

U.S.-NATO Involvement in the 2014 Ukraine Coup and Maidan Massacre: The Soft Power Ecosystem and Beyond

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[Ukraine 2014: The Tipping Point of Terror](#)

By [Jim Cole](#), April 19, 2023

The Psychology of Color Revolutions

Color revolutions are U.S.-funded regime-change operations utilizing a sophisticated understanding of psychology, sociology and political organizing to foment and precipitate an "electoral revolution" resulting in a U.S. client state or one that meets other geopolitical purposes. They require a large ecosystem of change agents, including military, intelligence and diplomatic government actors, foundations, NGOs, PR companies and other contractors and corporate co-conspirators and media, developed over years with millions or billions in investment.

They have been successful in Serbia (2000), in Georgia's Rose Revolution (2003), in Ukraine's Orange Revolution (2004), in Lebanon's Cedar Revolution (2005), Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution (2005), Kuwait's Blue Revolution (2005), Iraq's Purple Revolution (2005), and in Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution (1989). Others, such as Ukraine 2014, were

ultimately more characterized by violence but featured the same change-agent organizations; still others, such as Venezuela (2018) and Belarus's Slipper Revolution (2020), failed, likely as the target regime is too entrenched and/or the soft-power ecosystem is too inhibited.



[Source: europereloaded.com]

Although on the surface they utilize civic group energy and genuine discontent, particularly “creative non-violence resistance” of student and youth, their main power is in the control of the interpretation of unfolding events by both local and foreign audiences. This might make them “post-modern coups” in that they reflect a shift of regime-change operations from military hard power to civilian soft power, from reality to perception of reality, where the power of propaganda is much more insidious, yet the managers remain those connected to state and corporate power.

As with all propaganda, the control of the narratives in color revolutions is rooted in manipulation through fear and desire; a false promise of dissipating this fear through a desired candidate or policy, to channel the population against their current regime and pursue a direction in harmony with imperial interests.

Fear is also induced by some change agents (chaos agents such as saboteurs, snipers or terrorists) whose aim is to destabilize society and citizens’ sense of security, to provoke a desire for security internally (counterinsurgency) or for regime change in a foreign target (insurgency).

Insurgency/regime-change operations have become a sophisticated science of mass manipulation, researched by government, academic and foundation scientists for decades, involving the work of political and behavioral scientists, PR firms, social media experts, intelligence agents, local and foreign professional activists, and strategists and tacticians employed through governmental agencies, foundations and a plethora of NGOs.

“Collectively, their job is to make a palace coup (of their sponsorship) seem like a social revolution; to help fill the streets with fearless demonstrators advocating on behalf of a government of their choosing, which then legitimizes the sham governments with the authenticity of popular democracy and revolutionary fervor.

Because the operatives perform much of their craft in the open, their effectiveness is heavily predicated upon their ability to veil the influence backing them, and the long-term intentions guiding their work.

Their effectiveness is predicated on their ability to deceive, targeting both local populations and foreign audiences with highly-misleading interpretations of the underlying causes provoking these events.”^[1]

Mass manipulation is as old as power, but for the modern era we might start, a century ago with Gustave Le Bon’s *The Crowd* and the work of Sigmund Freud’s nephew Edward Bernays as the originator of consumer propaganda (aka “PR”), the linchpin of our globalized and falsified non-culture.

As the military and intelligence agencies became more interested in soft power, funding increased for think tanks such as the deceptively named Albert Einstein Institution, an offshoot of Harvard University where political scientist Gene Sharp evolved a sophisticated—but very accessible—understanding of how to foment revolution in target countries.

His work had such a convenient overlap in appearance and terminology with civil rights campaigning and ostensibly non-violent and anti-war ideals, it escaped many people’s attention for decades that he was central to neo-imperial expansion “by other means” and that many of these worked in tandem with other soft-power techniques as well as covert-action operations with no façade of humanitarianism.

Two fundamental influences on the psychology of color revolutions are the cultural bias that comes from 80 years of American Century cultural imperialism with which the world has been bombarded and the endlessly exploitable genuine grievances citizens have against their own leaders, who may be separate from U.S. spheres of influence but can be just as immoral and vile.

