

# How Washington Uses Social Media to Topple Governments and Manipulate Public Opinion

By [Global Research News](#)

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## [Transcript](#)

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On April 2nd the Associated Press released an report exposing how the U.S. government recently attempted to topple the Cuban government yet again. This time the plot hinged on the creation of a communications network called "ZunZuneo" which was essentially a primitive version of Twitter. The plan, which was cooked up by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. State Department, was to build up a large following of users and then push them towards revolt. The network was built using shell companies and financed through a foreign bank to hide their connection to Washington. The Obama administration defended the program saying that it "had disclosed the initiative to Congress".

Of course we all know that attempting to topple a foreign government is perfectly fine as long as you let congress know a bit in advance.

As shocking and absurd as these revelations may be to the general public, the truth of the matter is that this is just the tip of the iceberg. The U.S. government and its allies have been using the internet as a covert weapon for some time now. Much of the evidence of these activities got mainstream coverage, but the corporate media is very careful not to refer to that evidence in the context of current events.

So let's connect a few dots here.

In 2011 it came to light that the U.S. military had developed a 'sock puppet' software for creating and managing fake online identities. These sock puppet accounts were to be used to spread propaganda on social media sites, forums and blogs. The software which was described as an "online persona management service" allows one soldier to control up to 10 separate identities based all over the world. When this program was exposed the U.S. government claimed that the program was never used on English speaking audiences. Considering that these are the same people who swore up and down that the NSA surveillance program never targeted U.S. citizens, we can take that with a grain of salt, but it's worth noting that they explicitly acknowledged in their statement that the program was intended for covert operations in foreign countries.

A leaked document recently made public by Glenn Greenwald showed that the UK's GCHQ has been running a similar program through a unit called the Joint Threat Research Intelligence Group (or JTRIG). You can download the file that Greenwald leaked [here](#).

According to the documents, JTRIG relies on two primary tactics: (1) the injection of false material onto the internet in order to destroy the reputation of its targets; and (2) the use of social sciences and other techniques to manipulate online discourse and activism towards desired outcomes.

Among the methods promoted in the document were "false flag operations" (posting material to the internet and falsely attributing it to someone else), fake victim blog posts (pretending to be a victim of the individual whose reputation they want to destroy), posting "negative information" on various forums, luring targets into sexual encounters to destroy their reputations (honey-traps), sending emails and text messages to the target's friends, neighbors and coworkers, and "crafting messaging campaigns to go 'viral'."

The documents placed an emphasis on using online techniques to trigger events in the real world.

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Now remember the copy cat Twitter network designed to topple Cuba was put together by USAID. USAID maintains a public front of humanitarian aid and democracy promotion, but the Cuba scandal confirms what many geopolitical analysts have been saying for years: that USAID, like it's sibling The National Endowment for Democracy, is nothing more than a branch of the U.S. intelligence apparatus in disguise.

This confirmation also further exposes Washington's hand in toppling the Ukrainian

government earlier this year.

Remember Victoria Nuland, the U.S. State Department diplomat who got caught in a leaked phone call discussing who should and should not be allowed into the new Ukrainian government?

In December of 2013 that same Victoria Nuland, made a speech at the U.S. - Ukraine Foundation in which she talked about how the U.S. government had invested over 5 billion dollars in Ukraine since 1991 to strengthen democracy.

She also specifically highlighted the important role the U.S. - Ukraine Foundation played in achieving their objectives.

Her statements taken on their own aren't incriminating, but if you go to the [U.S. - Ukraine foundation's website](#) you'll find that their programs are funded and run by the U.S. State Department and USAID. Remember this is the same USAID that just got caught attempting to topple Cuba.

USAID's connections to the Ukrainian coup don't end there.

It just so happens that [Larry Diamond, the executive producer of the "I am Ukrainian" video that went viral at the height of the crisis in Kiev](#), isn't just a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the [National Endowment for Democracy](#), and an advisor for the U.S. State Department, his public profile also mentions that he works for USAID.

