Out of the ignorance and complacency engendered by the avoidance of reality comes hatred and war.

The opening of a Jewish prayer from the Sabbath service: “Disturb us, Adonai, ruffle us from our complacency; make us dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the peace of ignorance, the quietude which arises from a shunning of the horror, the defeat, the bitterness and the poverty, physical and spiritual, of humans. Shock us, Adonai, deny to us the false Shabbat which gives us the delusions of satisfaction amid a world of war and hatred.”

"To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole." -- Robert H. Jackson, Chief U.S. Prosecutor, Nuremberg Military Tribunal

“It has been a mainstay of this book that successful antiwar movements are those that have been able to make direct links with those in the flight path of US aggression and to bring their struggles and concerns directly into the US political arena. Indeed, direct comprehension of their urgent struggles has often been a radicalizing factor in antiwar campaigns.”” Richard Seymour, American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-Imperialism (2012). p. 193.

J. William Fulbright during the height of the Cold War attempted to extend his Exchange Program to the Soviet Union, but his plan to acquire a part of WWII Lend Lease money the Russians were repaying was scuttled by US Sovietphobes. See The Price of Empire. Another Arkansas native, Betty Bumpers, wife of then Senator Bumpers, created the women’s organization, Peace Links, to exchange women from the US and Russia and other countries.

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Traces a pattern of US interventions, drawing a parallel with happenings in present-day Venezuela.
"America's Coup Machine: Destroying Democracy since 1953"

William Blum
The Anti-Empire Report #127
Long live the Cold War

In 1933 US President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized the Soviet Union after some 15 years of severed relations following the Bolshevik Revolution. On a day in December of that year, a train was passing through Poland carrying the first American diplomats dispatched to Moscow. Amongst their number was a 29 year-old Foreign Service Officer, later to become famous as a diplomat and scholar, George Kennan. Though he was already deemed a government expert on Russia, the train provided Kennan’s first actual exposure to the Soviet Union. As he listened to his group’s escort, Russian Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov, reminisce about growing up in a village the train was passing close by, and his dreams of becoming a librarian, the Princeton-educated Kennan was astonished: “We suddenly realized, or at least I did, that these people we were dealing with were human beings like ourselves, that they had been born somewhere, that they had their childhood ambitions as we had. It seemed for a brief moment we could break through and embrace these people.”

It hasn’t happened yet.

One would think that the absence in Russia of communism, of socialism, of the basic threat or challenge to the capitalist system, would be sufficient to write finis to the 70-year Cold War mentality. But the United States is virtually as hostile to 21st-century Russia as it was to 20th-century Soviet Union, surrounding Moscow with military bases, missile sites, and NATO members. Why should that be? Ideology is no longer a factor. But power remains one, specifically America’s perpetual lust for world hegemony. Russia is the only nation that (a) is a military powerhouse, and (b) doesn’t believe that the United States has a god-given-American-exceptionalism right to rule the world, and says so. By these criteria, China might qualify as a poor second. But there are no others.

Washington pretends that it doesn’t understand why Moscow should be upset by Western military encroachment, but it has no such problem when roles are reversed. Secretary of State John Kerry recently stated that Russian troops poised near eastern Ukraine are “creating a climate of fear and intimidation in Ukraine” and raising questions about Russia’s next moves and its commitment to diplomacy.
NATO – ever in need of finding a raison d’être – has now issued a declaration of [cold] war, which reads in part:

“NATO foreign ministers on Tuesday [April 1, 2014] reaffirmed their commitment to enhance the Alliance’s collective defence, agreed to further support Ukraine and to suspend NATO’s practical cooperation with Russia. ‘NATO’s greatest responsibility is to protect and defend our territory and our people. And make no mistake, this is what we will do,’ NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said. … Ministers directed Allied military authorities to develop additional measures to strengthen collective defence and deterrence against any threat of aggression against the Alliance, Mr. Fogh Rasmussen said. ‘We will make sure we have updated military plans, enhanced exercises and appropriate deployments,’ he said. NATO has already reinforced its presence on the eastern border of the Alliance, including surveillance patrols over Poland and Romania and increased numbers of fighter aircraft allocated to the NATO air policing mission in the Baltic States. … NATO Foreign Ministers also agreed to suspend all of NATO’s practical cooperation with Russia.”

Does anyone recall what NATO said in 2003 when the United States bombed and invaded Iraq with “shock and awe”, compared to the Russians now not firing a single known shot at anyone? And neither Russia nor Ukraine is even a member of NATO. Does NATO have a word to say about the right-wing coup in Ukraine, openly supported by the United States, overthrowing the elected government? Did the hypocrisy get any worse during the Cold War? Imagine that NATO had not been created in 1949. Imagine that it has never existed. What reason could one give today for its creation? Other than to provide a multi-national cover for Washington’s interventions.

One of the main differences between now and the Cold War period is that Americans at home are (not yet) persecuted or prosecuted for supporting Russia or things Russian.

But don’t worry, folks, there won’t be a big US-Russian war. For the same reason there wasn’t one during the Cold War. The United States doesn’t pick on any country which can defend itself.
"Seven Decades of Nazi Collaboration: America's Dirty Little Ukraine Secret"

Interview with Russ Bellant, Foreign Policy in Focus, posted March 18, 2014. [Access was forbidden to this article. –Dick]

As Unrest Grows, Is Ukraine Paying the Price of U.S.-Russian Ties Stuck in Cold War Era?

Amy Goodman, Video Report, NationofChange, April 29, 2014: The United States and the European Union have imposed new sanctions on Russia that target individuals and companies linked to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s inner circle. The moves come as the crisis in eastern Ukraine faces continued chaos. On Monday, pro-Russian separatists seized a new town and continued to detain seven European monitors. The mayor of the Ukraine’s second largest city, Kharkiv, was shot in the back and is now in critical condition.

WILL WE LISTEN TO SENATOR FULBRIGHT NOW?

By Dick Bennett

Blum tells about the young diplomat George Kennan in 1933 traveling to Russia in the company of Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Foreign Minister. It was the year 1933, and the US had recently recognized the Soviet Union after fifteen years of severed relations. The train passed near where Litvinov had grown up, and he described his youth there. Blum quotes Kennan: “We suddenly
realized, or at least I did, that these people we were dealing with were human beings like ourselves, that they had been born somewhere, that they had their childhood ambitions as we had. It seemed for a brief moment we could break through and embrace these people.”

