



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on February 8, 2011

Undermining Allies

While everyone's attention seems to be focused on the crisis in Egypt, a bombshell revelation about the administration's foreign policy in Europe has largely gone unnoticed.

The British newspaper *The Telegraph* has reported that part of the price which President Obama paid to get Russia to sign the START treaty, limiting nuclear arms, was revealing to the Russians the hitherto secret size of the British nuclear arsenal. This information came from the latest WikiLeaks documents.



To betray vital military secrets of this country's oldest, most steadfast and most powerful ally, behind the back of the British government, is something that should set off alarm bells. Following in the wake of earlier betrayals of prior American commitments to put a nuclear shield in Eastern Europe, and the undermining of Israel and calculated insults to its prime minister, this pattern raises serious, and perhaps almost unthinkable, questions about the Obama administration's foreign policy.

One of Barack Obama's first acts as President of the United States was to fly to Russia and try to get a deal with the Russian government by welshing on an existing American commitment to put a nuclear shield in Eastern Europe.

Obama's glib rhetoric about how he was pressing "the reset button" on American foreign policy treated the ongoing international commitments of the American government as something that each new administration is free to disregard.

Nations that ally themselves with the United States, and who cooperate in many ways to oppose the threat of international terrorism, do so at the risk of their own national safety and even survival. To make America's reciprocal commitments to them contingent on the whims of each new administration is to make other nations have to think twice about allying themselves with the U.S.

Since the fight against international terrorism requires not only information about terrorist activities and networks from other countries' intelligence services, but also cooperation from other countries' financial institutions, in order to block terrorists' transfers of money to finance their deadly activities.

This is in addition to other nations' direct military involvement in the fight against terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq and other places, current and prospective — not to mention providing military access through their lands when needed.



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But doing such things invites retaliation from the terrorists and from the leading international sponsor of terrorism, Iran, which may in a very few years have nuclear weapons.

Glib talk about setting the reset button on American foreign policy raises the question whether any alliance with the United States can be relied on beyond the term of a particular administration. To nations that have to think in terms of their own national survival, four years is a very short time.

It is also a very short time in the life of the United States of America. To alienate our allies and embolden our enemies because of one administration is a dangerous gamble in an international jungle where nuclear bombs may soon be in the hands of some of the most reckless nations on the planet.

The Obama administration's response to the current crisis in Egypt likewise threatens to make being an ally of the United States less attractive.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the advice that Barack Obama has been giving Hosni Mubarak, for the President of the United States to be publicly lecturing the president of another sovereign nation on almost a daily basis insults that nation, not just its leader.

Even in the worst days of the dictatorship in the Soviet Union, neither Stalin nor his successors publicly told the leaders of the satellite nations in Eastern Europe what to do. There is no question that Eastern European leaders were puppets of the Soviet Union, but Soviet leaders had the good sense not to say so to the whole world. Yet Obama makes allies look like they are puppets.

Countries like Egypt, that have once lived under colonial rule, are especially resentful of being publicly lectured by Western nations. Nor will the Obama administration's lecturing of Egypt endear us to other nations contemplating the down side of being an ally of the United States.

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