

# Barack and Vlad

If Barack Obama somehow loses the presidential race, he might partially blame Vlad “the Assailer” Putin. Since Russia invaded Georgia last week, the world’s attention has been focused on NATO’s response to the brutality. On balance, the response has been tepid, to say the least. President Bush says Russia better get out.

Or what?

Senator Obama is calling for “restraint by both sides.” Swell. Asking Putin to restrain his violent tactics is like asking al-Qaeda to celebrate Christmas—not gonna happen.

The Russian action is a reminder to all that we live in a dangerous world where just about anything can happen at any time. And, in America, the reaction from the far left, which enthusiastically supports Obama, is also a stark wake up call.

The liberal base is basically putting forth two sets of talking points on the Georgia situation. The first was articulated by *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd:

“The Bushies can hardly tell Russia to stop doing what they themselves did in Iraq: unilaterally invade a country against the will of the world to scare the bejesus out of some leaders in the region they didn’t like.”

So here again we have the left making a moral equivalency between removing a murderous dictator who violated the Gulf War ceasefire 17 times and hammering the democratically elected Georgian government. To left-wing nuts, Saddam Hussein is as worthy as President Saakashvili; there is no difference between confronting homicidal fascism and undermining a legitimate democracy.

That kind of thinking marginalizes the far left more than

anything a conservative critic could come up with.

But wait, it gets worse. A far-left commentator working for NBC News put forth that Putin is not the villain in the Georgia action—America is, because it encouraged Georgia to join NATO, thereby annoying Russia. So, once again, it was the United States that really caused the violent confrontation.

NATO, of course, was set up to protect democratic countries like, well, Georgia. But in the creepy world the far left inhabits, whatever happens is inevitably America's fault.

On the heels of Putin's great adventure, a new Zogby/Reuters poll startled some by concluding that John McCain is now leading Senator Obama by five points. Although these polls don't mean much two and a half months before the vote, they are a snapshot in time.

Non-ideological Americans recoil from the "blame America first" crowd, and that crew is firmly behind Obama. Thus, Putin's aggression reminded folks of that. Advantage McCain.

In the end, Barack Obama will lose the election if independent voters see him as part of the vast far-left conspiracy which, in today's dangerous world, has become a symbol of appeasement and anti-American attitudes. MoveOn.org, NBC News and the *New York Times* will not get Obama elected. He needs to tell Americans exactly what he thinks of Putin's desire to expand Russian power and influence. And he needs to do it without restraint.