Cultural bias, via [entertainment, such as cartoons, as propaganda](#) and by deep cultural bias and ties to the Homeland that prove very useful, for example, in [how the U.S. pressures UN voting by threatening diplomats’ bank accounts and other ties to the U.S. or U.S. organizations and companies](#). Like the political, civic and media narratives of soft power, these have a profound effect on world view, values, critical thinking and perception of causes of events and possibilities for political progress, i.e., what is perceived as possible and desirable.

Legitimate dissent, oppression and foreign interference, of course, are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they are synergistic in escalating the tension for regime change, and genuine discontent or ethno-religious tension, for example, are an Achilles heal for an imperial force to target and exacerbate with divide-and-conquer, destabilization and other strategies of domination and regime change.

It is an intentional strategy of U.S. imperialism to impoverish, destabilize and neutralize non-client countries over decades, by sanctions, sabotage, propaganda, war, terror and other strategies, so that manufactured discontent becomes legitimized, certain sectors are energized while others are disenfranchised, and the hidden hand of imperialism is largely to blame.

Soft Power Imperial Apparatus: USAID, NED, Embassies, Soros, Omidyar, et al.

The purpose of soft power is to pressure governments, persuade people (propaganda) and co-opt future leaders. Much of this is done through political, labor and civic groups, other NGOs and media, media, media.

If you can look past the oligarch-level PR, the aim of U.S. empire is to instill free-market reform for multinational market penetration and control of global political economy.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED, a CIA offshoot founded in the 1980s) currently funds about 1600 different NGOs (negating the “non” part of their title), and hundreds have been funded in Ukraine since the 1990s. The two main NED arms, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) have both had Kyiv offices since 1992, running what then-regional NDI head Nelson C. Ledsky termed the “Ukraine experiment” in an update statement to the House of Representatives in 2005.^[2]

In Serbia 2000, for example, the NDI focused on the opposition parties, while IRI focused on the young protesters and “paid for two dozen *Otpor* leaders to attend a seminar on nonviolent resistance at the Hilton Hotel in Budapest, a few hundred yards along the Danube from the NDI-favored Marriott.”^[3] This mild division of taste and labor is about the extent of the difference between Republicans and Democrats when it comes to foreign policy.



Protesters waving Otpor flag in NED-backed color revolution in Serbia. [Source: dgrnewsservice.org]

About 40 NED-funded organizations are named in the NED’s 2004 Annual Report as operating in Ukraine, by far the most of any country that year.^[4] But this is not a complete picture, even of the NED’s involvement, let alone the other soft-power agencies, many of which seem allergic to the spotlight; as Ron Paul said in a December 2004 speech before the U.S. House International Relations Committee, “That is what I find so disturbing: There are so many cut-out organizations and sub-grantees that we have no idea how much U.S. government money was really spent on Ukraine, and most importantly how it was

spent.”^[5] Twenty years later, you can amplify everything by about the same number.

By their own admission—thoroughly flooded across the millions of documents, websites, articles, press releases and media flowing from this industry that puts U.S. taxpayer money into oligarch accounts and aims to destroy any (potential) competition—all of this money is spent in a near religious faith in U.S. supremacy, manifest destiny and free market imperialism.^[6] The misdirection underlying this is that it is for benevolent reasons, when it is clearly for ruling elite greed and has caused an inconceivable amount of destruction since the dawn of colonialism and the genocide of indigeneity.

But the Ukrainian cut-outs just grew and grew because, as NED President Carl Gershman said in 2013, “Ukraine is the biggest prize” in Europe.^[7] And since late February 2022, the aid floodgates opened completely to fuel the proxy war to the last Ukrainian.

The NED board always tellingly includes some national security leaders, such as current [CIA Director William J Burns](#), who was head of the NED-associated Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. After all, they have taken on the main burden of political, psychological, and social action jobs the CIA did covertly before the 1970s scandals led to the foundation of the NED. Only they do it mostly in plain sight—much less stressful!

