

Enforcing the Ukraine 'Group Think'

Exclusive: U.S.-taxpayer-funded Radio Liberty has a checkered history that includes hiring Nazi sympathizers as Cold War commentators. Now, one of its current writers has used the platform to bash an American scholar who won't join Official Washington's "group think" on Ukraine, Robert Parry reports.

By Robert Parry

It may be fitting that the U.S.-funded Radio Liberty would be the latest media outlet to join in the bashing of an American academic who dares to disagree with U.S. policies on Ukraine, which have included supporting a 2014 coup that ousted the elected president and installing a new regime in which neo-Nazis play a prominent role. After all, Radio Liberty has a history of cuddling up to Nazis.

On May 6, a Radio Liberty pundit named Carl Schreck joined the Official Washington herd in demeaning Russian scholar Stephen Cohen as "a Putin apologist" who, Schreck said, was once "widely seen as one of the preeminent scholars in the generation of Sovietologists who rose to prominence in the 1970s, [but] Cohen these days is routinely derided as Putin's 'toady' and 'useful idiot.'"

While hurling insults, Schreck did little to evaluate the merits of Cohen's arguments, beyond consulting with neoconservatives and anti-Moscow activists. Cohen's daring to dissent from Official Washington's conventional wisdom was treated as proof of his erroneous ways.

In that sense, Schreck's reliance on vitriol rather than reason was typical of the "group think" prevalent across the U.S. mainstream media. But Radio Liberty does have a special history regarding Ukraine, including the use of Nazi sympathizers during the ramping up of the Cold War propaganda by Ronald Reagan's administration in the 1980s.

In early 2014, when I was reviewing files at the Reagan presidential library in Simi Valley, California, I stumbled onto an internal controversy over Radio Liberty's broadcasts of commentaries into Ukraine from right-wing exiles. Some of those commentaries praised Ukrainian nationalists who sided with the Nazis in World War II as the SS pursued its "final solution" against European Jews, including the infamous Babi Yar massacre in a ravine outside Kiev.

These RL propaganda broadcasts provoked outrage from some Jewish organizations, such as B'nai B'rith, and individuals including conservative academic Richard Pipes, prompting an internal review. According to a memo dated May 4, 1984, and written by James Critchlow, a research officer at the Board of International

Broadcasting, which managed Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, one RL broadcast in particular was viewed as “defending Ukrainians who fought in the ranks of the SS.”

Critchlow wrote, “An RL Ukrainian broadcast of Feb. 12, 1984 contains references to the Nazi-oriented Ukrainian-manned SS ‘Galicia’ Division of World War II which may have damaged RL’s reputation with Soviet listeners. The memoirs of a German diplomat are quoted in a way that seems to constitute endorsement by RL of praise for Ukrainian volunteers in the SS division, which during its existence fought side by side with the Germans against the Red Army.”

Harvard Professor Pipes, who was an adviser to the Reagan administration, also inveighed against the RL broadcasts, writing on Dec. 3, 1984 “the Russian and Ukrainian services of RL have been transmitting this year blatantly anti-Semitic material to the Soviet Union which may cause the whole enterprise irreparable harm.”

Though the Reagan administration publicly defended RL against criticism, privately some senior officials agreed with the critics, according to the documents. For instance, in a Jan. 4, 1985, memo, Walter Raymond Jr., a top official on the National Security Council, told his boss, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, that “I would believe much of what Dick [Pipes] says is right.”

That three-decade-old dispute over U.S.-sponsored radio broadcasts underscored the troubling political reality of Ukraine, which straddles a dividing line between people with cultural ties oriented toward the West and those with a cultural heritage more attuned to Russia. Since the Feb. 22, 2014 coup that ousted President Viktor Yanukovich, some of the old Nazi sympathies have resurfaced.

For instance, on May 2, 2014, when right-wing hooligans chased ethnic Russian protesters into the Trade Union Building in Odessa and then set it on fire killing scores of people inside, the burnt-out building was then defaced with pro-Nazi graffiti hailing “the Galician SS” spray-painted onto the charred walls.

Later, some of Ukraine’s right-wing “volunteer” battalions sent to eastern Ukraine to crush the ethnic Russian resistance sported neo-Nazi and Nazi emblems, including Swastikas and SS markings on their helmets. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“Seeing No Neo-Nazi Militias in Ukraine.”](#)]

Targeting Cohen

But anyone who detects this reality can expect to confront insults from the

mainstream U.S. media and U.S. government propagandists. Professor Cohen, 76, has borne the brunt of these ad hominem attacks.

