

Ukraine 2014: The Tipping Point of Terror

Part I of a CAM investigation into the origins of the Ukraine War: U.S. and NATO involvement in the February 2014 Coup and Maidan Massacre, and their historical antecedents

By [Jim Cole](#)

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As I write, the world is on the edge of nuclear and humanitarian crises after a year of the Ukraine "proxy" war with Russia. No single event can be seen as the sole cause, but the most dramatic lurch in the story was the "Revolution of Dignity" in Ukraine in November 2013 to February 2014, notably the horrific massacre of protesters and police in Maidan (Independence) Square on February 20, 2014.

Without dismissing the large sectors of Ukrainian society with legitimate grievances against corruption and stagnation, this was a bloody coup d'état, engineered largely by the U.S. over years with parts played by NATO puppets and local proxies. Viktor Yanukovich was elected in internationally recognized fair elections, and new elections were planned to occur within a year. But powerful interests and a large section of the public believed it could not wait as he could not be trusted. And he was chased out of the country like a hunted animal.

And, like all "color revolutions," despite the underlying legitimate grievances, it was no true upheaval or revolution at all, it was simply [local elites](#) of the same class switching their allegiances to another external power. As Ukrainian political researcher Volodymyr Ishchenko describes, four groups gained power after the violent 2014 coup: "the oligarchic opposition, the NGOs, the far right and Washington-Brussels."^[1]

Many protesters congregated in Maidan Square from late November to February, sparked by the governments reticence to agree to the EU association agreement and its clauses on economic reform. Initially peaceful, the protests experienced periodic escalations in violence, often precipitated when things were settling down.

But it was the sniper attack of February 20, 2014, that was the crucial event that pushed things over the edge and led to the violent overthrow of the government, the consolidation

of elements of fascist power in the government, and snowballed into the annexation of Crimea, a civil (and proxy) war in Donbas and the 2022 Russian “invasion” or “Special Operation Z,” depending on which side of the prism one is. The official and Western-implied view is that it was Yanukovych, or perhaps Russian-backed snipers, behind the massacre, yet those events received barely any coverage and no conclusive investigation or trial has occurred.

Who were the snipers? Who trained them? Who paid them? Who planned it? Who ordered it? Who benefited? Who covered it up and why?



Maidan shooters in the upper floors of the Maidan-occupied Music Conservatory Building on the morning of February 20, 2014. [Credit: [Eygeniy Maloletka](#)]

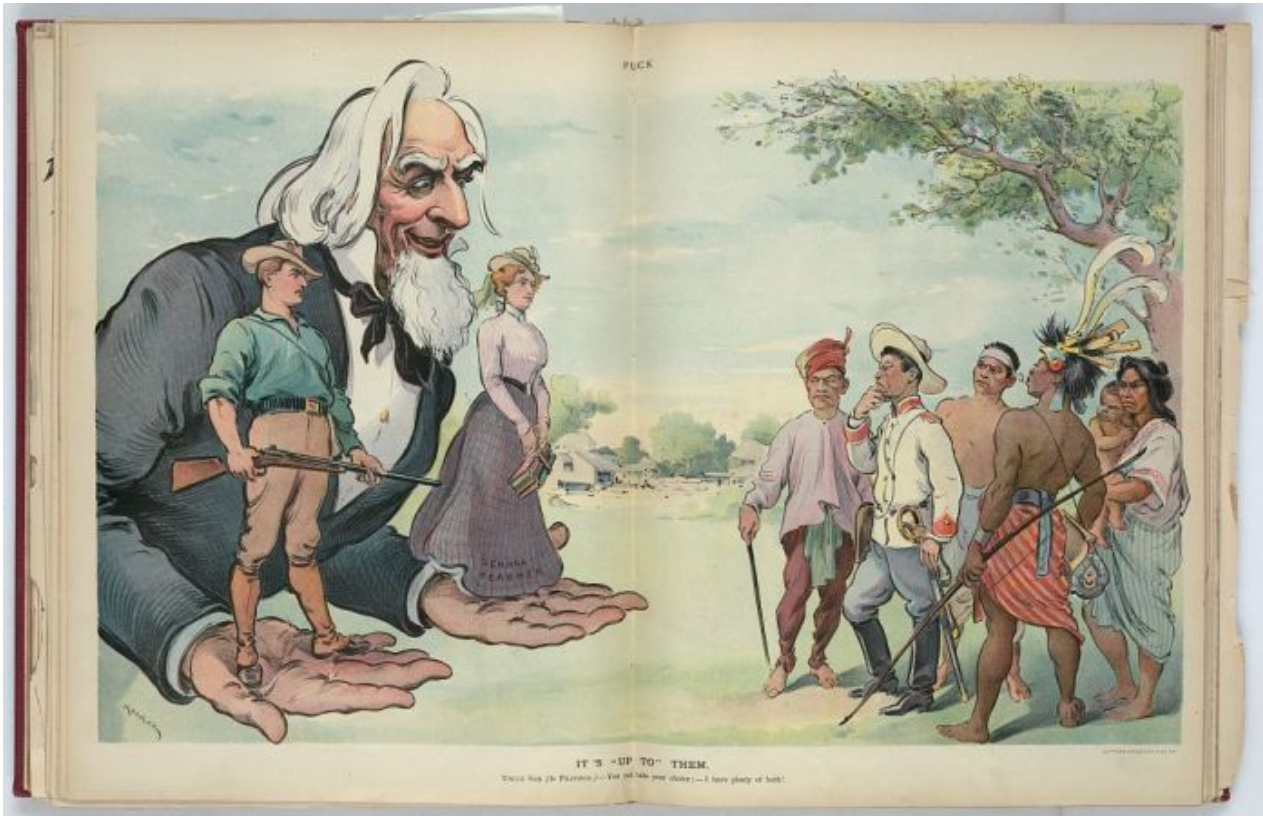
The Liberal-Fascist Alliance: Imperial Terrorism

Before we look at the influence of U.S. soft power on events, it is essential to consider the history of U.S. support of fascist and nationalist groups during the Cold War, including the recruitment of hundreds of Nazis in the Reinhardt Gehlen organization to develop the German Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND)^[2] and the use of diaspora Croatian and Ukrainian nationalists-fascists as spies and covert actors.^[3]

This dual track of elite power—using both soft social democratic or liberal and hard fascist hands—is neither new nor a U.S. invention. For example, the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919 by fascist Freikorps were pursuant to orders of Gustav Noske of the Social Democratic Party.^[4]

Mark Twain was so taken aback at the “banditry” of Teddy Roosevelt, William Randolph Hearst and Henry Cabot Lodge’s vile lurch into global imperialism that he suggested the flag should be changed into black and white stripes with skull and crossbones replacing the stars.^[5] One hundred and twenty years later, and perhaps as many million people killed in

aggressions of regime change and counterinsurgency since, the comparison to piracy seems a quaint anachronism.



Uncle Sam says to the Filipinos: You choose—school teacher or soldier? We will dominate you either way. A centerfold in Puck by Udo Keppler, published November 1901. [Source: [loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov)]

When your modus operandi is anti-communism, fascists are your best friends. In fact, the rabid anti-communism was and is itself a front for corporate imperialism, and its true aim was and is to crush any resistance, whether it is indigenous sovereignty or an uncooperative local elite.

