

The New York Times' Orwellian View of Ukraine

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In George Orwell's 1984, the leaders of Oceania presented "Two Minutes Hate" in which the image of an enemy was put on display and loyal Oceanianians expressed their rage, all the better to prepare them for the country's endless wars and their own surrender of freedom. And, now, in America, you have The New York Times.

Surely the Times is a bit more subtle than the powers-that-be in Orwell's Oceania, but the point is the same. The "paper of record" decides who our rotating foreign enemy is and depicts its leader as a demon corrupting whatever he touches. The rest of us aren't supposed to think for ourselves. We're just supposed to hate.

As the Times has degenerated from a relatively decent newspaper into a fount of neocon propaganda, its editors also have descended into the practice of simply inventing a narrative of events that serves an ideological purpose, its own version of "Two Minutes Hate." Like the leaders of Orwell's Oceania, the Times has become increasingly heavy-handed in its propaganda.

Excluding alternate explanations of events, even if supported by solid evidence, the Times arrogantly creates its own reality and tells us who to hate.

In assessing the Times's downward spiral into this unethical journalism, one could look back on its false reporting regarding Iraq, Iran, Syria or other Middle East hotspots. But now the Times is putting the lives of ourselves, our children and our grandchildren at risk with its reckless reporting on the Ukraine crisis - by setting up an unnecessary confrontation between nuclear-armed powers, the United States and Russia.

At the center of the Times' propaganda on Ukraine has been its uncritical - indeed its anti-journalistic - embrace of the Ukrainians coup-makers in late 2013 and early 2014 as they collaborated with neo-Nazi militias to violently overthrow elected President Viktor Yanukovich and hurl Ukraine into a bloody civil war.

Rather than display journalistic professionalism, the Times' propagandists ignored the evidence of a coup - including [an intercepted phone call](#) in which U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt discussed how to "mid-wife" the regime change and handpick the new leaders.

The Times even ignored a national security expert, Stratfor founder George Friedman, when he termed the ouster of Ukraine's elected president "the most blatant coup in history." The Times just waved a magic wand and pronounced that there was no coup - and anyone who thought so must reside inside "the Russian propaganda bubble." [See

Consortiumnews.com's "[NYT Still Pretends No Coup in Ukraine.](#)"]

Perhaps even more egregiously, the Times has pretended that there were no neo-Nazi militias spearheading the Feb. 22, 2014 coup and then leading the bloody "anti-terrorist operation" against ethnic Russians in the south and east who resisted the coup. The Times explained all this bloodshed as simply "Russian aggression."

It didn't even matter when the U.S. House of Representatives - of all groups - unanimously acknowledged the neo-Nazi problem when it prohibited U.S. collaboration in military training of Ukrainian Nazis. The Times simply expunged the vote from its "official history" of the crisis. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[US House Admits Nazi Role in Ukraine.](#)"]

Orwell's Putin

Yet, for an Orwellian "Two Minute Hate" to work properly, you need to have a villain whose face you can put on display. And, in the case of Ukraine - at least after Yanukovich was driven from the scene - that villain has been Russian President Vladimir Putin, who embodies all evil in the intense hatred sold to the American public.

So, when Putin presents a narrative of the Ukraine crisis, which notes the history of the U.S.-driven expansion of NATO up to Russia's borders and the evidence of the U.S.-directed Ukrainian coup, the Times editors must dismiss it all as "mythology," as they did in Monday's editorial regarding [Putin's remarks](#) to an international economic conference in St. Petersburg.

"President Vladimir Putin of Russia is not veering from the mythology he created to explain away the crisis over Ukraine," the Times' editors [wrote](#). "It is one that wholly blames the West for provoking a new Cold War and insists that international sanctions have not grievously wounded his country's flagging economy."

Without acknowledging any Western guilt in the coup that overthrew the elected Ukrainian government in 2014, the Times' editors simply reveled in the harm that the Obama administration and the European Union have inflicted on Russia's economy for its support of the previously elected government and its continued backers in eastern and southern Ukraine.

For nearly a year and a half, the New York Times and other major U.S. news organizations have simply refused to acknowledge the reality of what happened in Ukraine. In the Western fantasy, the elected Yanukovich government simply disappeared and was replaced by a U.S.-backed regime that then treated any resistance to its rule as "terrorism." The new regime even dispatched neo-Nazi militias to kill ethnic Russians and other Ukrainians who resisted and thus were deemed "terrorists."

The upside-down narrative of what happened in Ukraine has become the conventional wisdom in Official Washington and has been imposed on America's European allies as well. According to The New York Times' Orwellian storyline, anyone who notes the reality of a U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine is engaging in "fantasy" and must be some kind of Putin pawn.

To the Times' editors, all the justice is on their side, even as Ukraine's new regime has deployed neo-Nazi militias to kill eastern Ukrainians who resisted the anti-Yanukovich coup. To the Times' editors, the only possible reason to object to Ukraine's new order is that the

Russians must be bribing European dissidents to resist the U.S. version of events. The Times wrote:

“The Europeans are indeed divided over the extent to which Russia, with its huge oil and gas resources, should be isolated, but Mr. Putin’s aggression so far has ensured their unity when it counts. In addition to extending existing sanctions, the allies have prepared a new round of sanctions that could be imposed if Russian-backed separatists seized more territory in Ukraine. ...

