

Overthrow Assad, Let in Refugees, and Fight Russia...or Else!

Statement of US Ambassador to Hungary

By [Daniel McAdams](#)

Global Research, May 08, 2016

[Ron Paul Institute](#) 6 May 2016

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

If anyone wants a short course on what's wrong with US diplomacy look no further than US Ambassador to Hungary Coleen Bell's [speech](#) Friday to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament. In typical diplo-speak there was plenty of flowery language about shared values, fish swimming together in the same water (?), sappy poetics like "together, out of that winter, we would force the spring," and talk of together being "part of the world's greatest military and political alliance."

But make no mistake: Inside Ambassador Bell's velvet glove is an iron fist, poised to strike should Washington's annoyingly independent-minded Fidesz-led government step out of line on the big issues. And by "big" issues it should be understood that the US means the issues it considers in the interests of its own foreign policy, not those in Hungary's interest.

Message to Hungary: do as we say or you will be sorry.

Ambassador Bell's previous job was as a television soap opera producer, but raising more than two million dollars for the election of Barack Obama "earned" her the position of top US diplomat in Hungary.



US Ambassador to Hungary, Coleen Bell

The former television producer does know how to deliver her lines, though. She lectured the Hungarians about Syria, explaining to them that ISIS and Assad are both equally evil and both equally to blame for the disaster that is Syria.

ISIS has flourished in Syria, she told the Hungarians, because it "exploits the chaos of civil war in Syria, a conflict that has now claimed more than 250,000 lives." But she does not mention that it was US backing for "regime change" in Syria — beginning at least in 2006, as we learn from a critical Wikileaks-released [US Embassy Damascus memo](#) — that created that very chaos she blames for the rise of ISIS.

In fact it is propaganda to call what is happening in Syria a "civil war," as the forces battling the Syrian government are all sponsored by foreign powers like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the US. It is a proxy war against the Syrian government, not a civil war.

She then tells the Hungarians ISIS will never be defeated in Syria until Assad is overthrown:

[W]e know we won't be able to defeat Daesh in Syria unless we also deal with the civil war and particularly with Assad. Because as long as Assad is there, he remains the most powerful magnet for foreign fighters and recruits to Daesh.

Does she assume Hungarians are so stupid that they believe that by attacking and beating ISIS back nearly to Raqqa (with Russian assistance), the Syrian government of Assad is actually benefitting ISIS? Attacking ISIS means Assad is on the side of ISIS?

"Since February, the cessation of hostilities reduced the violence in Syria, allowing millions of Syrian civilians to take the first steps toward reclaiming a normal life," says the Ambassador, without even mentioning what brought the ceasefire about in the first place: Russian participation along with the Syrian army in the decimation of al-Qaeda and ISIS positions in northwest and central Syria. In fact it is absolutely bizarre that in the world of Ambassador Bell (and the State Department hacks who drafted her speech), the Russian intervention against al-Qaeda and ISIS simply never took place or was too inconsequential to mention.

Is any Hungarian so ill-informed that he would believe such nonsense?

Bell used the tragedy in Syria to pressure Hungary on the (largely American-made) refugee crisis. Hungary's firebrand prime minister, Viktor Orban, has, along with several of his central European counterparts, stood up to Brussels' (and Washington's) demands that Hungary take in tens of thousands of migrants who heeded German Chancellor Angela Merkel's call to come to Europe and enjoy lots of free stuff.

Last month Orban [told](#) Hungarian Radio that if he accepts the EU migrant resettlement plan, "it would be determined not in Hungary but in Brussels who we have to live together with, and how the ethnic composition of the country will look in future." He has rejected such a notion.

"Every sovereign nation has the right and an obligation to protect its borders," Bell told the Hungarian Parliament, "But every nation, as a part of the international community, also has a fundamental obligation to help refugee populations seeking safety."

Translation: your sovereignty is not determined by you, but rather by us. It is a practice articulated by Orwell in 1984 whereby a person can think two completely contradictory thoughts at the same time seemingly without any mental conflict.

But here is where the iron fist inside Bell's velvet glove glints in the sun. She pointedly condemned the Hungarian government position by praising those in Hungary who hold the opposite view, i.e. the Hungarian opposition:

We commend the humanitarian spirit of Hungarian leaders, law enforcement and military personnel, and ordinary citizens who are responding to this crisis with generosity and compassion.

Then she gives Hungary Washington's marching orders:

We continue to stress that any solution to these migration challenges should focus on saving and protecting lives, ensuring the human rights of all migrants

are respected, and promoting orderly and humane migration policies. That includes the support of all Member State governments for the refugee agreement forged between the EU and Turkey.

Translation: Hungary must support the EU [agreement](#) with Turkey which would see tens of thousands of migrants settled in EU member countries, including Hungary itself. The problem is that the Hungarian parliament [explicitly rejected](#) Brussels' forced migrant settlement plans for Hungary and plans to hold a nationwide referendum on the subject. Bell is saying here that Hungary's elected representatives and even the Hungarian voter must be ignored and Brussels' dictate obeyed.

When it comes to Russia, Ambassador Bell also has some instructions for Budapest: Moscow is your enemy and don't you forget it.

She told Hungarian parliamentarians:

As many Hungarians have reminded me, you need no introduction to the nature of Russian aggression. Your response has always been to show resolve. Our best weapons, in fact, are resolve and solidarity.

Weapons? Quite a loaded word.

Orban has been seen in Washington as insufficiently enthused about sanctions on Russia, which hurt Hungarian trade and business interests. Ambassador Bell makes it clear that Hungary must adhere to US demands of Russia, even if they are completely incoherent:

As the United States and Hungary have both stated many times, Russia has a simple choice: fully implement Minsk or continue to face sanctions. Russia must withdraw weapons and troops from the Donbas; Russia must ensure that all Ukrainian hostages are returned; Russia must allow full humanitarian access to occupied territories; Russia must support free, fair, and internationally-monitored elections in the Donbas under Ukrainian law; and most important, Russia must restore Ukraine's sovereignty.

That last point should be taken to mean that Russia must ignore the will of the people of Crimea who voted in overwhelming numbers to re-join Russia after just 25 years as part of independent Ukraine.

Not to worry, Ambassador Bell is confident that Budapest will do everything Washington tells it to do:

More than this, Hungary is equal to the great challenges of our times, and the United States is counting on you.

To stiffen their spine, US Ambassador Bell reminds the Hungarians that they are part of "our global order" and touts the great examples set by the US, including:

Our system of international economic, political, and social norms and institutions have kept the peace and fostered prosperity for decades. Whether

it is international law, environmental protection, trade regulations, anticorruption laws, child labor laws, human rights safeguards, the nonproliferation regime, public health systems, international financial institutions, UN peacekeeping, or a robust civil society - these norms and institutions give life and stability to our global order.

In the era of NSA spying on innocent Americans, Guantanamo, CIA torture, weapons sales to the world's worst dictators (Saudi Arabia for one), [destruction of the environment](#) by the US war machine, "regime change" operations that violate the sovereignty of other states, and outright aggression in opposition to US and international law (Libya, etc.), Bell's suggestion that "our global order" is the pinnacle of civilization should get a laugh out of most Hungarians. In fact, from Libya to Syria to Ukraine to Pakistan and Afghanistan, the US interventionist attempt to forge a global order with blood and bullets will go down in history along with the authoritarianisms of the 20th century as one of humanity's darkest chapters.

Here is the short version of Ambassador Bell to Budapest: "to be our partner means you do what we say whether or not it is in your interest."

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