The friendly relations, in which the Soviet people were human beings, lasted through WWII, but ended soon afterward during the period of the so-called “Cold War” (which Blum avers never really ended), when the US and the SU (mirror images0 nuclear targeted the major cities of their adversary. The people had become an abstraction. During that dangerous time, in which the tit for tat nuclear arms race threatened the planet, and any suggestion of amity resulted in accusations of disloyalty, Senator J. William Fulbright, author of the Fulbright Exchange Program, suggested the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the Program. “What is important,” he wrote in The Price of Empire “is that we come to think about each other as human beings” (230). One of his most persistent peacemaking ideas is that of “joint ventures” by which adversaries might learn about each other. And his most famous joint venture was that of educational exchanges. For Fulbright, exchanges, “from the standpoint of world peace and order, probably the most important and potentially rewarding of our foreign-policy activities” are educational exchanges (231).

The obstacles inspired by the Cold War were formidable, but Senator Fulbright in the early 1970s began conversations with a representative of the Soviet Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The moment was crucial. Détente seemed hopeful. Among other agreements, the SU had agreed to repay the US $800 million to the US WWII Lend-Lease program. Fulbright proposed to the Ministry representative that part of that money, “maybe a hundred million,” be applied to an exchange of US and SU students and teachers. The SU was receptive to the suggestion because it would allow them to pay in rubles instead of dollars.
But the full weight of Sovietphobic paranoia crushed the idea and détente in general through an amendment by Senator Henry Jackson on Russian Jewish emigration in a trade bill. In Fulbright’s opinion, Jackson, fiercely anti-Soviety, “sabotaged” the amicable proposal (31).

Recalling that history gives credibility to Blum’s belief that the conflict over the Ukraine today continues the Cold War in fundamental prejudices and in practices. Although the Soviet Union is now capitalist, the competition is over military and resources power. And as in the days of the Soviet Union, Russia is surrounded by US military bases. Thus the possibility of expanding educational exchanges to Russia is slim, particularly when the Republicans and now President Obama are urging the reduction of the Fulbright Exchange budget.

**US Plans Military Drills in Eastern Europe**
Gordon writes: "The United States plans to carry out small ground-force exercises in Poland and Estonia in an attempt to reassure NATO's Eastern European members worried about Russia's military operations in and near Ukraine, Western officials said Friday."  
[READ MORE](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/19/world/europe/united-states-plans-military-drills-in-eastern-europe.html)

**PETER HART, BEATING UP ON PUTIN AND US DOUBLE STANDARDS**

**FAIR BLOG**

Mar 05 2014

**Putin's 'Delusions' and Double Standards**

By Peter Hart 35 Comments

An effective propaganda system will either mostly disappear inconvenient facts, or
allow this information to surface if it comes out of the mouth of an enemy leader who is said to be out of touch with reality.

That seems to be thinking when it comes to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "Has Vladimir Putin lost touch with reality?" wondered a Washington Post editorial (3/4/14) after a press conference. The Post kidded that while they "don't have access to his psychologist," one thing was clear: Putin made a "wild assortment of claims" about Russia's military presence in Crimea, and that "the political system he has created has insulated him from the truth."

There's nothing to suggest that Putin was actually telling the truth; he's a politician, after all.

But all of this conjecture about his mental state does a good job of obscuring the fact that some of what he said made perfect sense. In the New York Times story (3/4/14) about the press conference, for instance, readers are told that Putin "delivered a version of the crisis that was fundamentally at odds with the view held by most officials in the United States, Europe and Ukraine."

This passage is definitely at odds with how US leaders talk about the crisis:

Above all, Mr. Putin appeared defiant, evidently frustrated by what he described as false promises by foreign diplomats and double standards that justify American or NATO military operations in the name of protecting human rights or democracy but disregard Russian concerns.

"We are often accused of illegitimacy in our actions, and when I ask the question, 'Do you think everything you do is legitimate?' they say yes," he said, and then went on.

"It's necessary to recall the actions of the United States in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Libya, where they acted either without any sanction from the UN Security Council or distorted the content of these resolutions, as it happened in Libya," he said. "There, as you know, only the right to create a no-fly zone for government aircraft was authorized, and it all ended in the bombing and participation of special forces in ground operations. Our partners, especially the United States, always formulate their geopolitical and state interests, and then drag the rest of the world with them, guided by the well-known phrase ‘If you're not with us, you’re against us.’"

How completely out of touch!
Consider these remarks alongside some of what Secretary of State John Kerry has been saying recently. On *Meet the Press* (3/2/14), he explained, "You just don't invade another country on phony pretext in order to assert your interests."
And then yesterday (3/4/14) in Kiev, he said, "It is not appropriate to invade a country and at the end of a barrel of a gun dictate what you are trying to achieve."
To call these comments at odds with reality would be far too kind. As Robert Parry noted (*ConsortiumNews, 3/4/14*):

> Since World War II—and extending well into the 21st century—the United States has invaded or otherwise intervened in so many countries that it would be challenging to compile a complete list. Just last decade, there were full-scale US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, plus American bombing operations from Pakistan to Yemen to Libya.

Indeed, one of the more revealing parallels might be Ronald Reagan's 1983 **invasion of Grenada**. While the circumstances in Ukraine are certainly unique, there is some overlap; an internal power struggle led to a coup that killed Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and several other leaders. Reagan launched an invasion a week later, which he said was intended to protect the lives of several hundred medical students. As University of San Francisco Stephen Zunes (*AP, 10/27/13*) pointed out, the rationale was bogus:

> "The coup gave us the excuse, and because the people of the island where so shell-shocked and outraged at what had been done, they welcomed in large part the US invasion that they would have probably fought off had it taken place while Bishop was still in power," he said.

Zunes noted the Reagan administration had been trying to undermine Bishop's regime, and said the invasion molded Grenada's political and economic future, turning it from socialism to more capitalist lines.

