

US Diplomats Act Like Imperial Governors Riding Roughshod Over Sovereignty of National Governments

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On the world's Grand Chessboard, the US is fighting for control and influence. And there are countries where its ambassadors are perceived more as imperial governors than simple channels of communication.

At the height of the Maidan protests in Kiev in early 2014, a conversation was leaked between the US ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, and the then-Assistant Secretary of State in the Obama administration, Victoria Nuland. The conversation gained notoriety because Nuland said to Pyatt, “F**k the EU” and the recording was almost instantly available on [Youtube](#).

More shocking than Nuland’s bad language, however, was what the conversation was about. The US government officials were discussing how to put their men into power in Ukraine – which of the three then opposition factions would dominate, who would take the lead (Arseniy Yatsenyuk) and who would be excluded (Vladimir Klitschko). At the time of this conversation, early February 2014, their enemy Viktor Yanukovych was still president. The leaked recording proved that the US and its Kiev embassy were actively involved in a regime change operation. The composition of the post-Maidan government corresponded exactly with US plans.

What few people knew at the time was that such levels of control over the composition of foreign governments had become standard practice for US embassies all over the world. As I could see on my very numerous travels around the Balkans in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the US ambassador was treated by the political class and the media in those countries not as the officially accredited representative of a foreign government but instead as an imperial governor whose pronunciamientos were more important than those of the national government.

This has been going on for decades, although the levels of control exercised by the United States increased as it rushed to fill the political vacuum created by the collapse of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe after 1989. In earlier times, such control, especially regime change operations, had to be conducted either covertly, as with the overthrow of Iranian prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, in 1953, or by financing and arming an anti-government militia, such as in Nicaragua and elsewhere in central and South America, or by encouraging the army itself, most famously in Chile in 1973. There is a huge body of

literature on this vast subject (for the coup against Mosaddegh, see especially 'All the Shah's Men' by Stephen Kinzer, 2003) and there is no possibility of denying that such operations took place. Indeed, former CIA director, James Woolsey, recently [admitted](#) that they continue to this day.

Many of the ambassadors who engineered or attempted regime change operations in Eastern Europe and the former USSR had cut their teeth in Latin America in 1980s and 1990s. One of them, Michael Kozak, former US ambassador to Belarus, even boasted in a letter to The Guardian in 2001 that he was doing the same thing in Minsk as he had done in Managua. He wrote:

"As regards parallels between Nicaragua in 1989-90 and Belarus today, I plead guilty. Our objective and to some degree methodology are the same."

Kozak did not mention that he also played a key role in the overthrow of General Noriega in Panama in 1989 but he is far from alone. The experience accumulated by the Americans during the Cold War, including in major European countries like Italy where US interference was key to preventing Communist victories in elections, spawned a whole generation of Kermit Roosevelts (the architect of the coup against Mosaddegh) who have made their careers over decades in the State Department. Some names, such as that of Michael McFaul, former US ambassador to Russia who made no secret of his opposition to the president of the state to which he was accredited, will be familiar to RT readers.

Two years after the violent overthrow of Viktor Yanukovych, which he helped coordinate, Geoffrey Pyatt was appointed US ambassador to Greece. He remains in that post to this day – which is why some are asking whether his hand might be behind last week's expulsion of Russian diplomats from Athens. Greece and Russia have customarily had good relations but they differ on the Macedonian issue. Now, the Greek government headed by the "*pseudo-Euroskeptic*" Alexis Tsipras, claims that four Russian diplomats were engaged in covert operations in Greece to lobby against forcing Macedonia to change its official name.

Like almost every other political issue these days, this relatively arcane one is regarded through the distorting prism of alleged Russian "*interference*": any decision which does not consolidate the power of American-dominated supranational structures like the US or the EU is now routinely attributed to all-pervasive Russian influence, as if all dissidents were foreign agents. Western discussion of this subject now resembles the paranoia of the old Soviet regime, and of its satellites in Eastern Europe, which similarly attacked anti-Communists for being "*fifth columnists*" – the very phrase used by a prominent European politician last month to lambast all his enemies as Russian stooges.

Europe has a fifth column in its ranks: Putin's cheerleaders who want to destroy Europe & liberal democracy from within: Le Pen, Wilders, Farage, Orbàn, Kaczynski, Salvini use Kremlin money & intel. Like Farage's friend Arron Banks, who colluded w/ Russians to deliver [#Brexit](#)

— Guy Verhofstadt (@guyverhofstadt) [June 13, 2018](#)

US influence is suspected in this case between Greece and Macedonia because the Americans are pushing to bring the whole of the Balkan peninsula under Western control.

This has been policy for nearly thirty years – at least since the Yugoslav wars led to a US-brokered peace deal in Bosnia in 1995. In recent years the tempo has quickened, with the accession of Montenegro to NATO last year leaving only Macedonia and Serbia as missing pieces of the puzzle. The Greek victory over the name of Macedonia removes the last obstacle to that country's accession to NATO and other “Euro-Atlantic structures” like the EU and soon only Serbia will be left. Will she last long?

One of the most notorious anecdotes of the Second World War was told by Churchill. While in Moscow in 1944, he and Stalin divided up Eastern Europe and the Balkans into spheres of influence, putting percentage figures to show the respective weight of the West and the USSR – 10:90 in Greece, 50:50 Yugoslavia, 25:75 in Bulgaria, and so on. Churchill recalls how this so-called Percentages Agreement was concluded in a few minutes, and how he scribbled a note of their verbal agreement on a piece of paper which Stalin glanced at for a second and then ticked off. Churchill wrote, “*It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down.*”

Churchill then reflected that it might seem cynical to decide the fate of millions of people in such an offhand manner. Later generations have generally agreed with his self-criticism. Today's West would certainly never conclude such an agreement – but not because of any squeamishness or lack of cynicism on its part. Instead, the West, especially the US, could not conclude any agreement because in every case the only acceptable outcome would be 100% influence for itself. That is what Geoffrey Pyatt and his colleagues spend their entire careers trying to achieve – and, to a large extent, they succeed.

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