One of the ugliest episodes came when the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies joined the bash-Cohen mob. The academic group spurned a fellowship program, which it had solicited from Cohen's wife, The Nation's editor Katrina vanden Heuvel, because the program's title included Cohen's name.

"It's no secret that there were swirling controversies surrounding Professor Cohen," Stephen Hanson, the group's president, told the New York Times.

In a protest letter to the group, Cohen called this action "a political decision that creates serious doubts about the organization's commitment to First Amendment rights and academic freedom." He also noted that young scholars in the field have expressed fear for their professional futures if they break from the herd. Cohen mentioned the story of one young woman scholar who dropped off a panel to avoid risking her career in case she said something that could be deemed sympathetic to Russia.

Cohen noted, too, that even established foreign policy figures, ex-National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, have been accused in the Washington Post of "advocating that the West appease Russia," with the notion of "appeasement" meant "to be disqualifying, chilling, censorious." (Kissinger had objected to the comparison of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Adolf Hitler as unfounded.)

So, as the United States rushes into a new Cold War with Russia, we are seeing the makings of a new McCarthyism, challenging the patriotism of anyone who doesn't get in line. But this conformity presents a serious threat to U.S. national security and even the future of the planet. We saw a similar pattern with the rush to war in Iraq, but a military clash with nuclear-armed Russia is a crisis of a much greater magnitude.

One of Professor Cohen's key points has been that Official Washington's "group think" about post-Soviet Russia has been misguided from the start, laying the groundwork for today's confrontation. In Cohen's view, to understand why Russians are so alarmed by U.S. and NATO meddling in Ukraine, you have to go back to those days after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Instead of working with the Russians to transition carefully from a communist system to a pluralistic, capitalist one, the U.S. prescription was "shock therapy."

As American "free market" experts descended on Moscow during the pliant regime of Boris Yeltsin, well-connected Russian thieves and their U.S. compatriots plundered the country's wealth, creating a handful of billionaire

“oligarchs” and leaving millions upon millions of Russians in a state of near starvation, with a collapse in life expectancy rarely seen in a country not at war.

Yet, despite the desperation of the masses, American journalists and pundits hailed the “democratic reform” underway in Russia with glowing accounts of how glittering life could be in the shiny new hotels, restaurants and bars of Moscow. Complaints about the suffering of average Russians were dismissed as the grumblings of losers who failed to appreciate the economic wonders that lay ahead.

As recounted in his 2001 book, *Failed Crusade*, Cohen correctly describes this fantastical reporting as journalistic “malpractice” that left the American people misinformed about the on-the-ground reality in Russia. The widespread suffering led Putin, who succeeded Yeltsin, to pull back on the wholesale privatization, to punish some oligarchs and to restore some of the social safety net.

Though the U.S. mainstream media portrays Putin as essentially a tyrant, his elections and approval numbers indicate that he commands broad popular support, in part, because he stood up to some oligarchs (though he still worked with others). Yet, Official Washington continues to portray oligarchs whom Putin jailed as innocent victims of a tyrant’s revenge.

After Putin pardoned jailed oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the neocon Freedom House sponsored a Washington dinner in Khordorkovsky’s honor, hailing him as one of Russia’s political heroes. “I have to say I’m impressed by him,” declared Freedom House President David Kramer. “But he’s still figuring out how he can make a difference.”

New York Times writer Peter Baker fairly swooned at Khodorkovsky’s presence. “If anything, he seemed stronger and deeper than before” prison, Baker wrote. “The notion of prison as cleansing the soul and ennobling the spirit is a powerful motif in Russian literature.”

Yet, even Khodorkovsky, who is now in his early 50s, acknowledged that he “grew up in Russia’s emerging Wild West capitalism to take advantage of what he now says was a corrupt privatization system,” Baker reported. In other words, Khodorkovsky was admitting that he obtained his vast wealth through a corrupt process, though by referring to it as the “Wild West” Baker made the adventure seem quite dashing and even admirable when, in reality, Khodorkovsky was a key figure in the plunder of Russia that impoverished millions of his countrymen and sent many to early graves.

