



Media networks directly owned and operated by the U.S. state, including *Radio Free*

Europe (<https://www.rferl.org/a/naulny-ukraine-attitudes-mixed-feelings-russia-nationalism-putin/31120106.html>) and *Voice of America*

News, commentary and analysis from the Black left.

(/) ([https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_ukrainian-rights-activists-worry-about-kremlin-](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_ukrainian-rights-activists-worry-about-kremlin-hostage-release/7495406175491.html)

[https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_ukrainian-rights-activists-worry-about-kremlin-](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_ukrainian-rights-activists-worry-about-kremlin-hostage-release/7495406175491.html)

This gives the impression that there is a sizable groundswell of individuals all focusing on the same issue when, in reality, it is simply operatives from the same source (the U.S. government) all interacting with each other.

Target: Donbas

Before his overthrow, President Yanukovich maintained cordial relations with Russia. However, that changed drastically after the Maidan Revolution, with the new government not only attempting to tie itself to the West, but also aggressively suppressing any pro-Russian sentiment. Since 2014, the government has shut down (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/5/ukraines-president-bans-pro-russian-networks-risking-support>) Russian-language media and jailed pro-Russian voices. It has also banned (<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210401-new-law-stokes-ukraine-language-tensions>) the Russian language from schools and in public places such as in stores and restaurants. Any business caught violating the law is subject to a fine.

This has caused significant consternation inside the country, not least because almost one-third (<https://translatorswithoutborders.org/language-data-for-ukraine>) of Ukrainian citizens speak Russian as their first language, and significant minorities do not speak Ukrainian at all. This is particularly true in the Donbas, the large industrial area of Eastern Ukraine, and in the Crimean peninsula, which Russia controversially annexed in 2014. In both regions, Russian is far-and-away the majority language, spoken by nearly three-quarters of the population. Support for Yanukovich and language preference are closely correlated. Since 2014, the Ukrainian government has also been engaged in a low-level civil war in the Donbas against Russian-speaking militias.

The Donbas is a target for not only the Ukrainian government but for NED as well. The word "Donbas" is referenced 52 times in the 334 one-paragraph grants noted above, while eastern Ukraine is mentioned 108 times and Crimea 22 times. The projects are full of coded references to "expanding outreach" of media outlets into the Donbas, or, even more alarmingly, to "assisting" civil groups "working in the front line territories of the Donbas" — a statement so vague that it could mean anything from health workshops to funneling weapons.



they explain, adding that Russia uses “strategic corruption” to undermine Ukraine’s sovereignty. The “Lava Jato” between Ukrainian democracy and Russian autocracy, they write, calling for the U.S. to flood Ukraine with arms and to sanction Moscow.

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(<https://donate.stripe.com/fZe9Ccb4lg2hdIQ5kk>)

In this sense, then, NED’s incessant focus on “corruption” appears to look far more like a witch hunt to bring down political forces that it opposes. This is reminiscent of the tactics of advanced “lawfare” — using legal means to destroy political enemies — that Washington used to overthrow Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff in 2016 and imprison her predecessor, Lula da Silva, paving the way for far-right pro-U.S. Jair Bolsonaro to become president.

Unbeknownst at the time, the U.S. government was secretly aiding an “anti-corruption” operation known in Brazilian as “Lava Jato” (<https://www.mintpressnews.com/joe-biden-latin-america-policy-more-obama-style-coups/272720/>). A combination of corrupt judges and extremely flimsy evidence led to the persecution of the leaders of the Workers’ Party. Both the FBI and CIA were crucial to the operation. As one prosecutor involved in the persecution quipped (<https://www.brasilwire.com/lula-arrest-is-a-gift-from-the-cia-mocked-lava-jato-prosecutor/>), Lula’s arrest was “a gift from the CIA.”

Send in the Neo-Nazis

At the same time as NED has been training political leaders, other arms of the U.S. government have been training military units, almost certainly including the notorious Neo-Nazi group, the Azov Battalion (<https://www.mintpressnews.com/fbi-neo-nazi-militia-trained-by-us-military-in-ukraine-now-training-us-white-supremacists/251687/>). A *Yahoo! News* (<https://www.yahoo.com/news/cia-trained-ukrainian-paramilitaries-may-take-central-role-if-russia-invades-185258008.html>) report noted that, since 2015, the CIA has been training “insurgent leaders” while Congress rubber-stamped hundreds of millions of dollars worth of military aid to Ukraine. The congressional aid bill originally included text explicitly barring assistance to Azov but, under pressure from the Pentagon, the language was removed

(<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/congress-has-removed-a-ban-on-funding-neo-nazis-from-its-year-end-spending-bill/>). “Given all this,” wrote

(<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2022/01/cia-neo-nazi-training-ukraine-russia-putin-biden-nato>) *Jacobin*’s Branko Marcetic, “it would be more of a surprise that the neo-Nazis of Azov haven’t been trained in the CIA’s clandestine make-an-insurgency program.”

