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## Obama Rewrites the Cold War

*The President has a duty to stand up to the lies of our enemies.*

By LIZ CHENEY

*(Please see corrections and amplifications [item below.](#))*

There are two different versions of the story of the end of the Cold War: the Russian version, and the truth. President Barack Obama endorsed the Russian version in Moscow last week.

Speaking to a group of students, our president explained it this way: "The American and Soviet armies were still massed in Europe, trained and ready to fight. The ideological trenches of the last century were roughly in place. Competition in everything from astrophysics to athletics was treated as a zero-sum game. If one person won, then the other person had to lose. And then within a few short years, the world as it was ceased to be. Make no mistake: This change did not come from any one nation. The Cold War reached a conclusion because of the actions of many nations over many years, and because the people of Russia and Eastern Europe stood up and decided that its end would be peaceful."

The truth, of course, is that the Soviets ran a brutal, authoritarian regime. The KGB killed their opponents or dragged them off to the Gulag. There was no free press, no freedom of speech, no freedom of worship, no freedom of any kind. The basis of the Cold War was not "competition in astrophysics and athletics." It was a global battle between tyranny and freedom. The Soviet "sphere of influence" was delineated by walls and barbed wire and tanks and secret police to prevent people from escaping. America was an unmatched force for good in the world during the Cold War. The Soviets were not. The Cold War ended not because the Soviets decided it should but because they were no match for the forces of freedom and the commitment of free nations to defend liberty and defeat Communism.

It is irresponsible for an American president to go to Moscow and tell a room full of young Russians less than the truth about how the Cold War ended. One wonders whether this was just an attempt to push "reset" -- or maybe to curry favor. Perhaps, most concerning of all, Mr. Obama believes what he said.

Mr. Obama's method for pushing reset around the world is becoming clearer with each foreign trip. He proclaims moral equivalence between the U.S. and our adversaries, he readily accepts a false historical narrative, and he refuses to stand up against anti-American lies.

The approach was evident in his speech in Moscow and in his speech in Cairo last month. In Cairo, he asserted there was some sort of equivalence between American support for the 1953 coup in Iran and the evil that the Iranian mullahs have done in the world since 1979. On an earlier trip to Mexico City, the president listened to an extended anti-American screed by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and then let the lies stand by responding only with, "I'm grateful that President Ortega did not blame me for the things that occurred when I was 3 months old."

Asked at a NATO meeting in France in April whether he believed in American exceptionalism, the president said, "I believe in American Exceptionalism just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." In other words, not so much.

The Obama administration does seem to believe in another kind of exceptionalism -- Obama exceptionalism. "We have the best brand on Earth: the Obama brand," one Obama handler has said. What they don't seem to realize is that once you're president, your brand is America, and the American people expect you to defend us against lies, not embrace or ignore them. We also expect you to know your history.

Mr. Obama has become fond of saying, as he did in Russia again last week, that American nuclear disarmament will encourage the North Koreans and the Iranians to give up their nuclear ambitions. Does he really believe that the North Koreans and the Iranians are simply waiting for America to cut funds for missile defense and reduce our strategic nuclear stockpile before they halt their weapons programs?

The White House ought to take a lesson from President Harry Truman. In April, 1950, Truman signed

National Security Council report 68 (NSC-68). One of the foundational documents of America's Cold War strategy, NSC-68 explains the danger of disarming America in the hope of appeasing our enemies. "No people in history," it reads, "have preserved their freedom who thought that by not being strong enough to protect themselves they might prove inoffensive to their enemies."

Perhaps Mr. Obama thinks he is making America inoffensive to our enemies. In reality, he is emboldening them and weakening us. America can be disarmed literally -- by cutting our weapons systems and our defensive capabilities -- as Mr. Obama has agreed to do. We can also be disarmed morally by a president who spreads false narratives about our history or who accepts, even if by his silence, our enemies' lies about us.

**Ms. Cheney served as deputy assistant secretary of state and principal deputy assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs from 2002-2004 and 2005-2006.**

**Corrections & Amplifications:**

Liz Cheney was deputy assistant secretary of state under George W. Bush. A previous version of this op-ed by Ms. Cheney misstated her title.

**SmartMoney Glossary:** [zero-sum game](#), [Wall Street](#)

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