

Maidan 2.0: Ukraine Rightists Kill Police; Putin Blamed

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As I read the latest example of The New York Times' propagandistic coverage of the Ukraine crisis on Tuesday, it struck me that if these same reporters and editors were around in 1953, they would have cheered the coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh as a popular "revolution" putting the beloved and benevolent Shah back on the Peacock Throne.

Similarly in 1954, these credulous journalists would have written about another people's "revolution" in Guatemala removing President Jacobo Arbenz and restoring law and order behind well-regarded military commanders. The Times would have airily dismissed any suggestions of U.S. manipulation of events.

And, for decades, that was how the Central Intelligence Agency wanted American journalists to write those stories - and the current crop of Times' journalists would have fallen neatly into line. Of course, we know historically that the CIA organized and financed the disorders in Tehran that preceded Mossadegh's removal and pulled together the rebel force that drove Arbenz from office.

And, the evidence is even clearer that U.S. government operatives, particularly Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt, helped orchestrate the 2014 coup that overthrew Ukraine's elected President Viktor Yanukovich. Indeed, journalists knew more about the coup-plotting in Ukraine in real-time than we did about the coups in Iran and Guatemala six decades ago.

In the Ukraine case, there was even [an intercepted phone call](#) just weeks before the Feb. 22, 2014 coup revealing Nuland handpicking the new Ukrainian leaders - "Yats is the guy," she said referring to Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who would become the post-coup prime minister - as Pyatt pondered how "to midwife this thing" and Nuland dismissed the European Union's less aggressive approach with the pithy remark, "F**k the EU!"

Several months earlier, on Sept. 26, 2013, Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy (a U.S. government-funded operation that was financing scores of Ukrainian activists, journalists and business leaders), stated in a Washington Post op-ed that Ukraine was "the biggest prize" and would serve as a steppingstone toward eventually destabilizing Russia and removing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

After Gershman's op-ed pronouncement, Nuland and Sen. John McCain personally cheered on anti-government protesters in Kiev's Maidan square. Nuland literally passed out cookies,

and McCain, standing on stage with right-wing extremists from the Svoboda Party, told the crowd that the United States was with them in their challenge to the Ukrainian government. Meanwhile, Pyatt advised the coup-makers from the U.S. Embassy.

The U.S. interference was so blatant that George Friedman, founder of the global intelligence firm Stratfor, [called](#) Yanukovych's ouster "the most blatant coup in history."

Blatant to anyone, that is, who wasn't part of the U.S. government's propaganda team, which included the foreign desk of The New York Times and virtually every mainstream U.S. media outlet. Following the script of the State Department's propagandists, the Times and the MSM saw only a glorious people's "revolution."

Resistance to the Coup

However, ethnic Russians from Crimea and eastern Ukraine, the key bases of support for Yanukovych, resisted the new order in Kiev. The people of Crimea organized a referendum in which 96 percent of the voters favored seceding from Ukraine and rejoining Russia, ties that went back to the Eighteenth Century. When Putin and Russia agreed to accept Crimea, the Times and the MSM announced a "Russian invasion," although in this case the Russian troops were already stationed in Crimea under the Sebastopol port agreement.

Ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine also rose up demanding independence or at least autonomy from the hostile regime in Kiev. The new government responded by labeling the dissidents "terrorists" and mounting an "Anti-Terrorist Operation," which killed thousands and was spearheaded by neo-Nazi and Islamist militias. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[Ukraine Merges Nazis and Islamists.](#)"]

Although the Times at times would acknowledge [the key role](#) played by the neo-Nazis and other ultra-nationalists, that troublesome information – along with the Nuland-Pyatt phone call and other evidence of the coup – would disappear into the Memory Hole when the Times was summarizing the Ukraine narrative or was decrying anyone who [dared use the word "coup."](#)

As far as the Times was concerned, what has happened since February 2014 was simply a glorious "revolution" with "pro-democracy" Ukrainian idealists on one side and propaganda-deluded ethnic Russian automatons on the other, depersonalized and ready for the killing. And behind all the bloodshed was the evil Putin.

The Times reprised its propagandistic narrative on Tuesday in [an article](#) by Andrew E. Kramer, who tried to put the best face possible on a violent protest by neo-Nazis and other right-wing nationalists against a proposed constitutional change that would grant more autonomy to eastern Ukraine as part of the Minsk II peace agreement reached last February between German, French, Ukrainian and Russian leaders.

Authorities identified a member of Sych, the militant arm of the right-wing Svoboda Party (John McCain's old friends), as the person who threw a grenade that killed three police officers, but the Times made clear that the real villain was Vladimir Putin. As Kramer wrote:

"The [autonomy] measure is fiercely opposed by Ukrainian nationalists and many others, who loathe any concession to Mr. Putin and see him as the driving force behind a civil war that has claimed more than 6,500 lives.

President Petro O. Poroshenko had conceded the constitutional change, which is included in the text of the Minsk agreement, with a metaphorical gun to his head: thousands of Ukrainian soldiers surrounded by Russian-backed rebels near the Ukrainian railroad town of Debaltseve.

“Supporters of the change say granting special status to the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk would co-opt the rebels’ major selling point, blunting the drive for separatism. Yet the war has angered Ukrainians to such an extent, opinion polls show, that members of Parliament are struggling to win support from voters for any concession.”

While the Times’ narrative paints Putin as the instigator of all the trouble in Ukraine, it also portrays him as a villain who is on the run because his “aggression” led to Western sanctions, which along with lower oil prices, are collapsing the Russian economy.

Kramer wrote:

“Hopes for a peaceful settlement of the [Ukraine](#) crisis have been rising lately in Europe as oil prices have sunk, increasing financial pressure on Mr. Putin. With the Russian economy reeling, the thinking goes, he should be more willing to compromise on eastern Ukraine, the source of damaging Western economic sanctions. But that thinking was not shared by many in Ukraine. ...

“As Parliament approved the concessions, protesters outside the building scuffled with police, and shouted, ‘Shame! Shame!’ The demonstrators grew more agitated. Some tore helmets from the riot police and threw them on the paving stones. ‘They are trading in our blood and our corpses,’ said a veteran of the war in the east, Volodymyr Natuta, referring to members of Parliament who supported the measure. ‘They sold out Ukraine.’...

“It [the right-wing killing of the first police officer on Monday] was the first death in politicized street violence in the capital since the 2014 revolution ... Officially, the Russian government denies having any hand in propping up the two enclaves in eastern Ukraine. But Ukrainians — not to speak of virtually every Western government and NATO — universally reject that, holding Moscow responsible for all the carnage in the east.”

So, having brushed aside the evidence of a U.S.-backed coup and ignoring the role of right-wing Ukrainian nationalists in both overthrowing an elected leader and launching attacks against ethnic Russians, the New York Times has settled on the only permissible view of the crisis: that it is all Vladimir Putin’s fault. Perhaps history will know better.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, [America’s Stolen Narrative](#), either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes [America’s Stolen Narrative](#). For details on this offer, [click here](#).

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