In their drive to stoke hostilities between the West and Russia, corporate media have overwhelmingly ignored the fact that the U.S. and NATO forces have been supporting openly Neo-Nazi paramilitaries for many years. A *MintPress* study (<https://www.mintpressnews.com/279612-2/279612/>) of the op-ed pages of *The New*



Black Agenda Report
 News, commentary and analysis from the Black left.

York Times, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* found that only one of 91 articles published in a daily newspaper mentioned this connection at all, with far more asserting that Vladimir Putin himself is Hitler incarnate. Around 90% of opinion columns pushed a "get tough on Russia" message, with anti-war voices few and far between.

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<https://donate.stripe.com/fZe9Ccb4lg2hdIQ5kk>

"People who take at face value the Western media coverage would have a very distorted perception of the Ukraine conflict and its origin," Ivan Katchanovski (https://twitter.com/I_Katchanovski), Professor of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa, told *MintPress*, adding:

"They omit or deny that there is a civil war in Donbas even though the majority of scholars who [have] published or presented concerning this conflict in Western academic venues classify it as a civil war with Russian military intervention. The Western media also omitted that recent 'unity marches' (https://twitter.com/I_Katchanovski/status/1490034084600594436) in Kharkiv and Kyiv and a staged training of civilians, including a grandmother, were organized and led by the far right, in particular, the Neo-Nazi Azov [Battalion]."

The Azov publicity stunt involving a grandmother, to which Katchanovski is referring, was a particularly noteworthy incident. Conducting a civilian training operation in the middle of the Donbas city of Mariupol while a crowd of Western journalists looked on, Azov units showed locals how to use rifles. The extraordinary image of a silver-haired, 79-year-old "babushka" staring down the sights of an AK-47 went viral around the world, allowing the media to construct an "everyone in brave Ukraine is doing their part to oppose an imminent Russian invasion" narrative. The story was covered by a host of outlets, including *ABC News*

(<https://twitter.com/freedomrideblog/status/1493072867273199618>), *MSNBC*

(<https://youtu.be/scO-WlbYc40?t=556>), *Newsweek* (https://www.newsweek.com/79-year-old-great-grandma-among-those-involved-ukraine-combat-training-1678985?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1644858871), the *BBC*

(<https://twitter.com/SuheylaTopuz/status/1493036499293638660>), *The Guardian*

(<https://www.todaypapers.co.uk/guardian-front-page-2022-02-14/>) and *The Financial Times*

(<https://www.todaypapers.co.uk/financial-times-front-page-2022-02-14/>), as well as by media in Ireland (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/images-of-the-weekend-1.4801294>), Australia (https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/world/gallery-the-best-photos-from-around-the-world-20220214-h21po9.html?ref=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_source=rss_feed), Israel

(<https://www.timesofisrael.com/diplomatic-efforts-continue-at-fever-pace-as-ukraine-tensions-hit-critical-point/>), Denmark (<https://nyheder.tv2.dk/udland/2022-02-14-ukrainske-boern-og-gamle-undervises-i-at-skyde-mod-en-russisk-invasion>), Thailand

(<https://www.prachachat.net/world-news/news-865171>) and Indonesia

(<https://medan.tribunnews.com/2022/02/14/nenek-79-tahun-ikut-latihan->

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Berlin. In 2013, German state-owned media outlet *Deutsche Welle* was forced to rescind

(<https://www.dw.com/en/deutsche-welle-streicht-publikumspreis-best-blog-ukrainisch-2013/a-16814122>) an award for which it had nominated her after

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(/) activists highlighted ([https://globalvoices.org/2013/05/13/is-ukrainian-right-wing-](https://globalvoices.org/2013/05/13/is-ukrainian-right-wing-blog-a-tripmine-for-the-bundespreis-award/)

[https://globalvoices.org/2013/05/13/is-ukrainian-right-wing-](https://globalvoices.org/2013/05/13/is-ukrainian-right-wing-blog-a-tripmine-for-the-bundespreis-award/)

her pro-Hitler writings. In 2019, she was invited (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtO2CICHFDI>) to NATO headquarters in Brussels to give a speech.