In Ukraine, a coup following a violent round of demonstrations has led Russia to move forces into Crimea, in part—they claim—to protect ethnic Russians. US political leaders and media elite scoff at this reasoning. But is it any less bogus than Reagan's?
There are plenty of other examples, of course; George H.W. Bush's **invasion of Panama** was based in part on his suggestion that he needed to protect Americans
there. The NATO military actions in Kosovo were intended in large part to support a secessionist uprising.

These—and plenty other—incidents are conveniently forgotten by much of the media, with a few exceptions, like the Washington Post's Eugene Robinson (3/3/14):

Before Iraq there was Afghanistan, there was the Persian Gulf War, there was Panama, there was Grenada. And even as we condemn Moscow for its outrageous aggression, we reserve the right to fire deadly missiles into Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and who knows where else.

But this history must be obscured in order to give US elites the chance to mock Putin. The Washington Post editorial worries that Putin "may actually believe his own propaganda." Perhaps. But there's little doubt that we believe our own.

FILED UNDER: AP, MEDIA CRITICISM, NEW YORK TIMES, RUSSIA, UKRAINE, WAR/MILITARY,WASHINGTON
POST TAGGED WITH: EUGENE ROBINSON, GRENADA, JOHN KERRY, VLADIMIR PUTIN

← A Protest in the Capital and a Media Blackout

Jonah Goldberg Swings at Obama on Nukes—and Hits Reagan →

About Peter Hart

Activism Director and and Co-producer of CounterSpin Peter Hart is the activism director at FAIR. He writes for FAIR's magazine Extra! and is also a co-host and producer of FAIR's syndicated radio show CounterSpin. He is the author of The Oh Really? Factor: Unspinning Fox News Channel’s Bill O'Reilly (Seven Stories Press, 2003). Hart has been interviewed by a number of media outlets, including NBC Nightly News, Fox News Channel's O'Reilly Factor, the Los Angeles Times, Newsday and the Associated Press. He has also appeared on Showtime and in the movie Outfoxed. Follow Peter on Twitter at @peterfhart.

Veterans for Peace Oppose US Troop Deployments near Ukraine
http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2014/04/30-3

"Ukraine: From Crisis to Catastrophe"

By Patrick Cockburn, CounterPunch.org, posted April 22
An argument on "the perils of intervention" based on recent history in Iraq and Afghanistan

"Is the Only Solution to the Ukraine Crisis an Appalling One?"
By Cynthia Hooper, History News Network, posted April 20
The author teaches Soviet and post-Soviet history at College of the Holy Cross.

"What Do You Call It When a Big Country Takes a Chunk of a Smaller One? Greed (And We Should Know)"
By David Lee McMullen, History News Network, posted April 20
The author teaches history at the University of South Florida.

"The Ukraine Imbroglio and the Decline of the American Empire"
By Arno J. Mayer, CounterPunch.org, posted April 18
The author is a professor of history emeritus at Princeton University.

"Whose Advice Should You Trust on Ukraine?"
http://hnn.us/article/155595
By Walter G. Moss, History News Network, posted May 11
The author is a professor of history emeritus at Eastern Michigan University.

"What You Need to Tell People When They Say We Should Use the Military"
http://hnn.us/article/155550
By Lawrence S. Wittner, History News Network, posted May 11
The author is a professor of history emeritus at SUNY Albany.

"Ukraine – The Way Out"
By Anatol Lieven, New York Review of Books, posted May 8
Ukrainian citizens have rallied in the bitter cold at Independence Square in Kiev to demand a better economic future and to protest President Viktor Yanukovych's failure to sign an economic agreement with the EU.

But while the draft of the EU "Association Agreement" is being sold as an economic boon for Ukrainian citizens, in reality it appears to be NATO's Trojan Horse: a massive expansion of NATO's military position in the region. What's more, the Agreement occurs under the cover of nebulous economic promises for a beset population hungering for better wages.

In a country where the average monthly minimum wage stands at about $150 USD, it's not hard to understand why Ukrainians are in the streets. They do not want to be in Russia's orbit, nor do they want to be pawns of NATO.

**But is the plight of Ukrainians being exploited to usher in a new military agreement under the guise of economic reform?**

For NATO, the goal is expansion. The prize is access to a country that shares a 1,426-mile border with Russia. The geopolitical map would be dramatically reshaped by the Agreement, with Ukraine serving as the new front for Western missile defense at the doorstep of Russia. Should the U.S. nuclear deal with Iran fall apart, Ukraine could be employed in larger regional disputes, too.

As an EU deal appears imminent, few people are asking questions about NATO's role in the deal,
which was meant to facilitate jobs and trade. Economic conditions in Ukraine are dire: $15 billion in IMF loans suspended, danger of default and a zero growth forecast.

While NATO is not specifically mentioned in the draft of the "Association Agreement," the proposal, which was posted online (and translated to English here) by the Ukrainian cabinet in August, pledges convergence of foreign and security policy. Read: NATO expansion.

For instance, in the draft of the Agreement, foreign and security policy mandates:

"The Parties shall explore the potential of military and technological cooperation. Ukraine and the European Defence Agency (EDA) will establish close contacts to discuss military capability improvement, including technological issues."

The draft of the Agreement's preamble links Ukraine to "ever closer convergence of positions on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest" including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) -- which underscores the military nature of the agreement.

Since 22 of 28 members of the EU have NATO membership, there is little doubt that Ukraine is being drawn into the broad military arrangement with EU nations.

If the EU Agreement is ratified, Ukraine will inevitably spend a higher percentage of its GDP for military purposes, steering critical resources from social programs and job opportunities. In 2012, Ukraine's military budget already increased 30 percent -- to $2 billion, representing a comparatively low 1.1 percent of GDP. NATO members agree to spend at least 2 percent of GDP on defense.

NATO members are also under pressure to contribute more and more of their GDP to military expenditures. "It is time to move beyond the '2 percent rule,'" says the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, in his farewell remarks in June, 2013, described the sentiment:

"The gap between American and European contributions to the Alliance is widening to an unsustainable level. Something must be done. The trends need to be reversed."