In the recent post-war U.S. context, in parallel to the “left-hand” overt and covert support of center-left political actors—a sort of “democracy washing”—there were simultaneous “right-hand” covert recruitments of fascist militias across the world. In Europe (and Turkey), for example, there were (are?) the [Operation Gladio](#)-type military-intelligence “stay-behind operations” that also apparently practiced a “strategy of tension” terrorism under U.S.-NATO control.^[6]

Similar imperial terror strategies of sabotage, death squads, torture and propaganda were also used in Asia (e.g., the CIA’s Edward Lansdale/General Thé’s terrorist bombing campaign in Saigon 1952-53,^[7] Operation Phoenix in Vietnam and similar operations earlier in the Philippines and Indonesia), Latin America (e.g., funding, training and intelligence support for police, military and paramilitaries in Operation Condor counterinsurgency in the Southern Cone and death squads in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador) and the Middle East, such as Shah-era SAVAK torture and assassination and the use of so-called Mujahadeen, Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda and ISIS-ISIL mercenary-terrorist groups in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.^[8]



The CIA-led bombing campaign in Saigon 1952–53, carried out by *Cao Dai* Buddhist-Catholic-nationalist General Trinh Minh Thé's Li An Minh army and managed by Edward Lansdale, the "Quiet American."
[Source: laboratoireurbanismeinsurrectionnel.blogspot.com]

Lest we forget, the Homeland is no exception to imperial aggression, and counterinsurgency (including provocateurism and terror) was and is rife; the FBI's COINTELPRO was the enemy of any group even hinting at challenging the power structure and would not hesitate to intimidate, incarcerate or assassinate (most often in overzealous police raids as in Fred Hampton's case), especially when their targets got geopolitically wise; its PATCON agents (including a German BND agent)^[9] riddled and provoked the right-wing militia movement in the 1990s; the CIA's Operation CHAOS along with Army intelligence monitored hundreds of thousands of anti-war activists and infiltrated, rattled and incited thousands of organizations; and the FBI's GOON squads terrorized and neutralized the American Indian Movement.^[10] Once one understands that the priority is counterinsurgency—elite power protecting itself—and not public or national safety, the violence and illegality of these operations are indefensible. And this is perhaps only the tip of a vast and disturbing iceberg, not to mention the links almost always found, when one takes the time to dig, between intelligence agents and terrorist acts on even cursory research of an event.

Back to foreign policy: in the end, to win a client-state against the interests of the majority

of its citizens, a final push of terror, shock and violence is often needed for both regime change and—once a state is a client—to protect the regime with counterinsurgency operations. Once the masses are terrorized and traumatized or disenfranchised, it is much easier to maintain the status quo, and the elites might consider the country “stabilized.”

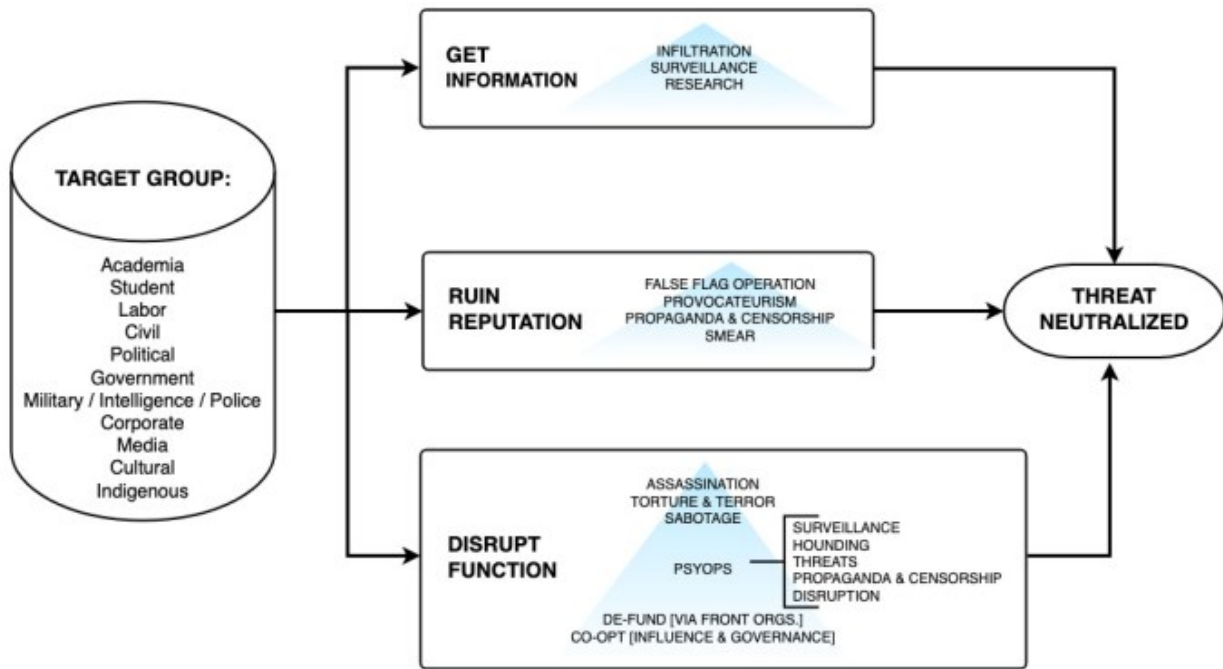
But the goons and dragoons that do the dirty work of empire are largely only pawns, radicalized with weaponized nationalism to face killing and death without squinting in the service of empire. Meanwhile, safely a few steps detached and hidden behind the façade of liberalism or feigned benevolence and endless trails of front organizations, the power players keep their hands clean and faces out of sight. These psychotic puppeteers use their psychotic puppets as agents of chaos, division and terror against the masses and their enemies.

In Ukraine, you do not have to look far to see an 80-year history of U.S. meddling with fascist groups for their own ends. The oldest is the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which was formed in the 1920s, made up the 14th Waffen SS Division during World War II, and its *Bandera* OUN-B branch. After OUN head Stepan Bandera was killed in 1959, Yaroslav Stetsko became its leader and, like many fascist-nationalist leaders across Eastern Europe, was chosen by U.S. intelligence—initially military intelligence, later the CIA—as their man to fight communism by any means necessary and, ultimately, like all of these brainwashed psychos, as a tool of U.S. imperialism.^[11]

More recent groups are the Ukrainian National Assembly—Ukrainian People’s Self-Defense (UNA-UNSO), founded in the 1990; its 2013 offshoot, Right (*Pravy*) Sector, founded by Dmytro Yarosh; and Svoboda, formed from the OUN.

All of these ultra-nationalist groups and more were supported by U.S. politicians and agencies before the coup, were present at Maidan, and formed the leadership and majority of the “Maidan self-defense.” Svoboda—supported by the U.S.—had already gained 10% of the vote by 2012, no doubt thanks to a savvy political grooming of their leader and violent anti-Semite Oleh Tyahnybok.^[12] After the coup, Svoboda and Right Sector leadership gained prominent positions in Poroshenko’s post-coup government. Svoboda’s new politicians, for example, included Oleksandr Sych as Vice Premier for Economic Affairs, co-founder Andriy Parubiy as Secretary of the Security and National Defense Committee, as well as ministers for education, agriculture, and the environment.^[13]

COVERT ACTION // METHODS OF INSURGENCY & COUNTERINSURENCY



Source: Photo courtesy of the author

One can also see “Gladio-B” parallels in the use of jihadists, mujahadeen and “moderate rebels” in the 1980s to the present, and some consider the training, funding and arming of neo-fascists more recently as a “Gladio-C.” (As a report by the *Counter Extremism Project* stated in an April 2020 report on Ukraine: “In 2019, right-wing extremism effectively replaced jihadi terrorism as the number one threat to internal/homeland security of the countries of the broader West.”)^[14]

In many of these projects there have been accusations of assassination and terrorism, including “false-flag” operations that blame an atrocity or outrage on the target in order to increase state authority, destabilize and weaken enemies, precipitate invasion or intervention, drive the permanent war economy and marginalize left-wing (or more correctly, “non-aligned”) politics.

As Italian fascist and convicted bomber Vincenzo Vinciguerra said in 1992 of CIA-NATO Operation Gladio’s strategy of tension that killed hundreds in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s: “You were supposed to attack civilians, women children...innocent people outside of the political arena for one simple reason: To force the Italian public to turn to the state...turn to the regime and ask for greater security.”^[15] It is the elite’s covert use of military, intelligence, police and paramilitary fascist might to maintain control in so-called liberal democracies.

As well as state terrorism, these sleeper cell “stay-behind networks” also perform sabotage operations, and there is no doubt that equivalent forces are still active and under CIA-DIA-NATO direction in most enemy states, including Russia and Belarus.^[16] And it seems such cells were activated there *before* the Russian attack of February 24, 2022.