A broken promise and an existential threat

In 1990, the U.S. government promised (<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>) Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would stray “not one inch eastward” from its current position in exchange for Soviet support for German reunification. However, it later reneged on this promise, and between 1999 and 2004 NATO galloped eastward, even admitting three former Soviet republics, all of which share a land border with Russia. In 2008, NATO also invited

(<https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2008/04-april/e0403h.html>) Ukraine and Georgia to join.

For Moscow, this was an existential threat. Russia as a country draws its origins from the Kievan Rus Federation, a medieval state whose capital was Kiev and from where the word “Russia” derives. In the 13th century, the Rus people fled north towards Moscow to avoid the Mongol invasion, helping to establish the Grand Duchy of Muscovy, which later became the Russian empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation today. Putin himself has said

(<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>) that he considers Russians and Ukrainians to be “one people”; “Ukraine” literally means “borderland” in Russian. Yet White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki recently described

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/01/24/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-jen-psaki-january-24-2022/>) Ukraine as “our eastern flank” — an assertion that is significantly less credible than Russia’s claim.

The U.S.-Russian relationship fundamentally deteriorated during the 2014 Maidan Revolution. President Yanukovich had been playing the European Union and Russia off against each other, negotiating economic deals with both. Unsurprisingly, given Ukraine’s importance to Moscow, Russia offered a more lucrative deal, which he accepted. This turned out to be Yanukovich’s political death warrant, as the United States immediately began supporting a nationwide protest movement. Senior U.S. officials like Senator John McCain and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland flew (<https://www.mintpressnews.com/railing-trump-coup-biden-appoints-chief-ukraine-coup-plotter-victoria-nuland/274096/>) to Kiev, famously handing out cookies to protestors in Independence Square.



In February 2014, leaked audio of Nuland speaking with U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt showed that the United States was pulling the strings and crowning the kings. "I don't think Klitch should go into the government. I don't think it is necessary. I don't think it is a good idea," Nuland can be heard saying, referring to the boxer-

donated politician Arseniy Klitschko. "I think Yats [Arseniy Yatsenyuk] is the guy who has got the economic experience, the governing experience," she added. Less than one month after the audio leaked, Yatsenyuk became the next prime minister.

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(<https://documents.reveal.us/govt-spent-22m-promoting-anti-russia-narrative-ukraine-and-abroad>)

Less than two weeks after the phone call, snipers massacred almost 100 people protesting. Although the U.S. immediately blamed the Yanukovych administration, another leaked audio call, this time between the E.U.'s foreign affairs chief and the Estonian foreign minister, revealed

(<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/05/ukraine-bugged-call-catherine-ashton-urmas-paet>) that they believed pro-U.S. forces had staged a false-flag attack as a pretext to remove Yanukovych and stage a coup. In the end, far-right militias like Azov and Right Sector provided the muscle to force Yanukovych out of office.

However, as Katchanovski noted, very little of this context is given in the press, leaving audiences fundamentally ignorant of the basic facts. In Katchanovski's opinion:

"The Western media coverage of the escalating Ukraine conflict is highly inaccurate and selective. The Maidan massacre, which led to the current conflict, is either omitted or misrepresented even though overwhelming evidence shows that this crucial mass-killing of the protesters and the police was perpetrated by the elements of the Maidan opposition; in particular, the far-right. Such evidence includes videos of snipers in the Maidan-controlled buildings shooting the protesters and the police, testimonies of the absolute majority of wounded protesters at the Maidan massacre trial and investigation, several hundred witnesses, and 14 self-admitted members of Maidan snipers groups."

All over the world, the National Endowment for Democracy is training groups of people who can function as the leaders of another color revolution. In the process, it helps squash genuine grassroots movements by co-opting them and using its financial clout to push activism down pro-U.S. avenues. Spending more than \$22 million on the country, NED has made Ukraine one of its top priorities. Yet an analysis of the groups receiving money reveals that the whole operation is an attempt to shore up support for the U.S.-backed Zelensky administration, and to carry out a foreign interference operation, the extent of which blows anything Russia is accused of out of the water.

The National Endowment for Democracy can claim it is in the business of democracy

PROMOTION. IN REALITY, IT DOES ANYTHING BUT UNLESS "DEMOCRACY" IS ENTIRELY SYNONYMOUS WITH A U.S. INTEREST.