to the author, the Declaration of State Sovereignty, providing the legal base for the dissolution of the USSR.\(^{27}\) The calendar sets the tone for the whole book and, after reading the description of the Georgian leadership of the early 1990s as neo-Nazi\(^{28}\) and the claim that the Russian nuclear submarine “Kursk” sank as a result of its collision with a foreign submarine (a conspiracy theory discarded officially by the Russian authorities a long time ago), the reader would be right to assume that the style of the whole book may be less than diplomatic.\(^{29}\)

The unwarranted use of crude language may please some of his less discerning voters if he decides to go back into politics, which is likely, unless his present mission is extended or his next posting is of equal or higher importance. But it will not win him many friends at NATO and the EU - particularly for instance his assertion that NATO, at a critical moment for Russia, stood on the side of the killers of women and children and then his description of the NATO statement of 19 August 2008, ‘blaming us [Russia] for all mortal sins’, as ‘loutish’ [khamskye].\(^{30}\) Rogozin describes the faces of several hundred hostile deputies in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, before he delivered his speech rejecting their criticism of the way Russia conducted the war against the Chechen radicals, as ‘self-satisfied’ mugs.\(^{31}\) An example of Europe’s short historical memory, according to Rogozin, is the Brussels cinema audience ‘whose fathers and grandfathers did not distinguish themselves, to put it mildly, by being particularly courageous’ in WWII, giving a standing ovation after the showing of the film *Inglorious Basterds*.\(^{32}\) Ambassador Rogozin clearly did not consider the probability that the cinema was dominated, as frequently happens in Brussels, by the international community and his gratuitous swipe at the citizens of Belgium is uncalled for. The tough language tends to be a part of the Russian (male) conversational culture, and it is not surprising that he leaves the strongest language for some of his countrymen, for example the suggestion that the men responsible for a clumsy TV program, aired during the terrorist attack on Beslan, should have parts of their reproductive organs removed.\(^{33}\)

\(^{25}\) Rogozin, Yastreby..., ibid., p.5.  
\(^{26}\) Chekhov’s literary story depicts characters arguing and justifying their sharply opposing moral and life principals. Arguments, pride and hurt feelings lead to a duel, in which neither is killed, but some internal changes take place and notion that ‘no-one knows the truth’ settles the narration, if not the sides.  
\(^{27}\) Rogozin, ibid, pp.1-16, here, p.7. The declaration was adopted by the Congress of People’s Deputies, which was the Russian Soviet Federative Republic (RSFSR) selected rather than elected supreme governing body. It established the priority of the constitution and laws of the Russian SFSR over legislation of the Soviet Union but was not a declaration of independence.  
\(^{28}\) ibid., p.9.  
\(^{29}\) ibid., p.12.  
\(^{30}\) ibid., pp.427-8.  
\(^{31}\) ibid., p.304.  
\(^{32}\) ibid., p.54.  
\(^{33}\) Rogozin, ibid., p.388.
To Russia with Love
The book is Rogozin’s political manifesto with all the basic ingredients: a decent family, a happy Soviet childhood (with a purposefully downplayed element of happiness), studies, professional life and political struggles with clearly delineated preferences. The author’s description of his ancestors is brief and interesting, showing that they were all brave and patriotic: there appear to be no political skeletons in the family cupboard, nor relatives shot in Stalin’s purges. Even the mysterious death of his grandfather (on his mother’s side) in 1935, is described with one word: ‘tragic’. Stalin’s security police left one of his great-grandfathers alone after he had a heart-attack. The author does not try to explain why the notorious NKVD was so humane in this instance.34

Son of a Soviet military scientist, a Lieutenant General and professor, who started his military career at the age of 13, serving on the auxiliary vessels of the Dnepr Flotilla and ended as a deputy head of the Armament Service of the Soviet Ministry of Defence, Dmitry Rogozin witnessed at home, from a very young age, interesting and highly sensitive “kitchen-debates” of his parents’ high-ranking guests. The parents and guests were critical of the Soviet pre-Gorbachev leaders and their defence policies and Rogozin describes them as ‘decrepit reptiles’,35 without acknowledging that he did rather well out of the system of which they were in charge.

