

Regime Change aka Coup d'état

By Mary Beaudoin

Do we really believe that the U.S. wants democracy for Ukraine, or was this about encircling Russia, increasing Western profits, and attempting to expand NATO?

It's probably safe to say that most Americans wouldn't really be very receptive to the idea of using their tax money to increase profits for the international financial sector and multi-national corporations—especially when they themselves are experiencing economic insecurity. And control of Ukrainian pipelines through which Russian gas is transported to Europe seems pretty far removed from our lives, as does NATO expansion.

But because we are accustomed to hearing that any protest anywhere is a way to improve the lives of citizens, it's harder for us to detect underlying profit motives. And so it was last December, when U.S. Undersecretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland brazenly handed out cookies in a gesture of solidarity with regime-change protesters in Maidan, the main square of Ukraine's capital—this while a democratically elected president sat as the legitimate head of the Ukrainian government (aka “regime” in State Department-speak). Two days later, on December 13, fresh from Kiev, appearing before the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation in Washington against a Chevron logo backdrop, Nuland thanked the people in the room (representatives from mega-corporations like Raytheon, Boeing, Microsoft, Monsanto, and also the Heritage Foundation, Freedom House, and the Brookings Institute) for supporting the brave Ukrainian people support that she said had cost the U.S. \$5 billion in developing “democratic institutions” within Ukraine.



Then, on February 6, the world had an unusual glimpse into just how democratic when Nuland's phone conversation with Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt was leaked—in which she appeared to choose who the president of Ukraine should be (which would mean dismantling the current government). The conversation revealed how deeply involved the U.S. State Department was. Nuland also uttered her now famous expletive, expressing exasperation with the EU, the U.S.'s partner in the process, for moving too slowly on installing a new, more western-friendly head of state. She said that the EU should be bypassed and the issue should go straight to the UN to “glue the whole thing together.” This was prior to the February 21 coup d' état in which President Yanukovych, considered by the West to be too close to Russia, was forced to flee the country and proclaim from exile that he was still the legitimate head of state.

Apparently it's not hard to feel confident about changing yet another country's government when the groundwork has already been laid from the outside by operating within a country. In Ukraine, as in other old Soviet countries, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and billionaire-funded nongovernmental organizations, infiltration, and propaganda help set the stage—the “soft power,” or co-opting component of what is now called “smart power” in U.S. foreign policy.

Stirring up the disgruntled through these instruments is easier when a country has first been the recipient of western-imposed policies that wreck havoc on its economy. But without an election, it takes a violent element and show of force to actually depose a seated government and enforce “regime change.” And here's where the height of hypocrisy comes in: NATO has picked off so many old Soviet countries that Russia is now surrounded, but Russia is accused of violating Ukrainian sovereignty by moving its military to its own Black Sea base in the (predominately Russian speaking) Crimean peninsula of Ukraine.

Not long ago Victoria Nuland announced that the U.S. stands with the people of Ukraine as they seek “justice, human dignity, security, and a return to economic health.” (Through IMF-imposed structural adjustments that rob them of these things?)

If our government stopped participating in overthrows and wars, isn't it likely that we could experience these conditions ourselves, as could the people in other countries whose well-being is such a supposed source of concern?

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