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'American public doesn't share establishment's hostility towards Russia' – Reagan's adviser

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Suzanne Massie

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The Cold War has long been over, but it seems, not for all. The idea of reconciling with Russia has been met by fierce

resistance on Capitol Hill. Though Trump promised to repair broken relations while on the campaign trail, the new US administration has been forced into a struggle against the nation's establishment. Will the new president still be able to find common ground with Moscow? Or are we in for Cold War Two? We ask a former adviser to President Ronald Reagan on Russian affairs, Russia scholar and author – Suzanne Massie.

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Sophie Shevardnadze: *Suzanne Massie, adviser to President Ronald Reagan on Russia policy, it's really great to have you on our show today, welcome.*

Suzanne Massie: Thank you, I am happy to be here.

SS: *The Washington Post says that the White House doesn't have enough capable experts to advise on Russia anymore, compared to Reagan times. What do you think, are people who are behind the Russian policy in Washington misinformed?*

SM: Well, I'd like to be tactful about this, but I do think that we have a lack of such things, at least recently, much more recently. Now, I don't think right now that we have... I don't like the word "expert", but I mean people who really know you, who know the language, who know your history, and who feel your history. I don't feel we have very many like that right now in official positions.

SS: *Now, when you started working with President Reagan, he actually reached out to you because he*

wanted work with people who were outside of the inner circle of Washington experts, right? Do you think the current administration is ready to make an effort like that?

SM: I wouldn't speak for them. Everybody in America at this moment, it seems, is very confused about our new president and where he's going and what he's going to say next. I think it's too early to tell. I happen to care a great deal for Russia and I have for many years, and I have always maintained the exact position from the beginning and that is you have a lot to give us and we have a lot to give you. We should be together, because together we could do a great deal more than we can do apart for the rest of the world. That's been my position. If they ever wanted to talk to me about that, I would be happy.

SS: *Well, you give speeches on Russian relations -why do you think voices like yours are ignored?*

SM: They are not. The American public is very-very different from what is now being heard in the U.S. It comes from Washington and it comes from some of the media. Much good stuff exists on the Internet if you want to look for it, but the great public and I say that, basically, sometimes, even Russia forgets that Washington is not the U.S. any more than Paris is the whole France. We have other places and I have been saying: instead of trying to concentrate all the time on Washington you should be concentrating on other places in the United States. Now, I have given lectures in every state of the United States except Alaska and Hawaii, and I have seen the same thing and I've done it now for about 20 years - the same thing

and I've done it now for about 20 years - the same thing.

The American people, the public, is always very curious about you, they always want to know, they always say to me: why Russia, why did I go and study Russia? They ask questions, they are always curious and they are not hostile. Americans, even up in Maine, not even Maine, which is a state of fishermen and boat-builders and you know, even the men who came to plough our snow the night before I left - said exactly the same thing as I'm saying to you: "We should be together". "You know" - he kept saying - "You know, I don't like what they're saying, the press". And that is the fact. So I wouldn't take too seriously the things that are said now in limited ways, and say that the public feels that way. No American I have ever met would like to have a war with you.

SS: *Well, when I turn on the TV, or read the newspapers...*

SM: I know...

SS: *...Anyone who actually speaks out for mending ties with Russia is automatically branded a "Kremlin Spy" - I mean, look at Trump. Is there place for a positive opinion about Russia in American mainstream at all?*

SM: Yes. But, remember, who the mainstream is run by - very few people in the end. I don't know how many people actually control the main media - and I'm talking CNN, Fox News, etc. They are corporations and those people are the ones who correct.... Now, I know, that mainstream is what you're hearing, and what I'm saying is: don't pay too much attention to it. It is not the mainstream of public feeling, and yet - listen. I don't hesitate to say what I feel but I'd tell

yet - listen, I don't hesitate to say what I feel, but I tell you... in my lectures, lately, you know what I name them? I name them "A Few Things About Russia Today You May Not Have Read in the Newspapers". And you should see how people flock to hear that.

SS: *But the thing is...even if the people themselves are not hostile towards Russia, this one-sided image of Russia in the mainstream leads to concrete actions. For instance, Trump is constantly coming under fire for alleged ties with Russia.*

SM: Yes.

SS: *But look at President's National Security Adviser who was actually forced to resign, and that's after it emerged he was maintaining dialogue with Russian officials. I'm wondering if this is actually going to turn into a McCarthy-era witch hunt against Trump's administration, just because they want to mend ties?*

SM: People have mentioned this, and people as, let's say, distinguished as Stephen Cohen, whom you may know. I am not sure what's going to happen in the next thing. Because all of our Senators don't feel that way, I don't know about our House of Representatives, but our Senators, many of whom I know, don't feel this way. Many of them have noticed exactly what you're saying. Many, I would say, influential people in the United States - and that means professors, people who are in the field, also have noticed it, and there's quite a reaction against it. So, I'm not sure, it's as pessimistic as you see it.