He attended a school where French was a special subject, was interested in politics from a very young age and liked to listen to Radio Liberty and Voice of America. The author downplays his family contacts in the Soviet military industrial complex or the power structures of the era and, beyond commenting that she was a student in the philological faculty at Moscow State university, does not tell us much about how he met his wife, daughter of Gennadiy Nikolayevich Serebryakov, a KGB colonel working for the First Chief Directorate (Intelligence). He married her at the beginning of his undergraduate course and by the time the KGB tried to recruit him, somewhere around 1985, he was already a father. The young Dmitry quite evidently had nothing against using the sword and the shield to defend the “decrepit reptiles” – indeed he says he had dreamt of working in intelligence and was ready even for illegal work, all the more because his appearance, he believed, meant that he could pass for a Spaniard, a Serb, an Arab, even, as his wife apparently joked, a ‘huge Japanese’.36

Despite his privileged background, he slips up on his career ladder and sees himself as an unfairly treated underdog: it is never his fault. Rogozin wanted to study journalism at Moscow State University, but at first was not accepted for a full-time degree because, as he maintains, he was the son of a military man. But then he contradicts himself immediately by explaining that he failed for academic reasons.37 However, because he was an accomplished handball and basketball player the university accepted him on an evening course and his father helped him to get a job in the editorial office of the Kurchatov Atomic Energy Institute. It seems that Rogozin was quickly allowed to transfer to the day course, but he is not ready to share with us much of his university experience. He began to study Spanish and later Italian and as the students were obliged to learn one “socialist” language, he chose Czech, although subsequently he many times regretted that he did not learn Serbo-Croat, and so does not speak the language of his ‘Balkan brothers’.38

At the end of his degree Dmitry Rogozin was sent to Cuba on a six-month internship, but once again he is reluctant to share with his readers and possibly future voters his Cuban

34 ibid., p.31.
35 ibid., p.17.
36 ibid., p.39.
37 ibid., pp.33-4.
38 ibid., p.35.
experience, except that he was able to write two dissertations when he was there: “The USA’s Psychological Warfare against Cuba” and “The Paradoxes of President Mitterrand” – the latter analysing French defence policy of the period.39

Rogozin returned from Cuba in February 1986, hoping to join the KGB. To his surprise, he was not accepted because, as he insists, the law enacted by the late Yuri Andropov (in his position as the General Secretary of the CPSU) prohibiting the recruitment of the sons (and probably daughters) of officers working for the First Chief Directorate of the KGB was still in force.40 The law (a decree or maybe only an unwritten rule) was still in force when the KGB approached him in 1985 and Andropov dead. Did the KGB recruiters have a momentary memory lapse (Rogozin already had a KGB father-in-law) or decide after observing him in Cuba that young Dmitry was a bit of a handful, that in spite of his linguistic talents, perfect pedigree and “politically correct” final dissertations he was not the right person to work for the organisation? By this stage, the reader may feel a grudging respect for the recruiters from Lubyanka.

Rogozin complains that he lost the competition for the job in a prestigious TV news programme to someone who was really privileged. He found it rather amusing that he was not accepted by the press agency “Novosti” because when addressing his potential future boss he called him – by mistake of course – Ribbentrop rather than using his real name Rappoport.41 In view of Russia’s history, “the mistake”, if true, was a particularly tasteless and juvenile joke. It is also difficult to understand why the author decided to share this “joke” almost twenty five years later as the Russia ambassador to NATO. What potential audience is he targeting and why?

Finally, he is offered a job by the Committee of Youth Organisations “KMO”, originally set up during WWII as the “Antifascist Committee of the Soviet Youth”, a blend of supporting team for the CPSU propaganda machinery and a KGB-lite – more than a half of the KMO employees, about 50 people, were intelligence and security officers.42 His main task was to establish contacts with young, promising Spanish, Italian and Portuguese-speaking foreign politicians. It is difficult to understand why Ambassador Rogozin feels it necessary to mention the role of the KGB in the KMO. Does he need to boast about his security contacts, some twenty years after the disappearance of the USSR?