Mainstream media, particularly recently, claim Ukraine as a legitimate democracy, with the

defense that the parliamentary vote is less right wing than other European nations. However, the continued co-opting of fascists into state power by other means, and reverence for fascist heroes such as Stepan Bandera, speaks of deeper roots. For example, in the early 1990s, officials from the Ukraine Defense Ministry attended an SS Galician Division reunion in Kyiv, whilst a similar reunion occurred in Lviv, endorsed by the city council and celebrated with the [renaming of a street after Stepan Bandera](#), one that ironically had been called Peace Street.^[17]



Bandera Street in Lviv [Source: [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepan_Bandera)]

More recently, as part of a tsunami-level neo-liberal PR campaign, the fascist brown is liberally whitewashed by both internal players seeking political power and the external U.S. and EU power-brokers not wanting their pawns weakened. It is important to look for blips in this whitewashing to see behind the propaganda to the true power of fascists in Ukraine. When you rule by fear, you do not need to be large in number, only in the right positions to create, validate and use that fear.

The fact that Zelensky is Jewish is often mentioned by the naïve or deceptive as an obvious sign that “Ukraine can’t be that fascist.” But this ignores the strange bedfellows of money and power politics, particularly in a region that has been pumped full of aid, gas money, corrupted investment and propaganda for decades, and has long been a battleground between the U.S. and Russia as well as between a large minority of Ukrainians and Russia.

Behind Zelensky and many of the notorious nationalist-fascist militias in the Donbas war, such as the Azov Battalion, is Ihor Kolomoisky, the PrivatBank and Burisma-linked billionaire.

Not only is he [accused by the U.S. Department of Justice](#) of millions in fraud and embezzlement, but Federal Court records show a [far greater level of embezzlement](#) that

triggered a recession in Ukraine: “Between 2006 and 2015, more than \$4.45 billion was transferred without any apparent effort by the banks or the government to stem the movement of dollars as the oligarch and his partners acquired an enormous [U.S.] real estate portfolio.”^[18] Yet, for the most part, the government, Deutsche Bank and mainstream media continue to look the other way. “He might be a totally corrupt oligarch with no morals, but he’s *our guy!*”

Apart from the shared source of income, Ukrainian politicians have had very real threats of assassination from the neo-fascists, and I believe they continue to take them seriously.

Like other post-Soviet countries, Ukrainian civic activists, largely working for or influenced by U.S. and EU-funded NGOs, can hold what can seem a paradoxical combination of nationalist, neo-liberal and pro-EU views.^[19] For example, during the 2013-14 protests, the EuroMaidan press—a George Soros-funded media central to the movement—[published a piece](#) defending even clearly hard-line fascists such as Dmytro Yarosh and their violence as a necessary force for change. Paradoxical views, like cognitive dissonance, are a sign that you are being manipulated.

A sort of “my bully is the good bully” moral ambiguity, and a recipe for escalation and disaster. This willingness to co-opt extremism (or be co-opted by extremists) even extends to ISIS-trained Jihadi fighters of the [Sheikh Mansur Brigade](#), who came fresh from Syria and were managed by the Right Sector in the war in Donbas.

Even more broadly, liberals seem not to grasp nor have memory of basic geopolitics, the “offensive realist” or realpolitik view as openly decreed by many prophets of U.S. imperial policy like Zbigniew Brzezinski, George Kennan, Robert Gates, Alexander Haig and the neocons of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC)—let alone the covert action, soft power and slick PR that hides realpolitik behind a façade of a surreal Disney-on-the-Deathstar show.

They are trapped by their own privilege, a framing by corporate media, and in the naïve belief that their leaders practice what they preach as their billion-dollar PR campaigns turn darkness into light. I call it the “propagandascope.”

In this insane view, complete acquiescence to U.S./NATO/West/North—whatever you want to call the neo-liberal empire—is called “neutrality”; there are no other ways of living; history is over and resistance is futile. And because of its righteousness, its professed liberal values—its true sole value being elite profit motive—it is an inevitable and manifest destiny, as the unprecedented powerbrokers of the first American century, like the Dulles brothers and Henry Luce—all sons of Presbyterian ministers—believed. America, god and the free market.

Soft-Power Imperialism

“In a counterinsurgency situation the primary sources of insurgent strength are not a strong military organization and its technological industrial support, but the sources of discontent of the people within the nation, and thus, the people themselves.” — Special Operations Research Office, 1962 ^[20]

The greatest trick of empire is to hide in plain sight; the main aims of empire are to protect

itself, neutralize its threats and to grow. Its main weapon for all of this is psychology—the appeal of virtue on one side, the threat of fear and anger on the other—and the most powerful form of this is the political use of atrocity to control the population.

After the exposures of clandestine imperialism of the CIA, et al., in the 1970s' congressional investigations, and related whistleblowing from greats like Philip Agee (who incidentally offers an excellent, concise description of soft power in [this 2005 interview](#)), John Stockwell and Ralph McGehee, the CIA's political action methods of imperialism evolved to overt soft power methods of NGOs, as neo-liberalism and spin took hold after the 1970s scandals and Vietnam failure.

The New Cold War started as the last one was ending, with a U.S. drive for global unipolar “benevolent” hegemony, later termed “full-spectrum dominance.” USAID began Ukraine projects in 1991 and recently described its interventions there as a 30-year partnership that “helped establish a vibrant and independent media, an active civil society, and a broader entrepreneurial class.”

This groundwork and astroturfing ensures that development is toward the American beacon and sphere of influence in terms of politics, economics, military, national security, civil society, labor, academia, culture and media; most importantly, it is intended that markets and resources (such as gas) are opened for U.S. and European multinational corporate exploitation.

As more and more soft-power influence has developed through countless and ever-multiplying USAID, State Department, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as well as European and the “philanthropic” projects of George Soros [whose International Renaissance Foundation (IRF) has been in Ukraine since 1989] and [Pierre Omidyar](#), events in Ukraine escalated under Obama and through State Department -eocons such as Victoria Nuland and their Military-Industrial connections.

Nuland is the ex-CEO of war hawk Democratic think tank [Center for a New American Security](#) (CNAS) and wife of PNAC co-founder Robert Kagan. Might as well call them all Republocrats or Demublicans, especially when it comes to imperial foreign policy.

Soft power includes political, diplomatic, cultural and media influence to co-opt civic and political leaders and capture the hearts and minds of the people. The darker side of this is sanctions, weaponizing aid (including IMF aid) as leverage as well as covert actions such as sabotage, provocateurism, assassinations and other “destabilizations” to create a society rotten-ripe for regime change. We will discuss the soft power apparatus developed in Ukraine in more detail in part II

Regime Change



John Pilger interviews Duane Ramsdell “Dewey” Clarridge, ex-head of CIA Latin America Division, on U.S. policy of regime change. [Source: vimeo.com]

Regime change requires an infiltration of society by the flow of (largely U.S. taxpayer) money to build infrastructure and cultural and political influence in a target state over years. In current USAID Orwellian parlance, these soft-power projects are called “stabilization and transition,” i.e., destabilization and regime change.