SS: *Hopefully. Now, I want to go back a little bit to your collaboration with President Reagan, because Reagan did choose to negotiate, but at the same time he didn't back down from military confrontation. What do you think of adopting Reagan's 'peace through strength' policy today? Do you think this military power is needed to preserve stability?*

SM: I don't, personally. That's my answer - I don't. I actually am very sorry for the amount of weapons, not only that the U.S. or Russia - or anybody... I really think that the world needs less arms instead of more. There are some people who make a great deal of money from arms and therefore they have a great deal of interest, and seeing precisely that the kind of... well, mainstream that you're talking about. Because I always ask: what point is in it? What are we gaining from this? I think we gain very little. I would like to see much less, and particularly, Ronald Reagan's dream which was less and hopefully no atomic weapons.

SS: *So, just to sum this up, do you think that the current administration will overcome the political establishment's objections to have a thaw with Russia?*

SM: I hope so. I hope so. There are many people who are concerned - just because we don't know yet, what form the new administration is going to take. It's not even chosen entirely. I think you're right, I have observed the same thing. There is a group of people, in Washington, they're not all transparent, who actually would like to prevent Trump - so it will depend on whether Trump has the guts to

Trump - so it will depend on whether Trump has the guts to go against the whole establishment that he does not know.

SS: *You know, The phrase "trust but verify" which Reagan was famous for - you are the one who taught him that, that's a Russian proverb translated into English - that has since become part of the American political dictionary, actually*

SM: Not only the American dictionary. They are selling everything from soup to nuts on television.

SS: *Do you think there's room for trust now? Can American leadership build enough trust with Russia to be able to verify?*

SM: I hope so. We were working in that direction. I can tell you, there are masses of people who could, but will they be in power - we don't know that yet. I think we have to wait a little bit and see what happens, and that's the advice

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what's going to happen, I have no idea. And that, as you know, it's in our newspapers every day - what's going on, what going to happen? We don't know. There are some real people against in the Senate and in the other places, and we'll see who wins in this. But I can only tell you that the public does count and the public does not want war with Russia - and why should they? There's no reason for it. So, I like to trust in the intelligence of the American public - it does have a kind of an intelligence, a collective intelligence. I think the American public was very anxious for a change because of many things, and not just because

for a change because of many things, and not just because of you or foreign policy, and they did that and now everybody's adjusting to that change and to new personalities. Reagan, after all, had a lot of experience, governing. He's been governor of California - a very big state, very important state - for two terms. So he had a lot of experience with the public, remember that. He had been going around, he had spoken for GE and he himself gave that a lot of credit for his being the kind of President he was. But he had an awful lot of appearances. He knew how to talk to the public. Now that's missing right now. Mr. Trump made a lot of money, he didn't necessarily talk to the public a great deal or know the public very well. So... again, we have to wait. But I know how people denigrated Reagan. Oh my, did they do it! They kept saying he was - the same media that you're talking about - said that he was a two-bit actor, that he never read, that he really was kind of stupid and went to sleep all the time, and... that is not true.

SS: *Look what happened, he was one of the great Presidents of the U.S.*

SM: He also read all the time, and that's how he knows me. He read all of my books.

SS: *While we're all waiting to see what happens in America, I still want to ask you a little bit about what's going on right now - people over here, they are wondering why has Russia today become a scapegoat for everything bad that happens in America. I mean, I know if you're big in Twitter or Instagram, but th*

a hashtag #russiansdidit. That's kind of funny.

SM: It's now become a joke, as a cartoon. I do you've seen that part. It's very funny and it's act too polite to even say, but I will say - there's a p two dogs and the dog says to one dog: "Guess Russians pooped in the hall!"

Now, you see, blaming even that on Russians. over the place. There are all kinds of jokes about People realise, they are not stupid, that this is e happen to agree with you, I think it's very dange have fought it as much as I could because I had feeling: that you couldn't say anything. That 18 people typing McCarthyism, you couldn't say anything. I decid out how to say and that's why I named those thi Things You May Not Have Read in the Newspa didn't say bad things about the newspapers, but them all kinds of things that I saw here, that they were very-very interested. Realise, we don't get very much news about you. And I mean personal news. You know, the things you take for granted.