After working for the KMO, Rogozin was offered, by one of his KMO colleagues, a KGB officer, the job of first vice president of the newly established Russian American University. At the same time he became active in the political life of post-communist Russia, because he found out during the failed coup of August 1991 that he could influence the world around him.43 He was a co-founder and co-leader of the Congress of Russian Communities, but once Putin appeared on the political scene there was no room for his party. Putin was fighting the same battles at a much higher level.44

Many enemies, not many friends
The description of his enemies and opponents is delivered vividly, though usually in black and white. He is highly critical of Gorbachev for allowing the USSR to fall apart. He hates Yeltsin for organising the break-up of the Soviet Union. It was Rogozin, or so he claims, who in October 1992 challenged in the Russian Constitutional Court the legality of the Belovezha agreement which put an end the existence of the USSR.45 Yuri Luzhkov, the powerful mayor of Moscow is another target of the author’s anger (a courageous criticism as at the time of

39 Rogozin. ibid., p.40.
40 ibid., p.40-3.
41 ibid., p.41.
42 ibid., p.42-4.
43 ibid., p.78.
44 ibid., p.298.
45 Rogozin, ibid., p.104.
the book’s publication he was still Mayor of Moscow) for running the city as if it was his own property. R
gozin dislikes with the same intensity the brave, courageous and occasionally naive human rights fundamentalist Sergey Kovalev, whom he regards as an animal, criticising him with a degree of hatred no genuine human rights activist like Kovalev deserves. (His absolute hatred of Kovalev contrasts sharply with his considerate attitude towards the empire builder Stalin. The secret of Joseph Stalin’s success of making the USSR a great country, according to the author, is that he did not allow the communist nomenclature to steal.

The author’s favourite political enemy is probably Anatoly Chubais, for some the hero of the privatisation of the 1990s, for others the villain-in-chief of the episode. He hates Chubais not only for the privatisation campaign and his support of Boris Yeltsin, but also for his criticism of Rogozin’s favourite Russian writer, Dostoyevsky.

A special place in Rogozin’s rogue’s gallery is reserved for the Chechens. His descriptions and comments of events in Chechnya are often interesting, but invariably one-sided. He even quotes the Tsarist general Yermolov: ‘Chechnya can justly be named the nest of all robbers’. Rogozin’s description of the first Chechen war is particularly noteworthy, but the numerous statistics he offers are not accompanied by analysis, nor are the examples of the help given to Chechen fighters by several countries, including Ukraine. The alleged transfer of 150 trainer aircraft to the Chechen rebels is not followed by a logical question of how many pilots, except Dudayev, and air force ground maintenance personnel they had.

An eight-page psychological assessment of the Chechens is fascinating and reads like the introduction to a security brief written for Russian officers serving in Chechnya. In 2002, Rogozin volunteered to be the presidential representative in Chechnya, but Putin said that he needed him in the State Duma. The description of the Beslan school siege, which began on 1 September 2004, is partial, but nevertheless also very worthwhile. Rogozin was there, by accident, from the first day and his account of the events, especially the chaos in the HQ of the antiterrorist group is fascinating if dispiriting.

The description of the failed anti-Yeltsin coup is excellent and the author’s analysis short and to the point. It also reads like a “what not to do for potential coup organizers”.

A patriot or a nationalist?
If he is hawkish on domestic affairs, the author is a super-hawk when it comes to international affairs. His criticism of NATO is merciless – more so than in NATO tochka ru – given that he can focus on Kosovo/Yugoslavia in 1999, although he quite clearly does not see it as a military threat to Russia. Jamie Shea, NATO’s press officer during the NATO intervention in the Balkans is often Rogozin’s unwarranted target. As a seasoned propaganda fencer Rogozin even includes a list of words and phrases, which were apparently twisted and misinterpreted by NATO during its Balkan operations. That does not stop the author from including a photo, taken in 2009, of himself with Jamie Shea, and describing him generously as the head of NATO’s “brain centre”.

