

A Different Take on Russia's Official Terrorism Debate

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Articles & Testimony

On 23 November Kirill Martynov, Novaya Gazeta's (New Newspaper) politics and economics editor, wrote about Russia's official debate on terrorism, which took place on 20 November—the first joint Duma and Federation Council meeting since Russia's annexation of Crimea. The accompanying excerpts are from his article.

Novaya Gazeta is one of the few remaining independent newspapers in Russia. The paper has conducted some of the most credible and brave reporting in recent months, including, in particular, on Russian-Syrian and Russian-radical Islam issues.

Martynov lets the facts speak for themselves. For instance, he says that Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko urged the public to consider establishment of an international tribunal against terrorists. However, Martynov points out that only a few months ago the Kremlin was strongly against such a tribunal to look into the downing of the Boeing 777 flight in July 2014 over Donetsk—a tragic event that many analysts believed was connected to the Kremlin.

In another example, Martynov writes that Communist Party leader Vladimir Zyuganov said the Soviet Union is the best example of how to fight terrorism, which, Martynov observes, has become a very convenient way to unite people. He notes, tongue-in-cheek, "In case anyone doubts that we will unite, United Russia party chairman Vladimir Vasilyev even specifically said that the fight against terrorism is our staple..."

"But best of all, perhaps," Martynov concludes, "was the speech by State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin, who simply complained that the West's rationale for the extension of sanctions against Russia in the background of recent events appears 'crazy and stupid.'" Indirectly, this phrase sums up how Martynov feels about the discussion he describes.

Anna Borshchevskaya is the Ira Weiner Fellow at The Washington Institute. This item was originally published in the December 2015 edition (<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/OEWatch/201512/201512.pdf>) of OE Watch. ❖

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