

Russian Invasion Of Georgia: A New America by J. Conrad Guest

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America's calling, Harry Truman;

Harry, you'd know what to do.

The world is turnin' round

and losin' lots of ground,

Oh, Harry is there something we can do to save the land we love?

— Robert Lamm

WHEN I FIRST HEARD THAT RUSSIA had invaded Georgia, I thought, *So what?* I've been to forty or so of the fifty states in the union, and although Ty Cobb, the greatest Detroit Tiger and perhaps the greatest ballplayer ever — one of baseball's nine immortals — was affectionately known as the Georgia Peach because he hailed from Narrows, Georgia, the state itself does not rank as one of my favorites.

But then a colleague of mine reminded me of what happened in the aftermath of World War II — how Harry Truman sat across from Joseph Stalin and pushed the Baltic states, one after another, across the chessboard of Eastern Europe to appease the dictator and form the new world order for the latter half of the 20th century, until the curtain fell on Christmas Day in 1991.

Later that night, as I sat alone in the dark sipping a glass of scotch — Glenfiddich (the good stuff) — and smoking a Graycliff (the good leaf), I wondered if this perhaps was the beginning of the end for life as we know it in these United States. First, Georgia falls, then Alabama, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee . . . where will it end?

College football starts in a couple weeks, and I've always enjoyed the image of crushed Buckeye nuts while watching the annual Michigan-Ohio State football game in November — I recall once telling my grandmother (now dearly departed) that I wouldn't be visiting that weekend because of this intense rivalry and she, disappointed and with all the naïve sincerity of an adolescent, asked me, "Didn't they play last year?" (this from a woman who once delighted me by telling me of a cousin of hers from Alpena who once played minor league baseball, and when I asked what position he played, she told me, "I think he played batter") — so I wouldn't much mind if Ohio became a part of the new Soviet Union. I rarely travel to Ohio, only occasionally through it to get to more pleasant destinations, and with my Michigan plates I always use caution because Ohio employs the death penalty for speeding violations, at least for Michigan drivers. But it frightens me, too, should Ohio fall — the Michigan/Ohio state border is, after all, fewer than a hundred clicks from my home near Ann Arbor. But then, with our high unemployment and sagging economy, a state near bankruptcy, why would the Russians bother? Maybe they'd stop their northward push at the border.

All this just a few months before the presidential election. *How will it affect the outcome?* I wonder. Until now I'd pretty much conceded the White House occupancy to Obama, the voters seeking change for the sake of change. How would

Barack, in his new Camelot, his Jackie wannabe wife in her pillbox hats, deal with this crisis? Would he merely ignore it, creating some other crisis elsewhere to draw attention away from it, as his predecessor did with Iraq, a weapons cache that never existed, the threat of the Evil Axis, never quite lying to us that Iraq was responsible for the events on 9/11, merely refraining from correcting the misconception? Or will the voters now give their nod of approval to McCain, a seasoned Viet Nam veteran, to lead the country back to its former fifty-star grandeur, to stand up to the Russkies, finger poised above the button of mass destruction to back up his rhetoric that the United States doesn't negotiate with terrorists, or Russian occupiers of Georgia or any other state of the union?

America needs you, Harry Truman — Harry, is there something we can do to save the land we love?



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