46 ibid., pp.157-160.
47 ibid., p.191.
48 ibid., p.65.
49 The Financial Times, 13.11.2004. Rogozin quotes Chubais from an interview he gave to Arkadiy Ostrovsky. p. 366. “He [Dostoyevsky] is certainly a genius, but his idea of Russians as special, holy people, his cult of suffering and the false choices he presents make me want to tear him to pieces.”
50 Rogozin, ibid., p.179.
51 ibid., pp.196-8.
52 ibid., pp.314-322.
53 ibid., p.374.
54 ibid., pp.231/232.
55 Rogozin, ibid., pp.232-234.
Rogozin lumps Vytautas Landsbergis, a gentlemanly anti-Russian former President of Lithuania and an MEP, with the former Georgian ultra-nationalist leader Gamsakhurdia and compares them both to Hitler: they were all artistic, and of a romantic nature, according to the author. The Georgians join the Chechens among the ambassador’s least popular peoples and he describes at length why, although he adds very little to the Russo-Georgian and Chechen gallery of black and white pictures. One of the more interesting and potentially explosive snippets of information in the book is the claim that on 12 August 2008 – during the Russo-Georgian conflict – a US colonel informed the Russian delegation in SHAPE that NATO had ‘taken a decision’ to send (unspecified) assault troops to Georgia. Rogozin says he ‘of course could not believe such chit-chat’, not least because ‘that’s not the way things are done in NATO’. Nevertheless, the episode ‘affected him unpleasantly’ and he hopes that the man, known to the Russian delegations, was punished (but does not say whether the Russian delegation complained).

He describes a group of young representatives from the Baltic republics, who came to the Paris industrial exhibition in August 1989 as ‘sobs’ (sukiny deti) and ‘political gigolos’ because they organised an anti-Soviet meeting, although Moscow paid for their trip. He even boasts about throwing one of them down the stairs. Rogozin then ordered the Balts to leave their accommodation and is very upset when the British delegation present at the exhibition helps them. He is furious at unspecified Western special services for encouraging members of the Yugoslav team to be more outspoken when voicing their dissatisfaction with the government in Belgrade. In October 1989, after a meeting of the Atlantic Association young political leaders [sic] in London, Rogozin witnessed a group of people in civilian clothes pressurising and trying to recruit a member of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Komsomol. The Western special services needed ‘cannon fodder’ [pushechnye myaso] – young people, ready for anti-Russian pogroms or at least to indulge in street protests, to shake loose the unity of the USSR. We can only speculate who would be in charge of the cannons. Again, it is worth underscoring that the book is subtitled “diary of a Russian Ambassador”.

Rogozin’s high-profile international career started in 1999, when the Russian lower chamber of the parliament elected him as the head of its international affairs committee. He subsequently led the Russian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and presidential envoy in dealing with aspects of Russia-EU relations. Yet the author has no time for European institutions, particularly the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) with which he reluctantly cooperated and which he strongly criticised during a public showdown over its condemnation of the way the Russian troops operated in Chechnya. He is especially amused by the fact that they did not demand Russia’s expulsion from the Council of Europe. The €20m annual contribution to the budget, representing 13% of the organisation’s total budget, he argues, may have something to do with it. He is outraged during the Kaliningrad transit talks between Moscow and Vilnius, that Russian citizens travelling to the Kaliningrad require a transit visa to travel through another country and fails to notice the existence of the sea routes, which Russia is free to develop. His unwillingness to accept the true and less-than-glorious role played by Moscow in the history of the Baltic States is not surprising – he simply follows the official Moscow line but he genuinely cannot understand why, as he insists, the Balts hate Russia.

56 ibid., p.216.
57 ibid., p.424/5
58 ibid., p.51.
59 ibid., p.52. Ambassador Rogozin alludes to Western intelligence services, most of whom are not as militarised or uniform conscious as their Soviet and Russian counterparts.
60 ibid., p.52.
61 ibid., p.303. According to the latest official figures available, the Russian Federations contributes 11.78% to the Council’s budget, like Italy, Germany, France and the UK, http://assembly.coe.int
62 ibid., p.335.
63 Rogozin, ibid., p.108.
Rogozin is shocked and offended when, with the arrival of what he describes as “democracy” [his quotation marks], the ungrateful inhabitants of Prague first painted a Soviet tank-monument pink and then removed it all together, leaving only the turret. ‘Now, the Czechs use the rough edges of the projectile wounds to open bottles of their famous beer. You don’t believe [me]. Go to Prague and see for yourself’ suggests Rogozin; continuing ‘what should I think about the leadership of that country? About its elite? About the moral state of the Czech society… This may influence Russia’s policies towards the Czech Republic, if I happen to be able to influence that policy’. And then, he pretends that this threat is a semi-joke, just in case.