Don’t forget the USAID and State Department, its embassies and those of wealthy client-states, also fund soft power with billions. Oh, and don’t forget the para-State Department oligarchs like Soros, whose International Renaissance Foundation spent \$181 million in Ukraine from 1990 to 2015. Although that pales next to Victoria Nuland’s [jubilant admission](#) that the United States government had spent \$5 billion on political change in Ukraine. According to [memos leaked in DCLeaks in 2016](#), after his quarter-century of investing in Ukrainian neo-liberalization, Soros was nearly dictating elements of post-coup policy, including how to [market the Ukrainian coup to potential Russian allies like Greece](#). His massive donations to the Democrats over recent decades—including [\\$25 million to the Hillary shitshow in 2016](#)—obviously confer heavy geopolitical influence, such as [directly advising Secretary of State Clinton via email on how to respond to the Albanian situation](#) in 2011.

The Omidyar Network—founders of the controlled opposition/whistleblower-capturing *The Intercept*—also got in on the soft power, according to the *Kyiv Post*, at least to the tune of \$200,000 in 2012—funding the “Center UA” in 2012 with USAID and NED.^[8] They also gave \$335,000 to “New Citizen” to one of the Center UA projects. Center UA is one of many weaponized anti-corruption NGOs particularly targeting anti-U.S. politicians, i.e., Yanukovych at the time.

It is blatant that the concerted aim of all these countless interrelated departments, organizations and corporations is neo-liberalization for elite U.S. interests—by pressuring, forcing and demanding shock therapy IMF/World Bank privatization reforms and nurturing a generation of a political class with the same outlook to serve their masters. U.S. elites used to be fine with a friendly dictator, but I think they realized in the 1980s that soft power—weaponized aid, diplomacy, sanctions and humanitarianism—is more profitable and maintains the spic-and-span humanitarian façade of modern imperialism.

A key think tank behind political action in opposition countries has been the Albert Einstein

Institution under the direction of the political change specialist Dr. Gene Sharp, a specialist and best-selling author in “nonviolence as a form of warfare.”

A key AEI operative, and friend of Sharp’s with decades of political action experience in Southeast Asia, was [Colonel Robert Helvey](#). Michael Dobbs gleefully described in a December 11, 2000, *Washington Post* article, how at an IRI sponsored seminar at the Hilton hotel in Budapest:

“[T]he Serbian students received training in such matters as how to organize a strike, how to communicate with symbols, how to overcome fear and how to undermine the authority of a dictatorial regime. The principal lecturer was retired U.S. Army Col. Robert Helvey, who has made a study of nonviolent resistance methods around the world, including those used in modern-day Burma and the civil rights struggle in the American South.

Helvey, who served two tours in Vietnam, introduced the Otpor activists to the ideas of American theoretician Gene Sharpe [sic], whom he describes as ‘the Clausewitz of the nonviolence movement,’ referring to the renowned Prussian military strategist.”^[9]

It is crazy: People read the word “non-violence” (and “pro-democracy,” “Einstein” and, if they are really hoodwinked, “Harvard”) and the references to civil rights, etc., and some sort of virtue switch is triggered that presumes the motives are not only benign, but benevolent and noble. It is a sickness of living in this false-liberal wilderness of mirrors, drunk on this manifest-destiny poison that saturates America and the Western world under its spell.

And so it is interesting that Gene Sharp has only recently been identified and analyzed as an arm of U.S. imperialism, for example, in a comprehensive set of articles [by Marcie Smith](#). Many still harbor vague thoughts of him as a supporter of national liberation movements—the exact opposite of the AEIs true intentions: anti-sovereignty and pro-imperialist. It is as if many fell for the whitewashing of “for freedom and democracy” and propaganda of weaponized humanitarianism/white man’s burden and forgot to look behind the neo-liberal curtain as to what was driving the multi-billion-dollar machine. Whoops. Again, it is hard not to get caught up in such massive, slick, trillion-dollar PR that has been flowing continuously since the dawn of the American century in 1898.

