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The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is Now Officially "Undesirable" in Russia

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Vladimir Putin! Now you've really done it. You have had the temerity to declare our National Endowment for Democracy (NED), America's most important Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to be "undesirable." Where will this end? Don't you respect our right, as a US Government-financed NGO, to meddle in internal Russian affairs? After all, we are the most important NGO of the world's Sole Superpower. We can go wherever we want and do whatever we like. We are truly upset!

This is the clear reaction of Washington to the decision by the Russian Prosecutor General's Office on July 28 to declare the activities of the US National Endowment for Democracy as "undesirable in the territory of Russia." The official statement stated that, "the National Endowment for Democracy used Russian commercial and non-commercial organizations under its control to take part in campaigns aimed at denying the legitimacy of results of Russian elections; organize political actions designed to influence the authorities' decisions and discredit the service in the Russian Armed Forces." It further elaborated, "In pursuit of these goals, the fund allocated about 2.5 million US dollars to Russian commercial and non-commercial organizations in 2013-2015."

Under Russia's law on Undesirable NGOs, adopted by the Duma or parliament and signed into law by President Putin this May, any foreign or international non-governmental organization could become "undesirable" if it threatened the foundations of Russia's constitutional order, the country's defense capability and the security of the Russian state.

Significantly, in a statement regarding the decision, Russia's Foreign Ministry named Carl Gershman, the neo-conservative who has been president since NED was founded in 1983. They noted that Gershman said – absolutely openly – that the NED organization was intended to be a beautiful facade for distributing funds among opposition circles in foreign countries. That suggests they have done their homework very well before banning the NED.

In a Washington Post OpEd responding to the ban, NED President Gershman cynically wrote that the move is, "the latest evidence that the regime of President Vladimir Putin faces a worsening crisis of political legitimacy." He failed to note that despite US economic sanctions put in place by Victoria Nuland's neo-conservative friends in the Obama Administration, Vladimir Putin's poll popularity currently stands at 89% according to Russia's independent Levada Center.

'Doing what the CIA used to do…'

The NED, along with Freedom House, has been at the center of all major US State

Department-financed 'color revolutions' in the world since 2000 when it was used to topple Milosevic in Serbia. The NED was created during the Reagan Administration to function as a de facto CIA, privatized so as to allow more freedom of action. Allen Weinstein, who helped draft the legislation establishing NED, said in a Washington Post interview in 1991, "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA."

The NED was the brainchild of Reagan's CIA Director, Bill Casey. Casey wanted to create a funding mechanism to support groups inside foreign countries that would engage in propaganda and political action that the CIA had historically organized and paid for covertly. To partially replace that CIA role, the idea emerged for a congressionally funded entity that would serve as a conduit for this money. The main revenue to finance NED activities in countries like Russia, China, Myanmar, Venezuela, Uzbekistan and other places where the regime is not 100% on Washington's music page, comes from the United States Congress. That is supplemented by such dubious organizations as George Soros' Open Society Foundations, which seems to always pop up where the CIA and NED want to topple a regime as in Ukraine in 2013-14.

Casey wanted to be sure to hide the strings being pulled by the CIA. In a letter to Reagan's White House Counselor, Edwin Meese III, Casey wrote, "Obviously we here [at CIA] should not get out front in the development of such an organization, nor should we appear to be a sponsor or advocate." To hide the CIA's role, Casey urged creation of a "National Endowment."

NED President since 1984 has been Carl Gershman, previously with the Freedom House, another "democracy" front for the US intelligence community involved in every Color Revolution. NATO General and former Presidential candidate Wesley Clark, the man who led the US bombing of Serbia in 1999, and who recently called for aggressive US military response to Russia, also sat on the NED Board.

The majority of the historic figures linked to clandestine CIA actions have at some time been members of the Board of Directors or the Administrative Council of the NED, including Otto Reich, John Negroponte, Henry Cisneros, and Elliot Abrams. The Chairman of the NED Board of Directors in 2008 was Vin Weber, campaign fundraiser for George W. Bush in 2000. Gershman, head of the NED since its creation to the present, worked closely with Richard Perle, Elliott Abrams and Frank Gaffney. Gershman was in a sense 'present at the creation' of the political-intelligence faction known as neo-conservativism.

On September 26, 2013, weeks before Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovich announced he would join Russia's Eurasian Economic Union rather than the less appealing EU "associate membership", Gershman wrote an OpEd to the Washington Post where he called Ukraine "the biggest prize," explaining that pulling it into the Western camp could contribute to the ultimate defeat of Russian President Putin. Gershman wrote, "Ukraine's choice to join Europe will accelerate the demise of the ideology of Russian imperialism that Putin represents. Russians, too, face a choice, and Putin may find himself on the losing end not just in the near abroad but within Russia itself."

In other words, NED is a US government-financed entity that intends to topple Russia's elected President because he displeases the folks in the Washington neo-con war faction.

Among NED projects in Russia has been to finance Russian anti-Putin opposition activist

Alexei Navalny, member of a group called Russian Opposition Coordination Council. Navalny received money from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The NED has sub-units: National Republican Institute, which is headed by Senator John McCain, the man who played a key role in the 2014 USA coup d'etat in Ukraine. The National Democratic Institute, tied to USA Democratic Party and chaired now by Clinton Secretary of State and Serbian bombing advocate, Madeline Albright. The NED Board of Directors includes the kernel of the Bush-Cheney neo-conservative warhawks like Elliott Abrams; Francis Fukuyama; Zalmay Khalilzad, former Iraq and Afghan US ambassador, and architect of Afghan war; Robert Zoellick, Bush family insider and ex-World Bank President.

Among projects in Russia the NED financed in 2014 according to their abridged annual report was $530,067 under a category, Transparency in Russia: "To raise awareness of corruption." Are they working with Russian prosecutors or police? How do they find the corruption they raise awareness of? That naturally also has a side benefit of giving Washington intimate details of corruption, real or imagined, that can be later used by its trained activist NGOs such as Navalny groups. Another project under their NED heading, Democratic Ideas and Values: $400,000 for something called "Meeting Point of Human Rights and History–To raise awareness of the use and misuse of historical memory, and to stimulate public discussion of pressing social and political issues." It sounds suspiciously like the State Department's recent campaign to rewrite the history of the Second World War and the fact that Russia and her affiliated Soviet regions lost 27 million lives in bearing the brunt of the victory over Hitler.

The only real question is not why the Russian government has banned the NED as the first under their new law on Undesirable NGOs. The question is why they did not ban it twenty years ago, or at least in 1999 when Putin first became President? NATO today is in a state of semi-war against Russia. In such circumstances, banning hostile foreign NGOs like NED is prudent self-defense.

In May, referring to the passage of the new Russian Undesirable NGO law, US State Department spokesperson, Marie Harf, said the United States was, "deeply troubled" by the new law, calling it "a further example of the Russian government's growing crackdown on independent voices and intentional steps to isolate the Russian people from the world." Before she became State Department media Spokesperson, Harf was Press Spokesperson at the CIA where she started her career. Interesting.

Notably, at the same time as Russia is banning NED under its new Undesirable NGO law, China has just signed into law its Overseas NGO Management Law to restrict foreign NGO's there. Last October, the same National Endowment for Democracy financed the Hong Kong Umbrella Revolution protests and the NED is financing Uygur separatists in China's Xinjiang Province, cross-roads of all major Chinese oil and gas pipelines from Russia and Kazakhstan.

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