The point is not that his joke/threat is unworthy of a man in his position nor that the author conveniently forgot about the events of 1968, but that as a Czech speaker he got the whole story so wrong. In August 2008, David Cerny, a well-known, controversial Czech sculptor illegally brought a four ton segment of back section of another tank, which included only the idler-wheels and a half of one road wheel, to the Smichov district of Prague, where the original tank was mounted. The original Soviet tank, still pink, has for many years been on display in the Military Technical Museum in Lesany. The offending piece of metal has been removed. What really annoyed Dmitry Rogozin was Cerny’s intention to protest against what he saw as Moscow’s intervention in Georgia.

A Political Manifesto
Most importantly, this book looks like the political manifesto of a man who expects to be recalled from his ambassadorial position in Brussels and is preparing to re-enter the political taiga back home. Rogozin wants to be all things to all Russian men: the whole range is here, from rough, straight talking action man, apparently speaking truth to power and the people, through to the clever literary reference and reflections, a man who has gained political and public recognition domestically and on the international scene. It is worth noting that the back cover of this Russian audience focused book is adorned with “endorsements”, not from Russian media or personalities, but from the international media, Liberation, Die Zeit, New York Times and NRC Handelsblat.

Sometimes the populist in him seems to take over and some parts of the book look like emotional articles at the cheaper end of the Russian media spectrum. Rogozin’s assertion that during the failed coup of October 1993 Yeltsin’s opponents in the Parliament were targeted by snipers serving in the presidential Main Protection Directorate is debatable. His claim that unknown snipers fired shots from the roof tops of the US embassy and its diplomatic settlement is so unbelievable that even the author appears suddenly to have some doubts about their existence.

The ambassador’s comparisons are often sweeping, inaccurate and undiplomatic. He wants to be seen as a super-patriot but comes across as a sabre-rattling populist with simplistic statements. After describing the incompetence of the top Soviet politicians and leaders, ambassador Rogozin still cannot understand – as he himself admits – that the Soviet leadership accepted the German reunification without getting any political or financial dividends and saddling the country with huge debts. According to him, the Soviet Armed Forces would have defeated any enemy who attempted to destroy the sovereignty of the Soviet state, or ‘our boys, in contrast with the Western peacekeepers in Srebrenica, do not

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64 ibid., p.436/437.
67 Rogozin, ibid., p.50.
68 ibid., p.21.
leave their action stations'.

He regrets that he was not armed when he met the terrorist Khattab, an idle boast, as it is quite clear from his own description that he would have been killed by Khattab’s bodyguards before he could so much as say “the safety catch”.

The chapter “The Deceiving Journalist and the Gullible Reader” is reserved for criticism of journalists, both Russian and Western. Not only should we not forget Rogozin’s journalistic experience, but here again it is worth returning to the literature to which Rogozin is referring in his chapter heading: the theme of the tale, originally authored by M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, is the ease with which a reader, who is prepared to believe, can be deceived with either a lie or the truth. The author’s descriptions of the shortcomings of media organisations and people who work for them are often accurate, yet the tone is generally vindictive and no realistic improvements are offered.

Russia’s future is the Far East (Siberia and the Pacific), partly because the author admires the new and the old economic tigers of the region and partly because he is worried about the situation in the Russian Far East. Some of the statistics in the book, describing the regional problems, look interesting and horrific at the same time, although it is a pity that the statistics are not properly sourced. In the chapter entitled “Bedniye lyudi” (“Poor people” – both emotionally poor and those suffering poverty, a story by Dostoyevsky), Rogozin focuses on Russia’s demographic problem. Or, as he phrases it: ‘in fact there is no demographic problem in Russia. There is a demographic catastrophe’.

During the last thirteen years the number of people infected with syphilis in the Russian Far East has increased 150-200 times and HIV/AIDS four times. The number of inhabitants in the region decreased by 3.7 million over the last 13 years and continues to decrease. Every minute three children are born in Russia and four people die. In China the proportion is 38 to 16 and in the US 8 to 4. During the last thirteen years the population of Russia decreased by 11m, during the last twelve years 2m Russians moved to its European side and 3.4 m left the country altogether. Striking statistics indeed. Furthermore, it is expected that between 2009 and 2020 the population of Russia will decrease by 9-10m and by 2050 it will total 92 to 112m people. A country like Russia should have no less than 500m inhabitants, writes the author, and offers several remedies. These include an instant expulsion and shaming of foreign organisations which propagate birth control, the destruction of family values and public morals and advocate abortions as a family planning method.