Any organization of dissent that truly tries to expose and counter the establishment’s machinations, once it crosses a threshold of influence, will be targeted: first, with monitoring and surveillance; followed by infiltration, co-optation and smearing; and, ultimately, by outright capture or sabotage. But when a voice comes from within the belly of the beast, no matter how noble and grand its professed nature and ideologies, do not let its sweet whispers in your ear for a moment.

Soft Power: Political, Diplomatic and Economic Pressure

As well as co-opting, training and funding the young street-level protesters and NGO puppets, it is necessary to unite, co-opt, train and fund the official political opposition, directly and indirectly. For example, building up to the Serbian election of 2000, more than 20 opposition leaders met with U.S. officials and “private democracy experts,” mostly in Budapest, to coordinate the \$41 million campaign of 2000.^[10]

And these astronomical NGO interference budgets mentioned above do not include private

contractors brought in through other funding routes, sometimes elicited, and the involvement of the EU, the World Bank and the IMF, the latter that the U.S. will often control, like a tap, to remind locals who's the boss. As in Biden's threat to withhold a \$1 billion IMF loan if his lapdog Petro Poroshenko did not fire Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin, investigating the gas embezzlement scam, by Mykola Zlochevsky's (now Zelensky and Azov Battalion funder Kolomoisky's) Burisma Holdings Ltd. Yes, the same Burisma that paid Hunter Biden \$83,333.33 a month for simply being on the board.^[11]



Left to right: Hunter Biden, Ihor Kholomoisky, Volodymyr Zelensky. [Source: lets戈brandonnews.com]

Although this is after the coup, it perfectly reflects the reasons for it. Biden recounted the tale with warmth and humor, as if around a cowboy's campfire, at a talk at the Council on Foreign Relations in 2018, "[On Defending Democracy](#):"

"'We're not gonna give you the billion dollars....If the prosecutor [Shokin] is not fired, you are not getting the money.' Well, son-of-a-bitch....He got fired. And they put in place someone who was solid..."

To be clear: Here is a U.S. vice president and future president bragging about blackmailing the "leaders" of a foreign country that his own government implanted, to fire someone who, before he crossed Biden, seemed a rare example of an uncorrupted Ukrainian politician (Viktor Shokin—who has, since Nuland, Pyatt and Biden turned against him in late 2015, [been in fear of his life](#))—in order, seemingly, to cover up his own apparent association with millions in tax fraud.

The gentleman he refers to as "solid" as future prosecutor general was not only not a lawyer, he was a recently released prisoner, Yuriy Lutsenko—described by Daria Kaleniuk, director of the (U.S., EU and "private international" funded) Anti-Corruption Action Center Ukraine, as "a crook" who "abused office for self-enrichment" and did not solve a single

case in more than three years.^[12] (It is an interesting theatrical short-circuit irony where you have a Western-funded NGO/individual criticizing a Western-installed puppet. Of course, theater, like circuses, delivered in constant and endless news-cycle drama stories, distracts from larger agendas and accumulates to provoke a numb, hypnotized and amnesic public.)

There is a unique, deep but shrill sycophancy heard in Poroshenko's voice [when he regularly talked with Biden](#). The chocolate king, despite his already disgusting wealth, has a palpable slavering greed for the further enrichment and power being a Biden/U.S. proxy elite entails. Is it a warped form of love, the worship of such power? It is a degenerate addiction.

Not just Biden held such close constant interest in Ukraine: It is interesting to note the parade of senior U.S. and EU politicians and influencers who spoke to crowds at Maidan during the protest. Portrayed as a sort of echo of the "Winds of Change" of 1989, as if bricks of the Berlin Wall were still hitting the ground—when in fact, it was to become more like the random slaughter of Romania 1989 than drunken hope of Berlin 1989—the list tellingly includes:

- Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
- Geoffrey Pyatt, Ambassador
- Catherine Ashton, EU foreign policy chief
- Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Chris Murphy (D-CT), threatening sanctions if there were any violence against protesters, spoke on stage with Oleh "Sieg Heil" Tyahnybok on December 13, 2013
- Bernard-Henri Lévy (February 2014)—who also met with Poroshenko twice and Vitali Klitschko in February and subsequently described the massacred victims as "European, indeed...because in the Maidan, for the first time in history, young people would die clutching the starry flag of Europe." This is deep-level, trauma-based PsyOps BHL is delivering. (Don't forget, as well, his [starring role in the Libyan regime change of 2011](#).)