When military spending goes up, domestic spending goes down. The winners are unlikely to be the people of Ukraine, but instead the "people" of Lockheed-Martin, Northrop Grumman, Boeing and other defense interests. The Ukrainians didn't go to Independence Square to rally for NATO. Yet NATO's benefit is clear. Less clear is whether Ukrainians will receive key economic benefits they seek.

To wit, the preamble to the Agreement is hazy on the implementation of visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine, a crucial incentive for struggling workers seeking better jobs. The draft of the Agreement is vague, calling for the visa issue to be introduced "in due course." It also asserts that EU nations could block the movement of self-employed Ukrainians to other job markets.

For Greece, Spain and others, EU membership hasn't turned out to be a shining economic savior.
The return of austerity policies reminds one of Naomi Klein’s warning about the perils of disaster capitalism, in which instability opens the door for exploitation from outside forces.

For the protesters in Kiev, standing tall for democracy and economic opportunity, there’s suddenly a new worry: Disaster Militarism. Ukrainians may be pro-EU, but are the EU and NATO pro-Ukrainian?


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"How NATO Jabs Russia on Ukraine"
By Ray McGovern, Consortium News, posted May 15

Chiefly on the history of NATO expansion in the 1990s, by a former analyst in the Soviet Foreign Policy branch

THREE ESSAYS FROM Z MAGAZINE
Published on Monday, March 3, 2014 by Common Dreams

Heard the One About Obama Denouncing a Breach of International Law?
by Norman Solomon
Breaches of international law are a serious matter... when some country other than the United States is accused. (Photo: Reuters)

International law is suddenly very popular in Washington. President Obama responded to Russian military intervention in the Crimea by accusing Russia of a “breach of international law.” Secretary of State John Kerry followed up by declaring that Russia is “in direct, overt violation of international law.”

**Unfortunately, during the last five years, no world leader has done more to undermine international law than Barack Obama.** He treats it with rhetorical adulation and behavioral contempt, helping to further normalize a might-makes-right approach to global affairs that is the antithesis of international law.

Fifty years ago, another former law professor, Senator Wayne Morse, condemned such arrogance of power. “I don’t know why we think, just because we’re mighty, that we have the right to try to substitute might for right,” Morse said on national TV in 1964. “And that’s the American policy in Southeast Asia—just as unsound when we do it as when Russia does it.”

Today, Uncle Sam continues to preen as the globe’s big sheriff on the side of international law even while functioning as the world’s biggest outlaw.

Rather than striving for an evenhanded assessment of how “international law” has become so much coin of the hypocrisy realm, mainline U.S. media are now transfixed with Kremlin villainy.

On Sunday night, the top of the **New York Times** home page reported: “Russian President Vladimir V. Putin has pursued his strategy with subterfuge, propaganda and brazen military threat, taking aim as much at the United States and Europe as Ukraine itself.” That was news coverage.
Following close behind, a *Times editorial* appeared in print Monday morning, headlined “Russia’s Aggression,” condemning “Putin’s cynical and outrageous exploitation of the Ukrainian crisis to seize control of Crimea.” The liberal newspaper’s editorial board said that the United States and the European Union “must make clear to him that he has stepped far outside the bounds of civilized behavior.”

Such demands are righteous—but lack integrity and credibility when the same standards are not applied to President Obama, whose continuation of the Bush “war on terror” under revamped rhetoric has bypassed international law as well as “civilized behavior.”

In these circumstances, **major U.S. media coverage rarely extends to delving into deviational irony or spotlighting White House hypocrisy**. Yet it’s not as if large media outlets have entirely excluded key information and tough criticism.

For instance, last October the *McClatchy news* service reported that “the Obama administration violated international law with top-secret targeted-killing operations that claimed dozens of civilian lives in Yemen and Pakistan,” according to reports released by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Last week, just before Obama leapt to high dudgeon with condemnation of Putin for his “breach of international law,” the *Los Angeles Times* published an op-ed piece that provided illuminating context for such presidential righteousness.

“Despite the president’s insistence on placing limits on war, and on the defense budget, his brand of warfare has helped lay the basis for a permanent state of global warfare via ‘low footprint’ drone campaigns and special forces operations aimed at an ever-morphing enemy usually identified as some form of Al Qaeda,” wrote Karen J. Greenberg, director of the Center on National Security at Fordham University’s law school.

Greenberg went on to indicate the scope of the U.S. government’s ongoing contempt for international law: “According to Senator Lindsey Graham(R-S.C.), the Obama administration has killed 4,700 individuals in numerous countries, including Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. Obama has successfully embedded the process of drone killings into the executive branch in such a way that any future president will inherit it, along with the White House ‘kill list’ and its ‘terror Tuesday’ meetings. Unbounded global war is now part of what it means to be president.”

But especially in times of crisis, as with the current Ukraine situation, such inconvenient contradictions go out the mass-media window. What remains is an Orwellian baseline, melding conformist ideology and nationalism into red-white-and-blue doublethink.

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Ukraine: Ousting a democratically elected leader backed by West

By Chandra Muzaffar. The Muslim News (March 4, 2014).

[I read this essay in Z Magazine (April 2014) with the title “Ousting a Democratically Elected Leader in Ukraine and Elsewhere.” Muzaffar argues that the US-supported ouster of the democratically elected Pres. Yanukovich is part of a long history from Mossadegh and Allende to Morsi and attempts in Venezuela and Thailand. The purpose of these coups or “regime changes” is hegemony.--Dick]

If Ukraine is on the brink of a catastrophe, it is mainly because the present regime in Kiev and its supporters, backed by certain Western powers had violated a fundamental principle of democratic governance.

They had ousted a democratically elected president through illegal means. President Viktor Yanukovich who had come to power through a free and fair election in 2010 should have been removed through the ballot-box.

His opponents not only betrayed a democratic principle. They subverted a ‘Peace Deal’ signed between them and Yanukovich on 21 February 2014 in which the latter had agreed to form a national unity government within 10 days that would include opposition representatives; reinstate the 2004 Constitution; relinquish control over Ukraine’s security services; and hold presidential and parliamentary elections by December 2014. According to the Deal, endorsed by Germany, France and Poland, Yanukovich would remain president until the elections.
His co-signatories had no intention of honouring the agreement. Without following procedures, parliament, with the backing of the military, voted immediately to remove Yanukovich and impeach him. The Parliamentary Speaker was elected interim President and after a few days a new regime was installed. One of the first acts of parliament was to proclaim that Ukrainian is the sole official language of the country, thus downgrading the Russian language, the mother-tongue of one-fifth of the population. Anti-Russian rhetoric which had become more strident than ever in the course of the protest against the Yanukovich government has reached a crescendo in the wake of the overthrow of the government.