SS: *You what I else I noticed? During the Cold War, the Americans systematically criticised the Soviet Union, but if you look at right now, personal attacks on Russia's President are prevalent.*

SM: That's terrible.

SS: *Why do you think the Russian-American relations soured down to the point of personal animosity?*

SM: I think it's disgraceful and many agree with me. I don't know... You have to admit that probably, there are some enemies there. They are not exactly transparent. They have done it... that has never happened in our history that I know, that there's been directed so much personally, that I finally said, really, if Mr. Putin actually did all the things they say he did, he wouldn't have time to rule Russia at all. It gets to be... absolutely absurd: all the things that are written. It's not right and I feel it is not correct to do that. I happen to have great pleasure of knowing Mr. Putin a little bit. After all, I was a great friend of Sobchak and I was in St. Petersburg, which is my city, and it's not that big, and so you meet people, you know... and, well, I was once introduced on a Boston radio program as being the only woman in the world who had been kissed by Ronald Reagan and Vladimir Putin. I had to say - "But it was very chaste, it was in the church!" And that's really only because of the old days, in Petersburg. So, personally, I always wish him well, I know how hard a job it is, not only in foreign policy, but right here - how much responsibility, how much difficulty. So, I always watch, with, let's say, an equal eye.

SS: *You put an emphasis on personal relations - and Trump wants to fix just that. Can 'person to person' contact between the leaders actually turn around the whole relationship, would that be enough?*

SM: Reagan did it, and he wanted very much to do it, and he deeply believed in personal relations. That's a matter of record. He always thought that if people could speak face-

to-face, you could go much further than any other way, and he put that into practice. I'm sure that you know that none of his advisors, except, perhaps, Mr. Shultz wanted him to meet at all with Mr. Gorbachev. They didn't want it. You know why? They said - "He wasn't up to it" - Reagan, "he was not up to it". Well, Reagan simply said "I want to and I will" and he was supported very strongly by his wife, Nancy, who was all for it. So, they did it against... When I came in to that, I was the only woman, there were no women, it was all, absolutely, men. A male administration and they didn't want it. He had many of his counselors who were absolutely against him meeting Gorbachev. It was his determination. And you know what else he said? He said: "We are not going to discuss ICBMs and all those initials. We are going to discuss basic things, absolutely basic things - like why are they afraid of us and why are we afraid of them, and that's what we're going to talk about". That was Geneva.

SS: *But, then, if we follow that logic, we had Putin and Bush - they had good relations, Obama and Medvedev got along, Obama and Putin - not so much. But if the relations between Great Powers depend on personal relationships between the leaders, doesn't that mean the minute one of the leaders is replaced, then everything - and the understanding that has been there between them goes off track?*

SM: Would you think it's also 'naoborot' - I mean, they didn't get so well along with Obama, or Hillary, she might have been... I don't think so

SS: *Look where we are right now, I mean, people call this the "new Cold War" era, just because they didn't get along so well.*

SM: You're not going to get very far with me on that because I don't think it is, and I do believe in the American public and I don't believe in that little group in Washington or in the media who have decided to mount an attack on Mr. Trump. I don't know Mr. Trump, I don't know what he's going to do. I have some doubts, but I'm willing to give him a little time, he did get elected. I didn't happen to vote either for Mr. Trump or Mrs. Clinton, because I knew them, and I just couldn't. I could not do it. But I'll tell you one good thing that's happening - American people have woken up a lot and...they were pretty much going along, thinking only of themselves, if you want, "they and our own problems", you know. But now, they realise that they hadn't paid enough attention to our own government, and now there's a great deal more interest in grassroots, local, which, I think, is very important. Everybody was kind of asleep, you know, thinking it was all going to go along the same old way, and then, suddenly, it isn't. So, now, everybody is paying a lot of attention.

SS: *I want to talk to you a bit about NATO.*

SM: Oh God, yes.

SS: *So, it happened with the NATO expansion into Eastern Europe which irritates Moscow to this day...*

SM: Of course!

SS: *So one administration was ready to leave East Europe neutral, but then Bill Clinton and Bush Jr. they decided to expand. All this time Moscow was protesting against this...*

SM: I know.

SS: *They were very firm about their position in the 90s, the 00s, and the 10s, until this day. Why was it and still is ignored?*

SM: I have just said this, at a speech that I gave at the Baltic Forum. I've said, number one, coexistence can never be brought about by force, number one, and that I personally, think that putting soldiers on people's borders is not the way to start a constructive conversation, most particularly with Russia. I think sometimes it will help to simply look at the map and you might understand better - after all, the U.S. is, I would say, very lucky, to have nobody particularly threatening on our borders. We have Canada, we have Mexico, and on the other two sides we have fishes. We have two big ponds with fishes. And that's it. Having worries about borders is not something that we... we've been very fortunate about that. But other people do have worries. They do have history, they do remember their history and, of course, Russia above all, does remember its history, not only their recent history, but before that. The big mistake of the Western policy was that the West was making policy about a country that no longer existed.