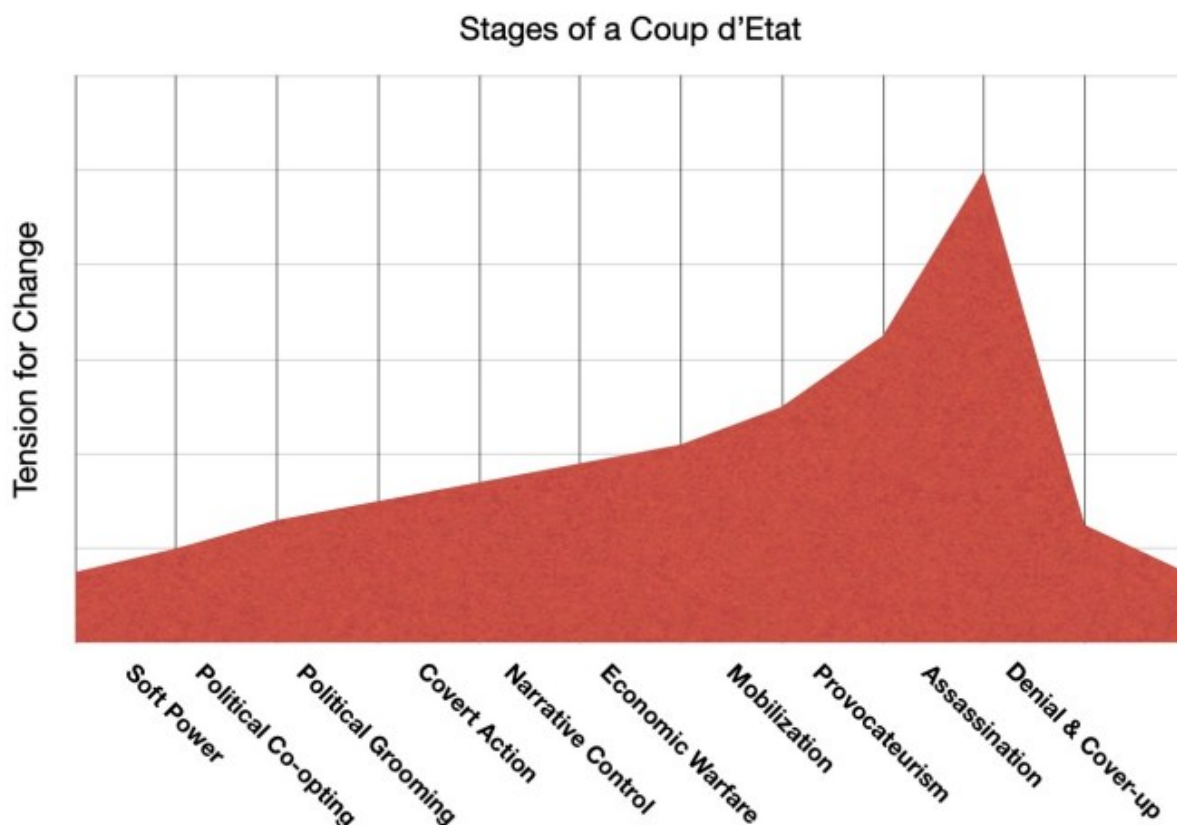
The local effect of each dollar and each project amplifies and is amplified by the level of public discontent, the weakness of local government and the level of opposition control of local and international media. Although color revolutions are largely an information war of hearts and minds, where the government is legitimate and has significant local support, brutal tactics of insurgency are ultimately needed for regime change.

The main strategies of regime change are:

1. **Soft power:** Provide weaponized aid, development, humanitarian assistance and media to win public opinion, ideology and culture.
2. **Political co-opting:** Co-opt and unite opposition, ideally including military leaders.
3. **Political grooming:** Train and fund a new generation of overt agents of change, the future political leaders (e.g., the World Economic Forum’s “[Young Global Leaders](#)” program).
4. **Covert Action/Black operations:** Train and fund covert agents of change (often fascist or extremist) to do the dirty work of insurgency and counterinsurgency.
5. **Narrative control:** Develop a sympathetic media.
6. **Economic warfare:** Diplomatic isolation, sanctions and sabotage to “make the economy scream.”^[21]
7. **Mobilization:** Organize mass protests and PR with media control, while also warning that “there will be blood.”
8. **Provocateurism:** Goons and dragoons of power engineer provocation,

confrontation, outrage and chaos and the soft arm controls the media analysis through immediate (social media), short (mainstream news) and long term (NGO reports and books).

9. **Assassination** of key political leader or **false flag** targeting opposition leader or public citizens.
10. **Denial** and **cover-up** via censorship, propaganda and narrative bias. It helps if you built the whole mediasphere.



Approximate stages of regime-change tactics.[Source: Courtesy of the author]

Dominique Fonvielle, who spent 15 years as an analyst with France's foreign secret service, Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE), described the following steps of regime change to German filmmaker Susanne Brandstaetter in 2003:^[22]

1. Identify opposition forces to destabilize ruling regime (need to be credible and influential)
2. Effective propaganda to smear the ruling regime
3. Prepare (convincing) future head of state and staff
4. Create revolutionary milieu
5. Spark a revolution/coup.

The methods of covert action for taking power with insurgency or securing power with counterinsurgency are ultimately the same: targeting a group of people to neutralize them by getting information, ruining their reputation and disrupting their function.

The U.S. foreign policy machinery is entirely geared to grind down countries that resist its

drive for political and economic domination. Coups are planned well in advance and cost a lot of money.

A key mid-level operator of the Ukraine 2014 coup, Victoria Nuland, estimated that the U.S. had [spent \\$5 billion on civic, political and media projects in Ukraine](#) from 1991 to the end of 2013, and I presume this does not include astronomical budgets for military, paramilitary or covert actions; private oligarch NGOs like those of Soros, Omidyar, Gates and Thiel; nor does it include behind-the-scenes deals or the carrot-and-stick use of IMF and World Bank loans and diplomatic pressure on NATO allies that, regardless, aim to drive neo-liberal economic reform and the looting of public resources and infrastructure.

Nuland announced her figure proudly at a U.S.-Ukraine Foundation meeting in 2013, with a large Chevron sign next to her. Did Ukrainians on the street not see this? Or did they not see it for what it was?

The Americans have moreover completely deceived the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian government with regard to the completely unrealistic victory of Ukraine in this war, in my opinion, because in any case the big loser in this war is Ukrainian population itself and also as a consequence Europe with all the crisis in which it was engulfed by the will of the politicians. — *Pierre de Gaulle, grandson of Charles de Gaulle, December 2022*^[23]

Like most regime-change operations, the 2014 coup involved a two-edged (Gladio) sword approach: one side soft, neo-liberal, political and “diplomatic”; the other side hard, dirty, bloody and fascist. The former co-opts the public’s genuine liberal aims and grievances against economic conditions, authoritarian tendencies and corruption. The latter is covert action; generally outsourced to local extremists and non-local private mercenaries, training and hiring extremists to do the dirty work when needed.

In Ukraine’s case, it is clear fascist extremists were involved by the prominent position as “Maidan security” provoking violence and in the post-coup government positions they were rewarded with after the coup. The far-right Svoboda (originally the “Socialist-Nationalist Party”), Right Sector, Azov Battalion and C14. The Azov Battalion, dismissed by NATO media as a minor aberration, post-coup became an official branch of the Ukraine Army numbering tens of thousands.

It is also clear fascists were involved in escalating the violence, and are proud of the muscle they flexed—C14 head Yevhen Karas recently proclaimed that the 2014 “Revolution of Dignity” would have been a [“gay parade”](#) if not for the instrumental role of neo-Nazis. The moderates and many liberal-progressive activists considered groups like Svoboda as the only party of action, making a deal with the devil, and some insisted at the time, such as the EuroMaidan Press (funded by Soros’s IRF) that the Nationalist fascists such as Dmytro Yarosh are needed to protect citizens from the state violence of leaders like Yanukovich; “Someone who is ready to risk his life so I can live in freedom and peace—can’t be a bad guy. It’s that simple.”^[24]

Strange bedfellows (and tragic naïveté), indeed.

The fascist psychos and ultra-nationalist ideology also became emboldened as the “anti-terrorist operation” evolved into the Donbas war. The initial wave of regular Ukrainian

soldiers lacked a desire, when it came to it, to kill their siblings and cousins in the east in 2014. And so, later in the year, Azov, et al., took over and the ideology was spread in parallel to the de-Russianizing of Ukrainian identity.^[25]

Ultimately, for imperial advance, the nationalist extremists ready to die serve as a destabilization grenade, exploited by local and foreign oligarchs as henchmen to protect their interests and to destroy and bleed their enemies, who are conveniently many in form. For the foreign elite, if this chaos and terror also destroys the local population and country, so be it. As long as access to energy and other valuable resources at least does not fall into enemy hands, the military industry oligarchs can make billions off the endless war. Should peace come after all is destroyed, so be it; there are also billions to be made in rebuilding projects along with excellent PR opportunities.