The protest gives us an idea of some of the underlying issues that have brought Ukraine to the precipice. There was undoubtedly a great deal of anger in the Western part of the country, including Kiev, over the decision of the Russian-backed Yanukovich to reject closer economic ties with the European Union (EU) in favour of financial assistance from Moscow. It explains to some extent the massive demonstrations of the last few months. Police brutality, corruption within government circles, and cronyism associated with Yanukovich had further incensed the people.

But these legitimate concerns tell only one side of the story. The protest movement had also brought to the fore neo-Nazis and fascists sworn to violence. Armed and organised groups such as the Svoboda and the Right Sector provide muscle power to the protest. They are known to have targeted Jewish synagogues and Eastern Orthodox Christian Churches. It is the militias associated with these groups that are in control of street politics in Kiev.

Elites in Germany, France, Britain, the United States and within the NATO establishment as a whole are very much aware of the role of neo-Nazi and fascist elements in the protest and in the current Kiev regime. Indeed, certain American and European leaders had instigated the demonstrators and were directly involved in the machinations to bring down the Yanukovich government. The US Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Victoria Nuland, had in her infamous telephone conversation with the US Ambassador to Ukraine admitted that her country had spent 5 billion US dollars promoting anti-Russian groups in Ukraine. For the US and the EU, control over Ukraine serves at least two goals. It expands their military reach through NATO right up to the doorstep of Russia, challenging the latter’s time-honoured relationship with its strategic neighbour. It brings Ukraine within the EU’s economic sphere. Even as it is, almost half of Ukraine’s 35 billion dollar debt is owed to Western banks which
would want the country to adopt austerity measures that would remunerate the banks. It is largely because of these geopolitical and geo-economic challenges that Russian President, Vladimir Putin, is flexing his military muscles in Crimea, in the eastern Ukraine region, which not only has a preponderantly Russian-speaking population but is also home to Russia’s Black Sea fleet. Besides, Ukraine is the cradle of Russian civilisation. This is why Putin will go all out to protect Russian interests in Ukraine, but at the same time, there is every reason to believe that he will avoid a military confrontation and try to work out a political solution based upon the Peace Deal.

The catastrophe in Ukraine reveals five dimensions in the politics of the ouster of democratically elected governments. One, the determined drive to overthrow the government by dissidents and opponents which is often uncompromising. Two, the exploitation of genuine people related issues and grievances. Three, the mobilisation of a significant segment of the populace behind these mass concerns. Four, the resort to violence through militant groups often with a pronounced right-wing orientation. Five, the forging of strong linkages between domestic anti-government forces and Western governments and other Western actors, including banks and NGOs, whose collective aim is to perpetuate Western control and dominance or Western hegemony.

Some of these dimensions are also present in Venezuela where there is another concerted attempt to oust a democratically elected government. Some genuine economic grievances related to the rising cost of living and unemployment are being manipulated and distorted to give the erroneous impression that the Maduro government does not care for the people. President Maduro, it is alleged, is suppressing dissent with brutal force. The truth is that a lot of the violence is emanating from groups linked to disgruntled elites who are opposed to the egalitarian policies pursued by Nicolas Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chavez. They are disseminating fake pictures through social media as part of their false propaganda about the Venezuelan government’s violence against the people — pictures which have now been exposed for what they are by media analysts.

Support for this propaganda and for the street protests in Venezuela comes from US foundations such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). It has been estimated that in 2012 alone, the NED gave more than 1.3 million dollars to organisations and projects in Venezuela ostensibly to promote “human rights,” “democratic ideas” and “accountability.” The majority of Venezuelans have no doubt at all that this funding is to undermine a
government which is not only determined to defend the nation’s independence in the face of Washington’s dominance but is also pioneering a movement to strengthen regional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean as a bulwark against the US’s hegemonic agenda. It is because other countries in the region such as Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Uruguay, and Paraguay know what the US elite is trying to do in Venezuela that they have described “the recent violent acts” in the country “as attempts to destabilise the democratic order.”

A third country where a democratically elected leader is under tremendous pressure from street demonstrators at this juncture is Thailand. Though some of the issues articulated by the demonstrators are legitimate, the fact remains that they do not represent majority sentiment which is still in favour of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and her exiled brother, former Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. As in Ukraine and Venezuela, violence — albeit on a much lower scale — has seeped into the struggle for power between the incumbent and the protesters. However, foreign involvement is not that obvious to most of us. Both Yingluck and the protest movement are regarded as pro-Western. Nonetheless, there are groups in Washington and London who perceive the current government in Bangkok as more inclined towards China compared to the opposition Democratic Party or the protesters. Is this one of the reasons why a section of the mainstream Western media appears to be supportive of the demonstrations?

There are a number of other instances of democratically elected leaders being overthrown by illegal means. The most recent — in July 2013 — was the unjust ouster of President Mohamed Morsi of Egypt. In 1973, President Salvador Allende of Chile was killed in a coup engineered by the CIA. Another democratically elected leader who was manoeuvred out of office and jailed as a result of a British-US plot was Mohammed Mosaddegh of Iran in 1953. It is only too apparent that in most cases the ouster of democratically elected leaders have been carried out directly or indirectly by the self-proclaimed champions of democracy themselves! It reveals how hypocritical they are. What really matters to the elites in the US, Britain and other Western countries is not democracy but the perpetuation of their hegemonic power. Hegemony, not democracy, has always been their object of worship.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar is President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST). Malaysia.
Reading the March 2 editorial in the *New York Times* on the so-called revolution in Ukraine, I couldn’t help but marvel at how easily elite opinion makers in the U.S. can call for the use of public resources to bail out the people and government of Ukraine without significant opposition or even serious questions. The *Times* editorial forcefully argued that in response to the “revolution” in Ukraine, Western powers must “provide prompt and substantial assistance to the Kiev government.” This sentiment was also voiced by a number of conservative Republicans who normally pretend to be fiscal conservatives, at least when it comes to state expenditures for working class and poor people in the U.S.

