

Even Loonies Who Plot Coups Deserve Jail

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Retired military intelligence Colonel Vladimir Kvachkov — a patriot and anti-Semite who was prosecuted but acquitted on charges of attempting to kill 1990s privatizations architect Anatoly Chubais — was sentenced a few days ago to 13 years in prison for planning an armed uprising. Honestly, I would not even bother writing about this incident were it not for the numerous objections raised by liberal commentators who claim that jailing a crazy man is just one more piece of evidence that the Kremlin is bloodthirsty and inhuman.

The authorities did not jail Kvachkov because he referred to President Vladimir Putin during the trial as a parasitic worm or even because he believes that the Jews, whom he refers to as "genetically modified people," appeared on Earth because "Satan conducted a special operation in which they were conceived through the incestuous liaison of Sarah with her brother, Abraham."

Kvachkov was charged with a very specific crime — namely, that he used meetings with his cohorts in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, Yekaterinburg and Samara to form militias. It was also claimed that in August 2010, thousands of these supporters — who were organized

into groups called Center, West, South, East and North — were to pose as tourists and gather in the woods near Military Training Center No. 467 in Kavrov, a small town in the Vladimir region, blow up a cell phone transmission tower, jam radio communications, seize the training center along with the weapons and armored vehicles housed there, and then march on the capital.

What's more, a year after Kvachkov's arrest, another group of his supporters headed by Colonel Leonid Khabarov planned to incite a revolt in Yekaterinburg. The plan, code-named Daybreak, was sketched out in detail, from Phase 1 to Phase 6. Phase 1 began with creating diversions, particularly by cutting electrical power to all of Yekaterinburg. Phase 2 called for selected killings. Notebooks containing neat, schoolchild handwriting held "hit lists" of Jews and Muslims whom the plan's authors considered the masterminds of a Jewish and Masonic conspiracy.

If starry-eyed liberals believe that the case was fabricated and that Kvachkov and his supporters never planned to seize the military training center in Kovrov, they should write that they challenge the truth of the investigators' claims. Instead, they do not even mention the accusations in the case and simply cry out, "Is that any way to deal with political opponents? How can you lock up an old man who is obviously off his rocker?"

But the problem is not their politics, but their plan to stage an armed rebellion. Such uprisings are often planned by crazies. In 1812, a certain General Claude Francois de Malet escaped from an insane asylum and attempted to seize power in Paris. Should we conclude that it was not a coup simply because he happened to be crazy?

Insanity is no excuse. Such uprisings might be easier to put down, but it does not mitigate the sentence. Sometimes I think Russian liberals have lost the most basic understanding of the state's responsibilities.

For a certain segment of the population, any person convicted by the abhorred ruling regime is automatically innocent of all charges. For them, even discussing the evidence is anathema, and the only decent act is to repeat the words of a defense lawyer, no matter how shamelessly he lies.

One more thing: State investigators have so disqualified themselves that they will not try to fully convince the public that a defendant is guilty even if it requires only the slightest effort. Why? Because they are too busy extorting money and chasing anti-corruption whistleblowers like Alexei Navalny.

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