False-Flag Attacks

There are many documented and admitted examples of false-flag attacks,^[26] where an atrocity is used to provoke increased authority and loss of civil liberties, a military intervention or regime change. The basic profile is:^[27]

1. **Highly emotive event:** Spectacular and traumatic
2. **Media bonanza:** Instant media saturation with widespread coverage
3. **Sham investigation:** Case is quickly closed, with a scapegoat/patsy identified with group being demonized; and cover-up
4. **Political reaction:** Dramatic government/group reaction:
 - a) Erosion of rights/civil liberties for “safety”
 - b) Military action or invasion
 - c) Regime change—fake revolution masqueraded as a democratic uprising.

As they are black operations ordered and sanctioned by powerful groups, with the media on their side, and strict compartmentalization and plausible deniability, evidence is hard to come by unless there are whistleblowers. Even then, such dark actors are easy to discredit, or can be silenced with threats, blackmail or assassination. It pays to look for:

1. The desired intent before the event
2. The reaction after the event
3. Who wanted this?
4. Who benefited? Which government, group, company or organization?

“Unknown Snipers”: False-Flag Crowd Assassination Precedents

If not enough people die, if not enough blood flows, the people will never stand up for themselves. —*Gheorghe Ratiu, head of domestic intelligence in Romania’s Departamentul Securității Statului “Securitate” 1986-1989*^[28]

There are many types of “big shock” atrocity that can provoke the reaction needed for a coup or military intervention, ranging from those that occur with no foreign manipulation other than the white propaganda that makes it well known, to false-flag black operations that create the event(s) and control the media interpretation. The effect is magnified by use

of controlled media—the propaganda multiplier. Where there is no incident that can be publicized or propagandized to provoke outrage, the most effective provocation is a false flag, laying blame on the target government.

Whether or not instigated by an insurgent, opposition or external agent, poisonings, such as the Yuschenko poisoning and the “Orange Revolution”; assassinations, such as that of [Rafic Hariri](#) and the “Cedar Revolution” in Lebanon; bombings, such as Israel’s [Lavon affair](#) in Egypt, 1954; chemical attacks (e.g., [Douma, Syria, April 2018](#)); and other provocations and atrocities are used to achieve public and political momentum for regime change.

Protest provocation can be used by or against a host government, i.e., for counterinsurgency or insurgency, respectively. Regime-change (i.e., insurgent) protests are increased by soft-power means and PR, but uglier methods of agent provocateurs and paramilitaries are used to bring serious conflict, outrage and a sense of chaos and illegitimacy of the target government that can only be quenched by a volte-face or military intervention. However, to frame the atrocity in favor of insurgency/the opposition, the (majority) media must be under control, to fan the flames of justice or revenge and to manage a cover-up. This requires co-ordination of social media campaigns, local news networks and amiable/compliant international media, NGOs, commentators, foreign governments and academia to form a propaganda multiplier, which takes years of investment and development by the imperial government. We will discuss the Ukraine imperial mediasphere later.

But let’s first look at some historical events with similarities to what happened in February 2014 in Kyiv: paramilitaries, terrorists or mercenaries randomly firing on crowds to provoke insurgency.

Syria 1982

Hama uprising, February 3, 1982: After years of terror campaigns and brutal reprisals, Muslim Brotherhood snipers ambushed a government soldier’s patrol and their commander, Abu Bakr (Umar Jawwad), declared Jihad against the Ba’athist Assad regime. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) estimated a few months later that 2,000 died over the three-week battle, including soldiers, jihadists and civilians.^[29] Many subsequently suggest much higher numbers, particularly of civilians. The jihadists, desiring an Islamic state, were well-funded and well-armed, with U.S. weapons, communications equipment and the backing of U.S.-allied Jordanians, Christian Lebanese and Iraqis.^[30]

Although not firing on a protest and not *obviously* a false flag, it was a foreign-funded insurrection, and the foreign media blamed the Syrian government almost exclusively for the bloodshed, ignoring the opposition violence (a common theme). As the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA; if you haven’t heard of them, the largest of intelligence agencies, it is because they are better at their job than the others) report stated in 1982: “Even if the plan were not successful the Hama rebellion could become a symbolic rallying point for future anti-government activities.” As in many other interventions before and since, extremists are used as a “battering ram” or “chaos agents” to foment regime change, and the association is either denied or whitewashed by the control of the media.

Romania 1989

Possibly along with the use of snipers in Moscow in 1993, Romania—December 1989—appears to be a rare example of a co-U.S. and Soviet black operation involving “unknown snipers” to get rid of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s regime blocking European reunification. Remember this was when team USA was negotiating “fixing” the Soviet economy and both sides viewed Ceaușescu as the main barrier to progress. It is telling that this was the most violent of the initial post-communist transitions.

More than 1,000 people died around late December 1989, most by random shootings including those by snipers, across the country, the vast majority *after* the Ceaușescus were arrested on December 22, 1989. The murderous chaos distracted from the coup itself and led to a desperate desire for stability and authority and quick international validation of and, ironically, sympathy for Ion Iliescu’s new National Salvation Front government.

The snipers were called “unknown terrorists” for years but the repeated recent prosecutions against the *Consiliul Frontului Salvării Naționale* (Council of the National Salvation Front, CFSN) regime that took power after the Romanian coup of 1989 indicate the local coup plotters had substantial support from Moscow, Budapest and Washington. Ion Iliescu (who became president), Gelu Voican Voiculescu, Iosif Rus and Emil (Cico) Dumitrescu have been repeatedly indicted for crimes against humanity for provoking the “psychosis” that led to the killings—a strangely evasive and medieval way to describe intentional massacre.^[31]

A more accurate charge would be complicity (along with the U.S., Hungary and Soviets) in being psychos that ordered mass random assassinations, distributed weapons to anyone with a trigger finger and pumped the country full of fear-inducing propaganda in order to *provoke* more psychosis, i.e., false-flag state terrorism.

During the brief mock trial that preceded the Christmas Day 1989 executions of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu—which were simply accepted as an inevitable and natural course of events in the global media—there are interesting statements by an unidentified military “judge” and the “defendants” themselves about the identity of the “terrorists” still causing chaos around the country:^[32]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. President, I would like to know something: The accused should tell us who the mercenaries are. Who pays them? And who brought them into the country?

PROSECUTOR: Yes. Accused, answer.

CEAUSESCU: I will not say anything more. I will only speak at the Grand National Assembly.

And, later:

CEAUSESCU: You as officers should know that the government cannot give the order to shoot. But those who shot at the young people were the security men, the terrorists.

ELENA CEAUSESCU: The terrorists are from Securitate.

PROSECUTOR: The terrorists are from Securitate?

ELENA CEAUSESCU: Yes.

The Ceaușescus are obviously not incriminating themselves in stating the terrorists are members of Securitate. Rather, coup plotters included members of the government, army and Securitate.

The new regime was promoted before and after the coup in Western media—particularly, of course, by *Radio Free Europe*—and CIA reports from 1982 and 1985 make it clear that Ion Iliescu was their chosen replacement for Ceaușescu years before the coup.^[33]

And so—anointed by the interventionist god of free-market consumerism—he immediately took power on December 22nd, with his first statement that same day clearly stating the country's new position as completely supportive of U.S./NATO and Soviet agendas, i.e., pro-free-market reform and European reunification.^[34] Roadblock cleared. Although, just to keep the path completely clear, the terrorist destruction continued for another week.

On December 24, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock met with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Aboimov. They agreed they were both in favor of supporting the “new leadership of Romania”—only two days old and (one would imagine) ill-defined to them unless they are privy to magical foresight or privileged information.

Matlock's main priority in the conversation was to know if the Soviets would intervene to *support* the new regime, in humanitarian or military aid, to which Aboimov replies in the affirmative. Matlock then asks if they would consider intervening militarily, to which he replied in the negative, stating that the Soviets gladly henceforth hand over Brezhnev's policy of eastern sphere intervention to the Americans.^[35]

This last point is focused on almost as a distraction in the literature as if it were a profound wisecrack, referring both to the shift to a unipolar world and a barb at the U.S. invasion of Panama. But more to the point is that it is clear from the transcript that they are completely on the same page regarding getting rid of Ceaușescu and bringing in the coup plotters, which means they must at least know who these people are, what they are planning and that they unreservedly approve of them. Matlock is likely focused on the intervention policy as it is a contingency of the strategy of insurgency tension to provoke international intervention. As it turns out, this was not required, perhaps as the horrendous chaos subdued any dissent or counterrevolution.