In response, the Obama administration is calling on Congress to agree to a long-term aid package for Ukraine and announced on Tuesday a short-term billion dollar aid package.

Yet, when it comes to crisis situations like extending unemployment benefits to the 1.3 million people who lost them in December or the forced bankruptcy of Detroit, a major city that happens to have an African American majority, or maintaining food assistance for the working class and poor in the form of the food stamp program, elite opinion in both parties has embraced the “common sense” position that significant reductions in public expenditures and services at every level of government are a reasonable and unavoidable necessity.

The *Times* editorial further argued that since President Yanukovych left the Ukrainian treasury bare, the West should provide immediate assistance. But what about the people in Detroit, whose government coffers were left bare as result of the predatory looting by big banks that targeted African American families with sub-prime loans and floating interests rates that resulted in them losing their homes? Where is their relief?

And when those same banks seized the properties of more than 100,000 families through foreclosure and then refused to pay property taxes to the city of Detroit—helping to create a fiscal crisis for the city—where was the Federal assistance to replenish the city’s coffers?

They call Pres. Yanukovych a dictator, but curiously, there was no outcry against the governor of Michigan when he engineered the passage of an anti-democratic piece of legislation that allowed him to impose a one-person dictatorial regime over the people of Detroit. Referred to as an “emergency manager,” he was granted the power to nullify decisions of the elected city council and mayor and seize control over all institutions of local government. The main
objective of the “emergency manager” is to ensure that the banks that looted the city will get a return on the 22 billion dollar debt that the city accrued.

But the elite do not call that process anti-democratic or dictatorial. Why? The explanation for this myopia an apparent inability to see a double standard is not just capitalist avarice and cynical ruling-class self-interest. It is rooted in the pathology generated by the disease of white supremacy.

Let me elaborate. What many conclude is hypocrisy—a gap between high-sounding rhetoric and actual behavior—is not hypocrisy at all, but rather a cognitive deficiency.

It is the same cognitive deficiency that allows Secretary of State John Kerry to state without any sense of irony, in response to reports that Russia might be moving troops into Crimea, that “You just don’t, in the 21st century, behave in a 19th century fashion by invading another country on completely trumped-up pretexts.” If someone had reminded Kerry that it was the “trumped-up pretext” of weapons of mass destruction that was the basis for the illegal invasion and destruction of Iraq by the U.S., he probably would not have been able to cognitively process the contradiction.

Kerry’s comments are representative of a liberal, Eurocentric consciousness in which the same standards of measurement don’t apply to Westerners because they are the standard. It is not just arrogance but an inculcated sense of omnipotence in which the Western worldview, values and interpretations don’t just reflect universal reality, they are the only reality that counts.

When President Obama and members of the corporate elite condemn the Russians for violating international law, the contradictory nature of that position is clear to those of us who are the ongoing victims of Western oppression and whose lives depend on seeing reality as it is.

From our point of view, it is absolutely bizarre that the same country that violates the sovereignty of other states worldwide with drone strikes, military interventions and political subversion can actually suggest to the Russians that it runs the risk of being a “pariah” state.

The U.S. is playing a very dangerous game by attempting to implement its strategy of encircling the Russian Federation. But the Russians also played a very dangerous game when they decided not to veto U.N. Security Council resolution 1973, which gave NATO colonial gangsters the green light to destroy the Libyan state, and then pretended to be surprised when NATO did just that. The aggressive encirclement of Russia by NATO is now a case of the chickens coming home to roost.

Perhaps the Russians did not fully understand what those of us from the African American community have always understood—that U.S. geostrategic decision-makers will ally themselves with right-wing forces if it will help them maintain the hegemony of their empire,
from racist nationalists in Ukraine to rightist Islamic fundamentalists in Syria.

The rise of right-wing racist political movements is not seen as a real threat for decision-makers in the capitals of Paris, Washington and London. But when the right-wing forces that they support in the Ukraine start to pass laws that strip away the rights of people to practice their culture and use their language, the character of that revolution becomes clear for those of us who experienced the underbelly of the great “American” revolution.

The frantic mobilization of public funds to assist the “revolution,” the unrestrained political support for an illegitimate government, and the easy dismissal of racist and anti-Semitic extremism coming from significant elements in that “revolution” all suggest that this is a bogus process that has nothing to do with justice, human progress and certainly not liberatory revolutionary change for the majority of the people in Ukraine.

A cardinal principle of the African American revolutionary tradition is to be in solidarity with people(s) engaged in struggles against oppression anywhere in the world. However, we are also always aware of the international balance of forces and the efforts by Western imperialism, our principle enemy, to confuse and ideologically disarm normally anti-imperialist forces with the appropriation of the vocabulary of social change and mass struggle. In that regard the enemy has succeeded: Employing the language of humanitarian concern and subtle appeals to a defense of the liberal state and the Western civilizational project, the ideological confusion among the left in the U.S. is total.

When U.S. radicals and progressives are unable to make a distinction between the right and the left and align themselves with a movement in Ukraine that has as its main objective to become more European and capitalist, and at the same time amplify the critiques of the rightist forces in Venezuela who want to murder the embryonic revolution in that country, the backwardness of radical thought in the U.S. is on full display.

In the U.S. where an African American is being murdered by police forces and vigilantes at a pace of one every 28 hours, where a million of our folks are entombed in the dungeons of this nation’s prisons, where state laws are being employed to deny us our democratic rights, where ex-panther Eddie Conroy is finally released from prison after 44 years, still leaving dozens of our political prisoners who are going into their fourth and fifth decades in prison, African American radicals must be clear on the principle enemy and the principle contradiction.

And for us, the enemy and the principle contradiction is not on the other side of the world in Russia.