If its future is the Far East, Russia is a European country. For the author this is not a geographical issue, since he mentions Manuel Barosso and Javier Solana’s visit to the great European city of Khabarovsk, and adds that ‘for the Western cultural elite Russia is a natural and the most reliable ally’. Rogozin likes Europe because it is much easier to deal with than the US or China.

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69 ibid., p.421.
70 ibid., p.215.
71 ibid., p.215.
72 The story can be found at: http://public-library.narod.ru/Saltykov.Mikhail/gazetchik.html.
73 ibid., p.327.
74 ibid., p.237. It seems that the statistical cut off line used by the author is 2005.
75 ibid., p.243.
76 ibid., pp.266 and 276.
77 No. 2.39, 241 and 243. Rogozin’s sources of information appear to be Vitaliy Averyanov, Venyamin Bashlayev, Andrey Kobyakov, Andrey Saveleyev and Sergey Butin, all respected expert demographers or sociologists.
78 ibid., p.255.
79 ibid., p.399 and 405.
80 Rogozin, ibid., p.400.
Equally, earlier in the book he had lamented that it is a ‘great pity’ that Europe considers Africans and Arabs as ‘its own’, but not Russians despite the huge contributions the Russian people have made to pan-European culture and history. Rogozin argues that Russia is the centre of European traditions, whether Brussels, Paris or Berlin like it or not: ‘a fact remains a fact’.\footnote{ibid., p.399.} The expansion of NATO eastwards and the EU’s Eastern Partnership are described by the author as essentially “new Trotsky-ite” projects, and provoke him to conclude that these initiatives are worse than if EU did not actually do anything.\footnote{ibid., p.399.} ‘Is it really possible’, he asks, ‘that Ankara and Tirana [as] capitals of NATO member states are cities more European than Moscow and St. Petersburg?\footnote{ibid., p.53.} Rogozin’s frequent criticism of NATO enlargement and its policies is predictable, frequent and inconsistent when he then describes the alliance as a paper lion,\footnote{ibid., p.401.} quite clearly trying to avoid the old Maoist term “paper tiger”.

**By Way of Epilogue**

Rogozin’s career was slowed down by his active opposition to Yeltsin. But as a trained, multilingual journalist with the experience of propaganda work and international diplomacy he has always been a potentially useful tool for those above him who needed competent, experienced representatives and envoys defending Moscow’s corner. He was noticed by Putin because of his aggressive counter-attacks against MEPs who criticised, not always objectively, the conduct of the Russian troops in Chechnya and his unrelenting negotiating style when conducting talks with the EU about transit access to Kaliningrad, and he was appointed to Brussels when Moscow understood that it needed a smooth and aggressive political communicator at NATO HQ, rather than a general with limited international experience.

Rogozin likes to impress, sometimes without thinking about the consequences of what he says and writes. It is difficult to imagine a Western politician or diplomat proudly including some of the episodes in these books or depicting them in the vivid, robust style in which Rogozin revels (it is noteworthy that his style echoes the similarly robust and vivid language of Vladimir Putin, to which he in fact refers on page 298), or a photo showing him riding a powerful motor-bike without holding the handle bars. However, Rogozin’s communication talents could become a double-edged sword if Moscow finds it difficult to switch him off, especially if he decides to start political campaigning before leaving Brussels. His only – admittedly very important – political benefactor is Vladimir Putin, whom he mentions infrequently but with respect. Medvedev is mentioned only at the end of the book.\footnote{ibid., p.379. The book has no index.}

We will hear a lot more from and about Ambassador Dmitri Olegovich Rogozin. Where he goes from Brussels will be interesting, with the main options likely being another high-profile job on the international stage or returning to Moscow. Having left Moscow in 2008 as the leader of a fairly major party (Rodina), and then fulfilled his tasks in Brussels, it is fair to assume that he is looking for promotion. In Moscow, this would mean two potential options – either party politics (in other words at the head of one of the major parties, probably, therefore, United Russia or a “main opposition” party) or a senior Ministry or Administration position.
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