Susanne Brandstaetter's excellent 2003 documentary, [Checkmate: Strategy of a Revolution](#), exposes Western intelligence and U.S. State Department involvement in Romania 1989, with direct interviews with protesters, CIA agents, Romanian intelligence, CIA and French DGSE officers, as well as a revealing interview with Miklós Németh, Hungarian prime minister at the time. No wonder many Romanians have always suspected large foreign complicity.^[36]

In it, Dominique Fonvielle says that paramilitaries were trained in Hungary and Germany, and were smuggled into the country in small groups to be ready for provocation of protests and “paramilitary actions” (presumably including sniper attacks).^[37] There were also reports of Russian “tourists” entering in larger numbers in the days before the protests.^[38]

Also in the film, Németh—somewhat coy and sheepish, yet also clearly enjoying the

reminiscing and salacious topic—confirms there were paramilitary training camps with U.S. personnel in Austria, Germany and Hungary. More precisely, the ex-head of domestic *Securitate*, Gheorghe Ratiu states that they were U.S.-led camps providing training in provocateurism and guerrilla operations in Traiskirchen, Austria; Zirndorf, Germany [presumably the [Pinder Barracks](#)]; and Bicske and Budapest, Hungary. Most likely there were others.

Ratiu also claims in *Checkmate* that, from early in the protests in Bucharest, a faction of the army simply started handing out weapons to the general public, leading to many fear-induced shootings and killings between civilians, the army and *Securitate*. As with snipers, the purpose was to maintain fear and insecurity until the new authority of Ion Iliescu's new US- and NATO-approved National Salvation Front government was in place. Pushing chaos on the public creates a pushback for authority. Although this chaos is often blamed on a "power vacuum," this is a myth as Iliescu picked up the reins immediately after Ceaușescu was deposed, according to his co-conspirator and army chief (who, conveniently for his Hungarian handlers, spoke Hungarian), General Victor Stanculescu.

This is all pretty convincing. But if, like me, you prefer straight-talking witnesses and whistleblowers over mealy-mouthed diplomats and spooks—especially the brutal and perhaps not very bright militarist ones that do not even see what is wrong with violent imperialist intervention—we can look to Major Craisor-Constantin Ionita's 2001 thesis submitted for a master's degree in Military Studies at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, Virginia.^[39]

Titled "The Influence of International Law Upon Military Operation on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) During Romanian Revolution, December 1989," it is an unexpected description of the revolution as a foreign-sparked coup by NATO, Hungary and (perhaps under a sense of naïve obligation to the U.S. as the new dictators of its mafia-neo-liberal future) Russia. Notably, he states that it was GRU Military Intelligence, *not* the KGB, that was involved in the Russian arm, which aligns with diplomatic cables of the time indicating that the KGB had (or would only give) terrible intelligence for Gorbachev during the "coup-volution."^[40]

Ionita, now a researcher at the National Defence University of Romania, contends that:

- Large numbers of "tourists" came into Timisoara from Hungary and Yugoslavia just before the beginning of the revolution. They were former refugees who had received training for "diversionary operations."
- Gorbachev described his role in the Romanian Revolution and in the execution of the Ceaușescus in the media—particularly in the January-February 1990 issue of *Europemagazine* (Bruxelles).
- "After the Gorbachev-Bush meeting at Malta (the beginning of December 1989), professional people from the GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence), were prepared to start a revolution in Romania's principal cities. Their role was only as a spark to start the revolutionary fire, already existent in cities. The strategic objective was to overthrow [Ceaușescu]. The operational objectives were the Communist Party buildings in Romania's principal cities." "Only as a spark" is an interesting and ambiguous qualifier that I do not believe would stand up in any court of law.
- International media played a key role, especially American *Freedom Europe* and *Voice of America*, and the British BBC with "a vigilant campaign against [Ceaușescu], carefully observing psychological and moral influence of

Romanians living in cities.” Amplified by Hungarian media, they “tried to create a hostile mood against the communist regime, to encourage dissidents and to incite a revolt within cities.”

- The CIA set up the “Trust Organization” in early December to encourage and support dissident movements in Eastern Europe, and destabilize the communist regimes in these countries, including Romania.
- Meanwhile, NATO countries increased their embargo against those countries that did not implement democratic reform.
- “At the same time of [Ceașescu]’s attempted escape, three ‘dissident persons,’ selected by Moscow to replace him, were helped by ‘professionals’ to occupy T.V. and Radio central stations”—Ion Iliescu, a Gorbachev friend and future President, Nicolae Militaru, a GRU agent and future Minister of National Defense, and Petre Roman, future Prime Minister.
- The terrorists’ plan was to sow confusion and get the military fighting the Securitate necessitating Warsaw Pact intervention. They also successfully disabled the air defense system.
- Finally:

At the beginning of [the] revolution it was thought that foreign agents and spy agencies, who wanted to destroy the communist ideals, started and supported the people revolt in Timisoara. That assessment led to the right of the military personnel to use deadly force in self-defense, their unit’s defense and defense of buildings under protection against any hostile act. In the midst of crowd there were some 300-400 revolutionary professionals trained by foreign countries (USSR, Hungary, NATO countries) to increase the popular revolt. If the civilians used rocks, “Molotov cocktail” (incendiary bottles), chains, and metallic balls to seize administrative and political buildings, these professionals handled white and fire armament.^[41] Due to their actions, soldiers were killed and soldiers opened fire against civilians.

On the contrary, CIA-friendly commentators still suggest it was fiercely loyal Securitate groups—particularly the *Unitatea Specială de Luptă Antiteroristă* (USLA) anti-terror squad—perhaps with the help of (always convenient) “Arab Terrorists,” who terrorized Bucharest for days, including attacks on embassies.^[42] The main evidence supporting this is from UK, U.S. and Canadian embassy cables during the period and some declassified CIA reports that identify the terrorists as loyalists aiming for a Ceașescu counterrevolution, despite his being deposed politically on December 22 and mortally on December 25. How this also squares with the strictly “need to know” basis of black operations, as well as the clear benefit of attacking prominent westerners in provoking and validating a crisis, is unclear.

Lastly, one wonders if the Hungarian-Bolivian terrorist, jackal, murderer, intelligence agent and ex-BBC journalist Eduardo Rózsa-Flores was involved in Romania 1989 as he was involved in false flags and [murders](#), fighting for Croatia in the Yugoslavian civil war only a couple of years later. According to leaked Hungarian secret service files, the KGB and Hungarian secret service trained Rózsa-Flores was doing provocateurist work in Budapest in September 1989, and was planning a Romanian trip with anti-communist activist and director Roland Antoniewicz, who claims he was [unaware of Rózsa-Flores’s undercover role](#).^[43]

Venezuela 2002

Caracas April 11, 2002. Nineteen killed and scores injured, with a key part played by snipers (and some police loyal to Caracas mayor and U.S. puppet Alfredo Peña) firing at pro-government *and* opposition protesters as well as, at some points, police. This was a plan in the failed coup of military leaders, supported by the U.S., Venezuelan elite and anti-Chávez media [see Angel Palacio's 2004 documentary [Llaguno Bridge: Keys to a Massacre](#) for more].^[44]

That the violence was planned is apparently evidenced by the practice run recording for CNN's Otto Neustaldt, where the generals denounced the violence that was yet to occur. Later that month, Venezuelan Congressman Roger Rondon accused Ambassador Charles Shapiro and two U.S. military attachés of involvement and stated that two foreign gunmen, one American and the other Salvadorean, were detained by security police but were "given some kind of safe conduct" and disappeared.^[45]

Many other suspects were released during the short reign of the de facto government, including seven suspected snipers arrested in the Hotel Ausonia - and more than 60 pro-Chávez supporters were killed in the protests for his release, which received very little outcry in the mainstream and foreign press.