*Ajamu Baraka* is a human rights activist, organizer and educator. His latest publications include contributions to two recently published books “Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA” and “Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral.” He can be reached at [ajamubarak@yahoo.com](mailto:ajamubarak@yahoo.com) and [Ajamubaraka.com](http://Ajamubaraka.com)
Robert Parry | What Obama Can Do to Save Ukraine

Parry writes: "The fate of Ukraine - whether it descends into civil war or finds a path back from the brink - may rest with President Obama and whether he can work with Russian President Putin."

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“Brown Is the New Black”

By John Feffer, Foreign Policy in Focus, posted March 26, 2014

On the rise of far-right influences in Russia  [Access forbidden. –Dick]

MEDIA

TWO ESSAYS BY ROBERT PARRY ON MEDIA


Also published on Wednesday, April 9, 2014 by Consortium News.

Secretary of State John Kerry accuses Russia of a “contrived crisis” in Ukraine as the U.S.-backed coup regime in Kiev sends troops to crush resistance in the ethnic-Russian east. But the most “contrived” element of this crisis may be the false narrative in Washington.

by Robert Parry

The mainstream U.S. news media, which hailed the Feb. 22 neo-Nazi-spearheaded coup overthrowing the democratically elected president of Ukraine as an expression of “democracy,” is now decrying public uprisings in eastern Ukraine as a Russian-instigated “putsch.”
It apparently has reached the point where the MSM is so tangled up in its propagandistic narrative that it can’t give American readers anything close to an objective reading of what is actually going on in Ukraine or many other places, for that matter.

The way the MSM now summarizes the Feb. 22 coup is simply to say that President Viktor Yanukovych fled after weeks of protests by Ukrainians who favored “good government” and opposed “corruption,” as the Washington Post wrote on Tuesday.

Airbrushed out of the picture is the fact that the uprising had financial support and political encouragement from U.S. officials, including neocon Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland and the neocon-controlled, U.S.-funded National Endowment for Democracy. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “What Neocons Want from Ukraine Crisis.”]

Also, disappearing from the frame was the inconvenient truth that neo-Nazi militants organized themselves from the start as paramilitary units with the intent of staging a violent putsch against Yanukovych’s elected government.

The MSM’s simplistic narrative turned this complex Ukrainian reality into a morality play of good guys vs. bad guys, the noble protesters against the nasty Yanukovych backed by the even nastier Russian President Vladimir Putin.

For instance, the New York Times on Sunday published a long and flattering profile of a Ukrainian man named Yuri Marchuk who was wounded in clashes around Kiev’s Maidan square in February. In the first half of the story, written by Alison Smale, we read about Marchuk’s courage in standing and fighting with his brave comrades.

The Neo-Nazi Connection

Only in the latter half of the article do we get a hint of a darker side to the tale. We’re told that Marchuk is “carefully skirting questions about the arrival of guns stolen from a government depot in the western Ukraine city of Lviv,” which was sending hundreds of new militants daily to bolster the sagging protests.

But what we’re not told by the Times is that Lviv is a neo-Nazi stronghold where 15,000 members of the far-right Svoboda party held a torchlight parade in honor of World War II Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera and where Svoboda has been mounting a campaign to have the
local airport named in honor of Bandera, whose fascist paramilitary force took part in the exterminations of Jews and Poles. However, since it’s been the consistent MSM practice to white-out the role of the neo-Nazi brown shirts – all the better to protect the pleasant narrative of a Kiev Spring – the Times ignores the Bandera angle and the significance of the Lviv reference.

Instead, we’re simply told: “organizers in Lviv said they alone were sending 600 people a day to Kiev. That enabled exhausted defenders [of the Maidan protests] to eat and sleep while new arrivals built barricades and then, early on Feb. 20, thrust toward the Berkut [police] positions.”

It was during that clash when Marchuk, a leader of a “sotin” or paramilitary force of 100 fighters, was shot in the right leg and suffered other wounds. After getting a splint on his leg, Marchuk said he returned to City Hall “checking on the fate of the 35 members of his hundred who had volunteered for that Thursday. Two were killed, 12 wounded, the rest all right, he found,” the Times reported.

We have to read down even further, to the fourth paragraph from the end, to learn that Marchuk is “close to Oleg Tyagnibok, leader of the nationalist Svoboda party,” though again the significance of that fact is not explained. The article continues in heroic terms:

“In these revolutionary times, he [Marchuk] suggested, it is not enough simply to be a patriot. You have to defend what you treasure. ‘To sit in the kitchen and simply cry about how much we love Ukraine, that is a crime,’ he said.”

But what is left out of this story is far more important than what is put in. The reporter should have pressed Marchuk about exactly what he thinks Ukrainians should “treasure,” whether he admires Nazi collaborator Bandera and what he would like to do with the ethnic Russians living in east and south Ukraine, Yanukovych’s “base” in the 2010 election.

Wouldn’t the story have been more interesting to Times’ readers if Smale had blended the grays of Marchuk’s far-right politics into this two-dimensional tale of the “white hat” Marchuk fighting bravely against the “black hat” Yanukovych.

But that would have violated an unwritten rule of the MSM’s coverage of the Ukraine crisis, to pretend that the neo-Nazi militias were simply one of Vladimir Putin’s “delusions” or a figment of Russian propaganda or at most a minor and insignificant factor in ousting Yanukovych.

Seeing a ‘Putsch’
Yet, while the crucial neo-Nazi violence in carrying out the Feb. 22 coup is whisked away to the memory hole and the word “putsch” is carefully avoided, an opposite phenomenon has occurred in reporting about resistance to the new Kiev government in Crimea and now eastern Ukraine. There, one can use the word “putsch.”

In those cases, the resistance is blamed on Russian “aggression,” since it’s apparently unthinkable that ethnic Russians who have witnessed a violent overthrow of their elected president – spearheaded by neo-Nazis – might actually want to resist the imposition of an unelected and extreme new government.
This alternative narrative – one that makes much more sense than the MSM’s storyline – is that the ethnic Russians feel disenfranchised by the coup organized in western Ukraine where the capital of Kiev is located. Their elected president had to flee for his life and a rump parliament took over, immediately “impeaching” him and passing legislation targeting Russian speakers in the eastern and southern sectors.

An American parallel might be: what would happen if the Red States elected a U.S. president but people in the Blue States around Washington D.C. violently seized the White House and imposed a new government? Would the folks in the Red States simply bow to the new order as a rump Congress passed laws targeting the rights and the interests of the Red States?