What sort of a neutered state allows a foreign state to parade its leaders through its capital inciting regime change? But the figureheads are only the front of the show, soft imperial power saturates a target like a rising tide.

Soft Power Tech: Civil Society 2.0

If the Gene Sharp-style color revolutions of the 2000s embraced youthful energy, symbols, slogans, top-level PR strategy and new media, those of the 2010s were influenced further by Silicon Valley's advances in the awesome and terrifying political potential of social media, not least in surveillance and propaganda in the service of imperialism.

Don't forget the military and intelligence roots of the internet, mobile phones and software. The interlinkage is seen not just by analyzing Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Stanford Labs and the many patents in your tech now spying on you owned by the Department of Defense, or the investments of the CIA's In-Q-Tel in Silicon Valley startups and companies; it is also clear by seeing how often State Department, military and intelligence organizations partner with tech companies in different projects and by the interchange of personnel, particularly since the Obama administration.

Core to this are Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, a bridge between Google and the State

department. As Julian Assange, who met both of them secretly in 2011, described in his review of their 2013 book *The New Digital Age*:

“[It] is a startlingly clear and provocative blueprint for technocratic imperialism, from two of its leading witch doctors, Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, who construct a new idiom for United States global power in the 21st century. This idiom reflects the ever closer union between the State Department and Silicon Valley, as personified by Mr. Schmidt, the executive chairman of Google, and Mr. Cohen, a former adviser to Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton who is now director of Google Ideas.

The book proselytizes the role of technology in reshaping the world’s people and nations into likenesses of the world’s dominant superpower, whether they want to be reshaped or not.”^[13]

The policy influence of Cohen is clear during and after his (official) State Department Policy Planning tenure of 2004–2010 that earned him a seat at the Council on Foreign Relations, with the introduction of zeitgeist (and already dated) terms like “21st century statecraft,” “diplomacy 2.0” and “civil society 2.0” to U.S. government foreign policy projects and documents.

Color revolution strategies have always focused on media narratives and co-opted youth as agents of change—as in *Otpor* in Serbia 2000—but as social media came to dominate, this became a new weapon in imperialism for insurgency and regime change.

An interesting innovation in Ukraine in 2012, TechCamps were first organized through the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. The project was developed initially by Katie Dowd and Angela Baker, both Advisers for Innovation at the U.S. Institute of Peace (should it be War?) in Washington.^[14]

The conferences were run at the embassy from 2012 to 2014 by Luke Schtele, an Assistant Press Attaché in the Obama administration, and funded by public and private grants. According to his bio at Fulbright conferences in 2014 and 2015, Schtele “led the implementation of the U.S. Department of State’s Civil Society 2.0 initiative in Ukraine” and “organized a series of TechCamps and media forums in Ukraine from 2012–2014, training more than 350 activists and journalists in the use of digital technology and communications.”^[15]

Soon after the fifth TechCamp on November 14–15, 2014, at the embassy, and just before the start of the Maidan protests, Deputy Oleg Tsarov had the audacity to complain in parliament that the U.S. Embassy TechCamp projects and funding were illegal intervention in Ukrainian sovereignty, information warfare and manipulation of public opinion to sow dissent by the United States, against the UN Resolution 2131 (XX) of December 21, 1965, entitled *Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty*.

He may have been drowned out by the boos of the opposition, defending their gravy train, but he was right. An early TechCamp project included mobilizing youth in internet-poor areas, particularly the poorer and more Russian-speaking east, to share messages via SMS, called “SMS Like” and “SMS-President,” developed by Vadim Georgienko at TechCamp 2012, after speaking to Trevor Knoblich who developed the similar FrontlineSMS. Other projects

included initiating the “journalism without borders” project, using online games for social causes. TechCamps in Ukraine were funded by the State Department as well as private support, including from Coca-Cola and Microsoft.

