

The Neo-Nazi Question in Ukraine. Washington Is Bolstering “Shadowy Forces”

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by Michael Hughes

The Obama administration has vehemently [denied](#) charges that Ukraine’s nascent regime is stock full of neo-fascists despite [clear evidence](#) suggesting otherwise. Such categorical repudiations lend credence to the notion the U.S. [facilitated](#) the anti-Russian cabal’s rise to power as part of a broader strategy to draw Ukraine into the West’s sphere of influence. Even more disturbing are apologists, from the American left and right, who seem willing accomplices in this obfuscation of reality, when just a cursory glance at the profiles of Ukraine’s new leaders should give pause to the most zealous of Russophobes.

In a State Department “[fact sheet](#)” released last week the U.S. accused Putin of lying about the Ukrainian government being under the sway of extremist elements. The report stated that right wing ultranationalist groups “are not represented in the Rada (Ukraine’s parliament),” and that “there is no indication the government would pursue discriminatory policies.”

It isn’t too surprising that conservative outlets like [FOX News](#) would downplay Russian allegations but the so-called “liberal” press has also contributed to the American disinformation campaign. Celestine Bohlen from [The New York Times](#) considers harsh epithets, like the word “neo-Nazi,” which Putin has hurled at the demonstrators in Kiev as part of a Russian propagandist effort to tarnish Ukraine’s revolutionary struggle against authoritarianism.

Yet after simply Googling the terms “Ukraine” and “Neo-Nazi,” the official position of the United States government along with the stance taken by many in the American media both now seem quite dubious, if not downright ridiculous, especially considering that one would be hard-pressed to machinate the lineup that now dominates Ukraine’s ministry posts.

For starters, [Andriy Parubiy](#), the new secretary of Ukraine’s security council, was a co-founder of the Neo-Nazi Social-National Party of Ukraine (SNPU), otherwise known as Svoboda. And his deputy, [Dmytro Yarosh](#), is the leader of a party called the Right Sector which, according to historian [Timothy Stanley](#), “flies the old flag of the Ukrainian Nazi collaborators at its rallies.”

The highest-ranking right-wing extremist is Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Sych, also a member of Svoboda, who believes that women should “lead the kind of lifestyle to avoid the risk of rape, including refraining from drinking alcohol and being in controversial company.” This is the philosophy underlying one of his “legal initiatives,” according to the [Kyiv Post](#), “to

ban all abortions, even for pregnancies that occurred during rape.”

The Svoboda party has tapped into Nazi symbolism including the “[wolf’s angel](#)” rune, which resembles a swastika and was worn by members of the [Waffen-SS](#), a panzer division that was declared a criminal organization at Nuremberg. A [report](#) from Tel-Aviv University describes the Svoboda party as “an extremist, right-wing, nationalist organization which emphasizes its identification with the ideology of German National Socialism.”

According to this BBC [news clip](#) two Svoboda parliamentarians in recent weeks posed for photos while “brandishing well-known far right numerology,” including the numbers 88 — the eighth letter of the alphabet — signifying “HH,” as in “Heil Hitler.” This all makes Hillary Clinton’s recent comments comparing Putin to Hitler appear patently absurd, as Stanley adeptly points out: “After all, in the eyes of many ethnic Russians, it is the Ukrainian nationalists — not Putin — who are the Nazis.”

Last week Per Anders Rudling from Lund University in Sweden, an expert on Ukrainian extremists, told Britain’s [Channel 4 News](#): “A neo-fascist party like Svoboda getting the deputy prime minister position is news in its own right.” Well, except in the U.S.

Even more disconcerting has been the emergence of phone intercepts between high-ranking U.S. and Ukrainian officials which make it look as if the U.S. was basically, in the words of Princeton’s [Stephen Cohen](#), “plotting a coup d’état against the elected president of Ukraine.” In other words, the U.S., in addition to providing moral support, may have paved the way for extremists to seize power in Kiev. Such a development would counter the American right’s condemnation of Obama for not “engaging” in the world. The real problem is actually the administration’s over-engagement in this case — as in meddling in the affairs of another state and trying to rearrange its domestic political machinery to suit Washington’s agenda.

This gambit has backfired in a number of ways. Not only has a neo-fascist-laden regime secured power in Kiev but it may have played the U.S. and its allies for fools by insinuating it would become part of the Western sphere when it really had no such designs. As Svoboda political council member Yury Noyevy baldly [admitted](#): “The participation of Ukrainian nationalism and Svoboda in the process of EU [European Union] integration is a means to break our ties with Russia.”

Be they radical mujahideen or neo-fascists, Washington certainly has a penchant for bolstering shadowy forces, usually labeling them with risible euphemisms like “freedom fighters,” in order to satiate short-term geopolitical needs, despite said factions being inimical to America’s true long-term interests.

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