Thailand 2010

April 10, 2010: "Red shirt"/United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship protesters, supporters of Dubai-based, U.S.-backed billionaire ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, convened at Bangkok's "Democracy Monument." Mysterious gunmen embedded with the protesters used sniper fire and grenades to create chaos and [kill six soldiers and a colonel](#). Thai troops returned fire: 25 died and 840 were injured.

CNN initially did not report that protesters were armed, then conceded two months later that there were "men in black firing automatic weapons on April 10."^[46] The international spokesman for the redshirts admitted in a *Reuters* interview about the recent "vibrant"(!) protests, that the men armed with AK47s and M16s in black were "a secret unit within the army that disagrees with what's going on."^[47]

And he continues, apparently without irony, "Without them, the black-clad men, there would have been a whole lot more deaths and injuries." Although these violent and soft "change agents" appear local, the insurgent opposition movement is U.S.-backed as Thailand is too close to China for Washington's liking. It will take a leak to discover exactly how but there are countless examples from which to extrapolate.

Syria 2011

March 17-18, 2011: The violence in Syria started in a small town near the Jordanian border, Daraa, with a series of demonstrations and reports of snipers killing both demonstrators and security forces. The vast majority of Western media (*CNN*, *NYT*, *Al Jazeera*, *AP*, etc.) ignored the police/security force deaths and reported most all deaths as civilian. In fact, as reported by [Israeli](#), [Lebanese](#) and [Indian](#) news sites, most of the initial deaths were police, and multiple government buildings and the SyriaTel phone company building were also torched.

This bias set the tone for the rest of the reporting on Syria that followed, [continuing to deny that there was an Islamist armed insurrection](#), let alone that they were supporting it with the aim of weakening Assad ^[48] and instead blaming provocateurism on “secret police” trying to foment a reaction to allow a larger crackdown. Similar events followed over the next month, with snipers firing on crowds “in the coastal cities of Baniyas, Jabla and Lattakia, in the central industrial city of Homs and in towns close to Damascus, Harasta, Daraya and Duma.” The effect described by one witness was that “[Anger is rising, the street is boiling.](#)”

An *Al Jazeera* correspondent reported at one incident in Douma in April 2011 that “it was an incredibly chaotic scene, and it seems as though pretty much everyone down here in the southern part of the country is now carrying weapons. It is unclear who was firing at whom, that’s part of the confusion.^[49] Yet no media were acknowledging that there was an armed insurrection occurring, who they were, *where the weapons came from* or where their bullets were going.

Was it foreign-backed armed terrorists or “government snipers” killing soldiers and civilians? Or both? The fact that the DIA stated in a [2012 Department of Defense Information Report](#) that their intent was to destabilize Syria and install an Islamic state in eastern Syria—and hence why they continue to fund, arm and train Islamist extremists to this day—suggests the snipers were most likely a U.S. strategy of regime change, escalating the ongoing conflict that has so far caused half a million deaths, millions injured and more than six million refugees.

Yemen 2011

March 18, 2011 (the same day as the violence in Daraa, Syria), 53 protesters were killed in Sanaa, Yemen, and hundreds injured, by rooftop snipers.^[50] Did President Saleh al-Ahmar think his U.S.-Saudi backing would allow him to get away with such an insane “crackdown” on protests? Or were these insurrectionist snipers? Why such a complete non-reaction from the U.S. and West, when the same month they declared war on Libya, to “protect [Libyan] civilians and meet their basic needs”? Such is the difference between a client and non-client state. It is always telling where the media projects its amnesic newsfeed gaze.

One “Western official” quoted in the UK’s *Telegraph* in 2011 said, “It is not in the West’s best interests to see this degenerate into a Libya-style conflict that would play into the hands of Islamist militants, which is why it would be better for Saleh to go sooner rather than later.” Well, Saleh indeed soon went, but the degeneration occurred regardless, to cause a war and a humanitarian disaster as the Houthis rose to power.

Nicaragua 2018

Nicaragua has been a focus of U.S. ire ever since the Sandinistas came to power in 1979. The U.S. tried to push things again in 2018, in an extremely violent but failed coup attempt, also backed by the Catholic Church and local elite trade groups, focusing on youth groups, social media and the “propaganda multiplier” and some provocative protesting, sabotage and terror involving paid delinquents. There are also accusations of police violence and Sandinista thuggery, though it seems the deaths were near equal in terms of pro- and anti-government members of the public and at least 20 police were killed in 2018.

Opposition groups, for example, used criminal goons to man the hundreds of *tranque*

checkpoints that besieged towns, [abducted, tortured and murdered Sandinistas, set large fires, attempted to blow up stolen fuel tank trucks](#) in towns and—like the CIA-organized trucker strike in Chile in the early 1970s that “made the economy scream”^[51]—cut off trade for months.

Riding a wave of soft-power foreign-funded NGOs and anti-government media, the violence escalated quickly, starting with student protests on April 18th sparked—somewhat obscurely—by changes in social security reforms: “a 1% rise in worker contributions, the 3.5% rise in employer contributions (over time) and a 5% cut in the benefit which was also a trade-off for expanded medical coverage.”^[52]

Snipers were certainly involved. As Ileana Lacayo told Amnesty International: “Most of the deaths that occurred in the country...are carefully aimed shots, a single shot fired with precision at the head or jugular or chest, they are shots that aim to kill and they are fired by professionals.”^[53]

The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) reported in May that 36 people died of gunshot wounds between April 19 and May 2, and 22 of these were by head, neck or chest shots. Opposition media reported that, between April 19 and July 3, there were 309 deaths, and 127 (41.5%) of these deaths were due to direct, single shots to the head, neck and chest.^[54] And, as Barbara Moore states in the *LA Progressive*:

Specific, eye-witness accounts of sniper use by the opposition have been shared with me and according to the same source even the government has withheld some information for the sake of relations with neighboring countries [namely, El Salvador]. That transnational gang members were involved in the attempt to destabilize the country was confirmed in June, but the extent to which that was the case is not yet known.^[55]

There are other reports of snipers targeting police. For example, on July 8, two police officers—Faber López Vivas and Hilario de Jesús Ortiz Zavala—were killed and two others wounded by sniper fire in Jinotepe.^[56] A U.S. resident reported to Barbara Larcom of the *Alliance for Global Justice*:

Our neighbor here...,whom we have known for years, is a member of the antiriot police. He told us that the day the roadblocks/barricades were removed ... he was one of [a number] who were the first to step outside the police station. There was only one way out. When they stepped out, there was a sniper on top of [named] building who was waiting for them and began picking them off, one by one. He was the only one who wasn't shot and had to try and drag his friends out of harm's way. One was killed, and the others luckily survived but with major injuries.... After the fighting they were able to capture several people. He said many of them were foreign gang members, mostly from El Salvador.....He also said that early on in the protesting they would be receiving fire from protesters and meanwhile, they could see someone firing on the protesters from behind.^[57]

The vast majority of the violence by local and mainstream international media was blamed on Nicaraguan police, claiming they fired indiscriminately into crowds and that they armed pro-government mobs. Amnesty International claimed in its May 2018 report that the government had “a strategy of indiscriminate repression with intent to kill not only in order to completely smash the protests, but also to punish those who participated in them.”^[58] Yet there is ample evidence of extreme violence and murder committed by the protesters that was ignored by even “progressive” international media.



Opposition protester at tranque in Masaya. [Source: thegrayzone.com]

A key event, very similar to the events in Venezuela in 2002, was the pro- and anti-government marches with separate routes in Managua on Mother’s Day, May 30. Before the marches, as in Caracas 2002, opposition leaders repeatedly stated in the media that violence and deaths would occur. Only after the marches, when a group of opposition protesters ventured off route toward the Sandinista post-march concert, did violence occur. Setting up a roadblock near Dennis Martínez National Stadium, they encountered police and gunfire began. Eight died, including two Sandinistas.