The rump Ukrainian parliament also passed a harsh austerity plan demanded by the Washington-based International Monetary Fund in order to secure $18 billion in loan guarantees. Even acting Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the handpicked choice of U.S. Assistant Secretary Nuland to run the new government, has acknowledged that the IMF plan is “very unpopular, very difficult, very tough.”

The coup regime also has appointed new governors to bring the eastern and southern provinces under Kiev’s control. Yet, when people in those regions resist this imposition of power by unelected officials, the MSM frames the protests as illegitimate. The Washington Post led its Tuesday’s editions this way:

“KIEV, UKRAINE – Pro-Russia demonstrators in eastern Ukraine declared separatist republics in two cities on Monday, and Ukrainian officials accused Moscow of orchestrating the moves as the first step toward launching an invasion.

“In Washington, the Obama administration expressed deep skepticism that the scattered uprisings and building takeovers in cities such as Donetsk and Kharkiv were spontaneous. ‘There is strong evidence suggesting some of these demonstrators were paid,’ said Jay Carney, the White House press secretary.”

The article by Kathy Lally and Will Englund continues in that vein, presenting essentially a conspiracy theory that blames the Russian government for the political unrest, albeit without presenting any actual evidence to support the suspicions.

On Tuesday, Secretary of State John Kerry, who has emerged as the leading spokesman for the hawkish State Department bureaucracy, blamed the eastern Ukrainian resistance to Kiev’s control on undercover actions by Russia.

“What we see from Russia is an illegal and illegitimate effort to destabilize a sovereign state and create a contrived crisis with paid operatives across an international boundary,” Kerry told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

So, while the Feb. 22 coup in Kiev was portrayed as a simple uprising of Ukrainian patriots – with no attention paid to the $5 billion that Assistant Secretary Nuland herself said the U.S. has invested in Ukraine’s “European aspirations,” nor the 65 projects in Ukraine run by the U.S.-funded NED, nor with little notice of the organized violence by neo-Nazi paramilitary forces from western Ukraine – the resistance to the coup in Crimea and now in eastern and southern Ukraine could only result from dark manipulations orchestrated by Russian
President Putin in the Kremlin.

It is that kind of biased journalism that has now become the norm of the MSM and, indeed, across significant parts of the "blogosphere." Rather than learning to be more skeptical after the Iraq War deceptions a decade ago, the major news outlets appear to have become even more gullible, more integrated into the government’s propaganda structure, less able to provide balanced and independent journalism.

The U.S. reporting on crises in Iraq, Syria, Iran and now Ukraine reveal a nearly complete disconnect from the real world, as if the MSM is operating in a parallel universe.

Old-fashioned reporting – where journalists took pride in uncovering information that spoiled a U.S. government scheme to dupe the public – has almost completely disappeared. Now, we see what looks like a competition between government officials and mainstream journalists to produce the most extreme distortion of the truth.

Indeed, it is hard to tell if the officials are captive to the false narratives spun by the MSM or if the MSM is parroting back the lies of officialdom. They seem to feed off one another as Official Washington’s narrative spirals further and further from reality.

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Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. His latest book, Neck Deep: The Disastrous Presidency of George W. Bush, was written with two of his sons, Sam and Nat. His two previous books are Secrecy & Privilege: The Rise of the Bush Dynasty from Watergate to Iraq and Lost History: Contras, Cocaine, the Press & ‘Project Truth’

Robert Parry | The Dangerous Neocon Role in Ukraine

Robert Parry, Consortium News, Reader Supported News, April 19, 2014

Parry writes: "The American mainstream news media has rarely bought in so thoroughly to a U.S. government propaganda campaign as it has in taking sides in support of the post-coup government in Ukraine and against Russia and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine."

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TWO ESSAYS BY PETER HART on MEDIA IN EXTRA! MAY 2014

“Radioactive’ Putin Is ‘Stalin’s Spawn.’”

US “corporate media coverage of the crisis in Ukraine demonstrated a Cold War eagerness for increasing the conflict. . . .” US politicians and elite media believe their own propaganda.

ROBERT PARRY ON BIAS OF *NEW YORK TIMES*

**FOCUS: Robert Parry | Will Ukraine Be NYT’s Waterloo?**

*Robert Parry, Consortium News, Reader Supported News, May 4, 2014*

Parry writes: "Everything that the Times writes about Ukraine is so polluted with propaganda that it requires a very strong filter, along with additives from more independent news sources, to get anything approaching an accurate understanding of events."

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Dick, US Empire and Corporate Media: *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

Patrick Smith, US/*New York Times* Spin

Stephen Cohen, Anti-Russia Is Old Anti-Soviet

Parry, Group Think

Alternative Analysis

(Plenty of protest against the pro-war Obama administration and media, but all together reflecting a comparatively small readership. If you agree with the analyses of these alternative views that try to view Russia outside the US imperial box, then forward this newsletter and notify your contacts.)

*The Nation* Editorial

Alterman, Cold War Hysteria Revived

How Russia/Ukraine Look in Beijing

Charles Pierce, Dick Cheney’s View


Ray McGovern, Putin Says No to Regime Change on Its Border

Bruce Gagnon, Danger of War Following US-led Coup for Gas and Oil

Pilger, Other Coups, Same Superpower

Robert Freeman, Ukraine and WWI over Energy

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More Reading

Via Historians Against War (HAW)

Via Common Dreams

Via FAIR TV

Contact Arkansas Representatives.
Alternative Perspectives

Who Is Threatening Whom?
Dick, Google Search: US Bases Surrounding Russia
Steve Weissman: US Participated in Coup That Toppled Yanukovych
Stephen Cohen, Cold War Again?
Two Essays from Bruce Gagnon

Bruce Gagnon, Boxing in the Bear (with Francis Boyle and Chandra Muzaffar)
Gagnon, Preparing for War with Russia
Franklin Spinney, What Is the Real Price of Starting a New Cold War?

US Corporate Old Cold War Media
Ira Chernus: Showdown with Russia Sells Newspapers

END RUSSIA/UKRAINE NEWSLETTER #3

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