“Although Mr. Putin insisted on Friday that Russia had found the ‘inner strength’ to weather sanctions and a drop in oil prices, investment has slowed, capital has fled the country and the economy has been sliding into recession. Even the business forum was not all that it seemed: The heads of many Western companies stayed away for a second year.”

An Orwellian World

In the up-is-down world that has become the New York Times’ editorial page, the Western coup-making on Russia’s border with the implicit threat of U.S. and NATO nuclear weapons within easy range of Moscow is transformed into a case of Russian aggression. The Times’ editors wrote: “One of the most alarming aspects of the crisis has been Mr. Putin’s willingness to brandish nuclear weapons.”

Though it would appear objectively that the United States was engaged in serious mischief-making on Russia’s border, the Times editors flip it around to make Russian military maneuvers – inside Russia – a sign of aggression against the West.

“Given Mr. Putin’s aggressive behavior, including pouring troops and weapons into Kaliningrad, a Russian city located between NATO members Lithuania and Poland, the allies have begun taking their own military steps. In recent months, NATO approved a rapid-reaction force in case an ally needs to be defended. It also pre-positioned some weapons in front-line countries, is rotating troops there and is conducting many more exercises. There are also plans to store battle tanks and other heavy weapons in several Baltic and Eastern European countries.

“If he is not careful, Mr. Putin may end up facing exactly what he has railed against — a NATO more firmly parked on Russia’s borders — not because the alliance wanted to go in that direction, but because Russian behavior left it little choice. That is neither in Russia’s interest, nor the West’s.”

There is something truly *1984*-ish about reading that kind of propagandistic writing in The New York Times and other Western publications. But it has become the pattern, not the exception.

The Words of the ‘Demon’

Though the Times and the rest of the Western media insist on demonizing Putin, we still should hear the Russian president’s version of events, as simply a matter of journalistic fairness. Here is how Putin explained the situation to American TV talk show host Charlie Rose on June 19:

“Why did we arrive at the crisis in Ukraine? I am convinced that after the so-called bipolar system ceased to exist, after the Soviet Union was gone from the political map of the world, some of our partners in the West, including and primarily the United States, of course, were in a state of euphoria of sorts. Instead of developing good neighborly relations and partnerships, they began to develop the new geopolitical space that they thought was unoccupied. This, for instance, is what caused the North Atlantic bloc, NATO, to go east, along with many other developments.

“I have been thinking a lot about why this is happening and eventually came to the conclusion that some of our partners [Putin’s way of describing Americans] seem to have gotten the illusion that the world order that was created after World War II, with such a global center as the Soviet Union, does not exist anymore, that a vacuum of sorts has developed that needs to be filled quickly.

“I think such an approach is a mistake. This is how we got Iraq, and we know that even today there are people in the United States who think that mistakes were made in Iraq. Many admit that there were mistakes in Iraq, and nevertheless they repeat it all in Libya. Now they got to Ukraine. We did not bring about the crisis in Ukraine. There was no need to support, as I have said many times, the anti-state, anti-constitutional takeover that eventually led to a sharp resistance on the territory of Ukraine, to a civil war in fact.

“Where do we go from here?” Putin asked. “Today we primarily need to comply with all the agreements reached in Minsk, the capital of Belarus. ... At the same time, I would like to draw your attention and the attention of all our partners to the fact that we cannot do it unilaterally. We keep hearing the same thing, repeated like a mantra – that Russia should influence the southeast of Ukraine. We are. However, it is impossible to resolve the problem through our influence on the southeast alone.

“There has to be influence on the current official authorities in Kiev, which is something we cannot do. This is a road our Western partners have to take – those in Europe and America. Let us work together. ... We believe that to resolve the situation we need to implement the Minsk agreements, as I said. The elements of a political settlement are key here. There are several.”

Putin continued:

“The first one is constitutional reform, and the Minsk agreements say clearly: to provide autonomy or, as they say decentralization of power, let it be decentralization. This is quite clear, our European partners, France and Germany have spelled it out and we are quite satisfied with it, just as the representatives of Donbass [eastern Ukraine where ethnic Russians who had supported Yanukovich have declared independence] are. This is one component.

“The second thing that has to be done – the law passed earlier on the special status of these territories – Luhansk and Donetsk, the unrecognized republics, should be enacted. It was passed, but still not acted upon. This requires a resolution of the Supreme Rada – the Ukrainian Parliament – which is also covered in the Minsk agreements. Our friends in Kiev have formally complied with this decision, but simultaneously with the passing by the Rada of the resolution to enact the law they amended the law itself ... which practically renders the action null and void. This is a mere manipulation, and they have to move from manipulations to real action.

“The third thing is a law on amnesty. It is impossible to have a political

dialogue with people who are threatened with criminal persecution. And finally, they need to pass a law on municipal elections on these territories and to have the elections themselves. All this is spelled out in the Minsk agreements, this is something I would like to draw your attention to, and all this should be done with the agreement of Donetsk and Luhansk.

“Unfortunately, we still see no direct dialogue, only some signs of it, but too much time has passed after the Minsk agreements were signed. I repeat, it is important now to have a direct dialogue between Luhansk, Donetsk and Kiev - this is missing.”

Also missing is any objective and professional explanation of this crisis in the mainstream American press. Instead, The New York Times and other major U.S. news organizations have continued with their pattern of 1984-ish propaganda.

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