After the coup, Schtele and some of his team proudly presented the achievements of TechCamp Ukraine at Fulbright conferences in 2014 and 2015, along with some interesting social media soft-power change agents. They included Professor [Josephine Dorado](#) of The New School, a “Trainer, State Department,”; Olena Sadovnik [Media Development Officer, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe]; and Vadim Georgienko [Developer, Creator of SMS-President and Dobrochyn crowdfunding platform]. The summary of the TechCamp project is identical for both and worth repeating in full: ^[16]

“Igniting Citizen Action in Ukraine through Mobile Storytelling

This session will highlight work being done by Fulbrighters and other agents of change at TechCamps, an initiative under the U.S. State Department and U.S. Institute of Peace which aids civil society organizations in developing countries by building their digital capacities. We will look at TechCamps through the lens of Ukraine and focus on how building skills around mobile story telling galvanized citizen actions and continues to address the challenge of communicating in conflict regions.”

Social media was the main driver of the Maidan protests, which “unexpectedly erupted outside the election cycle, on a random Thursday evening,” beginning with a Facebook post by a U.S. astroturfed journalist.^[17]

When Soft Power Fails, Coercive Violence Follows

And so soft power and its main tool, propaganda, multiply exponentially in the endlessly nourishing flow of money. The “ugly truth” if you speak to an old school military realist, or get an ex-CIA agent drunk enough, or infiltrate a group of defense contractors and their stooge senators as they ride waves of euphoria at the call of any military escalation, is that, geopolitically, “they” will sometimes also be content with chaos and destabilization of a target country, no matter the death and refugee toll.

This Plan B works as it also prevents and weakens competition and gives the military-industrial complex a good cash stream for a few years or decades. An endless war is more profitable than a successful one and still has geopolitical advantages. Being the last country left standing is as solid a path to “full spectrum dominance” as any other.

Although some NGOs proudly display the logos of embassies, USAID, NED, etc., a regular occurrence is the defense of some agencies attempting to hide the foreign source of their funding. Their argument is that this is used as a strategy to attack them. This farcical logic does somewhat [limit anti-corruption efforts](#), though.

And how did all these billions of investments, this political and economic macro and micromanaging and the two “color revolutions” improve Ukraine? Bloated oligarchic corruption to previously unimaginable levels;^[18] empowered, armed, funded and normalized neo-fascists,^[19] and started a civil war that claimed 14,000 lives even before the Russian invasion of 2022 and more than 200,000 wounded in the first year since the invasion, not to mention millions of refugees.

Because the soft power so ceaselessly targeted at Ukraine, the “prize of Europe,” was inevitably going to turn ugly and dark, the U.S. had to turn to hard power to achieve its aim of breaking Russia from Europe, at least so the U.S. can shift its imperial aggression to China while Ukrainians die.

Ultimately, all the methods of regime change, of empire, are a continuum, a selection of tools that escalate in violence and—safe in their Washington, New York, Houston and San Francisco mansions; or Swiss, Belgian, French or German chateaus; or English Home Counties Manors—the oligarchs don’t care about violence, death and chaos they create, as long as the income stream flows and the profits of missiles, minerals, oil and gas, and finance black magic continue to rise. The ugliest truth is that one creates the other.

As John McCain described the Arab Spring—very much the fruits of U.S. soft-power funding via NED and dozens of other tentacles—it is a crafted weapon intended to weaken Russia and China, despite overtures of cooperation; it is “a virus that will attack Moscow and Beijing” and collateral damage, or fear of all-out war, is irrelevant to these power-deranged psychos.^[20] If you don’t understand what these different crafted weapons of imperialism are, and how they work, you will have zero ability to interpret geopolitical events, and will likely go insane trying to understand history or reality as you are manipulated in a web of lies.

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Next, in Part III, we will discuss how this long soft-power project turned to violence—largely, but not solely, thanks to the U.S. proxy weaponized fascist groups it has been cultivating since the start of the Cold War—to push the regime change over the irreversible edge, and ultimately into war. We will survey the timeline of the protests and coup and of the exposure of evidence of U.S.-NATO involvement in escalating events as part of its regime-change operations.

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Notes

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