That's interesting. Let's connect the dots a bit more shall we?

Remember that drama in March where Lis Wahl quit RT News on air in protest over their coverage of the events in Ukraine? It created quite the stir, even among activists that are usually critical of U.S. foreign policy.

That event was staged. A neo-con think tank called the Foreign Policy Initiative knew the stunt was about to happen and began tweeting out hints twenty minutes in advance.

The first [tweet](#):

"#WordOnTheStreet says that something big might happen on RT in about 20-25 minutes."

Then, 10 minutes before Wahl would quit on air they [tweeted](#):

"#WordOnTheStreet says you're really going to want to tune in to RT:<http://rt.com/on-air/rt-america-air/> #SomethinBigMaybeGoingDown"

And finally, at 5:26 p.m., at the very moment Wahl quit, the Foreign Policy Initiative's Twitter account [broke the news](#): "RT Anchor RESIGNS ON AIR. She 'cannot be part of a network that whitewashes the actions of Putin.' "

Remember our friend Victoria Nuland? It just so happens that her husband, Robert Kagan, sits on the board of directors for the Foreign Policy Initiative. Wow, what a coincidence. An organization that Victoria Nuland's husband controls launches a smear campaign against RT at a time when RT is one of the few major outlets broadcasting her leaked audio.

Robert Kagan also serves on the U.S. State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Board and he co-founded the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) with William Kristol, who also

sits on the board of the Foreign Policy Initiative. Do a little research into the Project For a New American Century if you want to really dig up some interesting connections.

All just coincidences.

I'm sure it's also just a coincidence that James Kirchick, who happens to be a member of the Foreign Policy Initiative, released an exclusive interview with Lis Wahl on the DailyBeast just one hour after her choreographed stunt.

Here's James and Lis posing together in a ["freedom selfie"](#).

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The Liz Wahl stunt was a fairly benign example of social media being used to manipulate public opinion. To really understand how far these kinds of psychological operations are taken we need to step back to February 20th when a video went viral showing snipers shooting protesters in Kiev.

Almost everyone assumed that these were Ukrainian government forces firing the shots, but they weren't. The following phone conversation between EU foreign policy chief Cathy Ashton and Estonia's foreign minister Urmass Paet, which was leaked to the public on March 5th, makes this very clear.

### **The short version of the leaked call:**

Urmass Paet: "All the evidence shows that the people who were killed by snipers from both sides, among police men and people in the street, that they were the same snipers killing people from both sides."

Cathy Ashton: "Well that's, yeah..."

Urmass Paet: "And she also showed me some photos and she said that has medical doctor, she can say that it is the same handwriting..."

Cathy Ashton: "Yeah..."

Urmass Paet: "Same type of bullets... and it's really disturbing that now the new coalition, that they don't want to investigate what exactly happened. So that there is now stronger and stronger understanding that behind the snipers, it was not Yanukovich, but it was somebody from the new coalition."

### **The long version of the leaked call:**

It doesn't a rocket scientist to figure out that the only parties who would benefit from shooting both police and protesters at the same time are those who were working to topple the Ukrainian government.

That much is obvious.

The only real question here is whether the footage of the shootings in Kiev was filmed and released by the perpetrators themselves. We'll never know for sure unless there's a real

investigation, and no, having the primary suspect run an investigation doesn't count.

We saw this same tactic of killing civilians, and using a [coordinated social media campaign to pin the blame on a government targeted for regime change, in Syria in 2013](#).

These were U.S. backed rebels that killed thousands of innocent civilians with nerve gas. Those that funded this atrocity are still walking free. Those who coordinated the sniper killings in Kiev are still walking free, and the mainstream media, and these so called world leaders don't even so much as call them out.

Think about that.

Front groups, sock puppets, public relations stunts, and outright murder. That's how Washington and its allies topple governments and manipulate public opinion in the age of the internet, but make no mistake this is not new.

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