SS: *Americans believe in exceptionalism and exceptionalism has led to interventions and the spreading of liberal values; On the other hand, there's isolationism - like Trump's America First ideas. Which one do you think will prevail?*

SM: I can't tell you who's going to prevail.

SS: *What do you think?*

SM: I personally think that there's a great mood for thinking about America right now. We have a lot of problems, so I think there may be a move away from, let's say, interfering all over the place or the external policy. I think Americans are ready and desiring to think about themselves, if you think that that's isolationism. In that respect, it will be more thinking about itself, now, than worrying about every other country in the world. We could never forget Russia, but that is something else. But, I really do, I think, perhaps, you're right, that there may be more pulling in.

SS: *Finally, I just want to know because, U.S. and Russia mainly disagree on foreign policy - in Syria, on President Trump's confrontation path towards Iran - do you think that Russia and U.S. can manage to cooperate selectively? Do you think they can agree to disagree?*

SM: I hope so, I hope so. Why not? After all, nobody agrees with everything anybody else says. I don't really believe that any country is exceptional and absolutely... I think, every country has something to contribute. So, we may not agree, but, at least, we can respect each other's

feelings, and not only feelings - history and point of view may not be the same as ours.

SS: *Thank you so much for this wonderful interview. Suzanne Massie, adviser to President Ronald Reagan. And we thank Hotel Metropol that gave us an opportunity to record this interview in its Executive Lounge. Thank you.*

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Andrey Che ★ Leader



Oh ^{Edited} yes it does! Because Americans are used to having an enemy presented to them by their masters, whatever that enemy could be: Russians, Vietnamese, Cubans, Chinese, Iranians, Afghans, Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, North Koreans.... Russians! If not for their sheepish behavioral pattern, absence of a capacity for critical thinking and mental laziness the British-American empire could not commit even half of the crimes it did: the American public is the true enabler behind all these invasions, wars, destruction, terrorism and murder!

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**Purple Popcorn** → Andrey Che

This really strikes me as a fair and unbiased portrayal of the American public...

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**Blue Bowtie**

The American people have no reason to dislike Russia or its citizens. The governments try to do their job of creating bias, positive or negative, depending on what they want to portray.

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**Purple Flower**

Well! i'm American and i would like for America to be friends with Russia. The two super powers working together could accomplish anything. I hate Nazi's and the stinking Nazi neocons in DC. Nazi's McCain and Graham need to croak off. I am totally against them and the DHS, CIA, NSA, FBI, the Pentagon and dept of defense, all of them are constantly violating our Constitution. What part of Supreme law of the land don't they understand?

Reply · Share · 9 Likes ·

David Penrose Barneby ★ Leader → Purple Flower

Well Said !!! Absolutely Right !!! I share your view !!!

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Fiucik Miselfo ★ Leader → Purple Flower

What is a NAZI?

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SputnikCaviar ★ Leader → Fiucik Miselfo

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Zeitgeistttt ★ Leader

This gave me an insight into Reagan i never knew, and a nice interview



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**Land_der_Wunder** ★ Leader

Edited
Wonderful interview, thank you for allowing this knowledgeable scholar share her opinion. We should never forget that the American public is not all narrow minded and hateful. Americans like all other people. are not bad. On manv

'American public doesn't share establishment's hostility towards Russia' – Reagan's adviser RT — SophieCo
...and the Russian Americans into an other people, and the rest. On many occasions, the politicians ruling us are.

Sophie's respectful way to conduct interviews should be exemplary for our MSM. Very pleasurable to watch.



Reply · Share · 3 Likes ·  



Olive Bottle



The guest talks a lot of sense - lets hope the US takes note.



Reply · Share · 3 Likes ·  



Olive Box




Edited
If the Zionnuts in Washington get their way and the US smashes Iran, that will leave a corridor for the middle eastern Wahhabi loons to attack Russia. This is the root cause of the Zionnut Russia conflict. It's not America that has a problem with Russia, it's Israel and it's agents within America.

Reply · Share · 3 Likes ·  

David Penrose Barneby  Leader  Olive Box



I agree , somebody needs to take Israel out of existence .

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Episode 1112

End of the line

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DJ Khaled

by Taboola

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