[One report](#) on this day by a collaboration among the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), and the Organization of American States (OAS) involved a model with forensic and acoustic analysis of social media by the spooky *New York Times*-friendly [SITU Research](#) consultancy—whose involvement in official narrative Maidan massacre research we will discuss in Part III.

In tandem with many NGOs and “independent experts”—if you are bored, try a game where you search each expert in this report and see if you can find one *without* a direct link to USGOs or NGOs—SITU concluded, despite the lack of evidence identifying the shooters,^[59] that *police* snipers were responsible for the death of three of the protesters during the clashes and that this was “part of the systematic repression of civilian demonstrations.”^[60]

This analysis omitted any media incriminating opposition protesters, despite the mass of

such media and other evidence of protester violence. It also ignores shooting at Sandinistas and the well-reported presence of opposition protester weapons and guns as well as the possibility of a false flag as in Caracas 2002.

One has to dig into the middle of the *full* (500-page) GIEI report to read, “Lastly, these scenes show the presence of four armed individuals among the protesters, but the National Police and the pro-government media did not report any attacks perpetrated by protesters during these initial moments.”^[61] It is worth noting that the report, which discusses violence from April 18 to May 30, 2018, mentions multiple instances of witnesses reporting unidentified snipers.

Other “Unknown Snipers”

Other examples include Lithuania 1992; Russia 1993, when Yeltsin’s counterrevolution made use of snipers; Iran 2009; Kyrgyzstan June 2010; Tunisia January 2011; and Egypt and Libya, also in 2011.^[62]

During the siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996, there were multiple false-flag attacks, including cease-fire shelling, bombing and sniper fire. Recently declassified Canadian UN cables, for example, state that Bosniak and foreign Mujahadeen fighters (flown in by the United States) were “not above firing on their own people or UN areas.”^[63] In a very different context, although only one person died, the still “unsolved” case of the [murder of British police officer Yvonne Fletcher](#) outside the Libyan Embassy in London in 1984 also appears to fit the prototype of an intelligence-linked false-flag murder during protests by an “unknown sniper.” Around the same time, the Operation Gladio-linked [Brabant random murders in supermarkets](#) in Belgium in 1982-1985 appear to be state false-flag terrorism that killed dozens.

State Terror, Imperialism and Control

All events personal and political can be understood as a dynamic of power. The problem is—as we have discussed and as the above examples of state terror make clear—power hides itself masterfully, not least as it protects itself in counterinsurgency and projects itself in insurgency.

What it hides most are its most effective tools: covert action including propaganda, terrorism, assassination and sexual blackmail; and its sole purpose, the amoral pursuit of elite greed. In the face of such barbaric political reality, one has to consider case-by-case whether a terrorist attack, mass killing or shooting—whether the weapon is a bomb, gun, knife, poison, vehicle or saboteur’s wrench—serves a directly or indirectly useful political purpose, not least for imperial propaganda. As ex-Securitate domestic chief Gheorghe Ratiu said, if there is a political desire for regime change, there must be sufficient blood and outrage for the public to want it.^[64] If there is not, it must be created, in reality or in the minds of the public via the media. Blood that is the sacrificial fuel for Martin Luther’s “wheels of history”; blood that shocks, paralyzes and traumatizes, creating the martyrs of progress, progress toward the manipulative, threatening but [comforting arms](#) of elite power.

Reviewing the above cases, some patterns emerge. Lots of effort, time and money is needed both to nurture the network of dissidents and opposition prior to a push for regime change and to ensure the media coverage is controlled during and after the event. The

imperial strategy for regime-change insurgency (“revolution,” if you believe them) is essentially the same as the strategy for counterinsurgency, i.e., it centers on soft-power networks, political training, propaganda and control of media, galvanized by a strategy of tension precipitated by provocateurs and paramilitary guerrilla tactics such as random snipers. We can call them the strategies of insurgent and counterinsurgent tension.

Inside the client-states of the empire, atrocity—including torture, assassination and random terror and fear—is used for counterinsurgency and control. This has been well documented in the U.S.-installed, trained and controlled Latin American and Asian military regimes as well as in the client-states of Europe since the Second World War. Italy’s “years of lead” of the 1970s and 1980s have been well-documented as a part of U.S.-controlled counterinsurgency via NATO-CIA’s Operation Gladio, also involving elements of other elite supranational networks such as Le Cercle and local elite networks like the Masonic Propaganda 2 group.^[65]

Hundreds were killed in bombings and shootings, the socialist left was neutralized, marginalized, co-opted and vilified and Aldo Moro was assassinated as he tried to bridge social democrat and democratic socialist parties, all to push the politics to the center right, within the supranational neo-liberal empire under U.S. control through the CIA and NATO (with some history of MI6 and DIA involvement). Anyone who suggests there was any national sovereignty motivating these machinations is delusional or deceptive.

Similar Gladio/“stay-behind” operations are known in all NATO countries, for example, the “strategy of tension” random Brabant killings of Belgium in 1982-1985 and the horrific Baron Benoit de Bonvoisin, Michel Nihoul, Paul Vanden Boeynants and Marc Dutroux pedophile-murder-blackmail network both appear linked to the Belgian Gladio network.

Although the latter involved the largest national scandal in modern Belgian history, culminating in the White March of more than 300,000 grieving and outraged citizens in Brussels on October 20, 1996, the elite criminals completely squashed any investigation, via typical counterinsurgency measures of media control, co-optation, smearing, obstruction, distraction, threats and [murder](#). On this scale, one can only sense that the price is the Belgian soul.

If Gladio is new to you, I recommend starting with Arthur Rowse’s 1994 article in *CovertAction Quarterly* (No. 49) entitled “Gladio: The Secret U.S. War to Subvert Italian Democracy”; Philip Willan’s [Puppetmasters: The Political Use of Terrorism in Italy](#) (1991/2002); Allan Francovich’s stunning 1992 [three-part BBC documentary](#); and [Daniele Ganser’s pivotal 1995 book](#) *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe*; and exploring other elements on the [Wikispooks website](#) and elsewhere (with a caution for limited hangouts).

More recently, continuous with the near ubiquitous links to intelligence seen in “terror attacks,” the former commissioner of Spanish Police, José Manuel Villarejo, stated in the country’s high court in 2021 that the vehicle attacks of Barcelona in summer 2017, which killed 13 and wounded 130, were intended by the National Intelligence Center (CNI), to give Catalonia “a little scare” before their independence referendum.^[66]

We will not explore the common debate of state terror as to whether the elite’s political-military-intelligence apparatus made it happen or let it happen on purpose, or as blowback

(unintended consequences) or errors of surveillance in anti-terror infiltration operations (i.e., a “sting-gone-wrong”). In this case and in many others, it seems the terror is intentional and has many political benefits, not least a fearful and divided populace, leaving us mere pawns on the devil’s chessboard.

The ultimate dark lessons of the above examples are that state terrorism is a real and powerful tool of imperial insurgency and counterinsurgency; it has been used in many countries (including inside the U.S.) for many years; and, although the empire has supranational elements, even wealthy client-states of the U.S. have ultimately been at the behest of their Atlantic master, largely via networks of the military and intelligence. Regime change and strategy of tension counterinsurgency operations involve countless examples of well-documented state terrorism.

They require atrocity, the ultimate psyop of control; provocation to desperate pleas for external or internal justice and protection from or by authority depending on who the *perceived* threat is.

Whether or not an atrocity is a false-flag provocateurist covert action, the cause and details, as far as much of the public is concerned, are effectively irrelevant next to the control of the media by those in power, who prescribe or sanction the acceptable analysis.

As this is amplified in the emotive moments after an atrocity, and forges in the public’s psychic framework, it then enters legacy and is lost to imperialist amnesia, even where vague lingering doubt remains. Any subsequent critical analysis is then fighting against fixed or disappearing neural (and digital) networks and suffocating in the mounting layers of silt from the dirty, rich and ceaseless river of propaganda.

[See Part II here.](#)

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Jim Cole is an editor and researcher. He can be reached at jimocole@protonmail.com.

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Featured image: Anti-government protesters clash with police in Kyiv on February 20, 2014. [Source: nbcnews.com]

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