In the 1990s, Professor Cohen was one of the few scholars with the courage to challenge the prevailing boosterism for Russia's "shock therapy." He noted even then the danger of mistaken "conventional wisdom" and how it strangles original thought and necessary skepticism.

"Much as Russia scholars prefer consensus, even orthodoxy, to dissent, most journalists, one of them tells us, are 'devoted to group-think' and 'see the world through a set of standard templates,'" wrote Cohen. "For them to break with 'standard templates' requires not only introspection but retrospection, which also is not a characteristic of either profession."

Nor is it characteristic of U.S.-taxpayer-funded Radio Liberty, which has gone from promoting the views of Nazi sympathizers in the 1980s to pushing the propaganda of a new Ukrainian government that cozies up to modern-day neo-Nazis.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry's trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes *America's Stolen Narrative*. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

The Reasons for Urban Rioting

Urban rioting has a long history in the United States, often with one ethnic group turning on another. But modern history is more about oppressed racial communities lashing out at police brutality and government injustice, a phenomenon that requires a new national effort to resolve, writes Lawrence Davidson.

By Lawrence Davidson

If one goes to Wikipedia under [the subject](#) of "mass racial violence in the United States," one will find a "timeline of events" running from 1829 to 2015. There are so many race-related riots listed for these 186 years that, from a historical point of view, rioting appears almost normal.

Prior to World War II, these outbreaks mostly involved ethnic, racial or religious groups going after each other: Germans, Italians, Poles, Jews, Hispanics, African-Americans, Chinese, Catholics, Protestants were all involved in these set-tos. Often the causes were economic with a territorial overtone –

one group moving into the neighborhood of another group and/or taking their jobs. When the violence came, it was group against group.

In the post-World War II era, the nature of the still numerous instances of rioting changed. The group-versus-group scenario gave way to group-versus-state. Most of the categories listed above had successfully assimilated under the heading "Caucasian," and religious affiliations no longer seemed worth bloody murder. The arrival of new immigrants could/can still instill anger in citizens who mistake foreigners for the cause of problems they themselves have caused, but the result of late has rarely been rioting.

Actually, in the present era, the cause of rioting has mostly been black resentment over prevailing inequality: why the distribution of wealth seems never to work to satisfy the needs of African-American poor. Thus, all too many African-Americans, particularly men, have little opportunity for a decent life, while simultaneously having every opportunity to end up in confrontations with the police and then land in prison.

It is these ubiquitous confrontations with agents of the state that are now the standard trigger to the phenomenon of modern American rioting.

Inadequacies of the Civil Rights Acts

The ongoing phenomenon of urban riots involving African-Americans suggests that the civil rights acts that followed the widespread unrest of the mid-1960s have proved inadequate. In part this is so because their enforcement, such as it has been, was restricted to the public realm. That is, the effort to do away with discrimination went no further than preventing such acts within institutions serving the public: public schools and housing, restaurants, hotels, theaters and the like.

There were other aspects to the civil rights acts – grants to minority businesses, for instance – but they all just scratched the surface. As a result, the number of African-Americans made upwardly mobile by this legislation was less than optimal. A black middle class did emerge, but it was small relative to the numbers who needed help.

To say that the civil rights acts proved inadequate in the fight against nationwide discrimination is to say that they proved unable to reorient America's discriminatory cultural mindset. That mindset was the product of, among other things, nearly 300 years of institutional racism.

To change things was going to take the consistent reinforcement of the idea of

racial equality over at least three or four generations. This would have to be done mainly through the educational system, yet no specific efforts were made to this end. Indeed, even attempting to integrate the public school systems could provoke their own riots, as the "Boston busing crisis" of 1974 proved.

Another sign of this problematic cultural mindset is that, as far as I know, there is nowhere in the U.S. where one can find serious empathy for the fate of the inner cities amongst the vast, mostly white, population of the suburbs.

For instance, in the wake of the recent riots in Baltimore, the mayor of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter, commented, "local government cannot itself fix problems of violence and unemployment."

This is absolutely true, but Nutter has looked in vain for any meaningful help from a state legislature controlled by a hinterland of conservative whites who may not feel they belong to the same species, much less the same broader community, as those in the inner cities. The suggestion that they should send their tax money to help the residents of Philadelphia appears to be beyond their understanding. I doubt very much if it is different elsewhere in the country.

The Police

The police, of course, cannot stand outside the general discriminatory orientation of the culture. So the limited impact of the civil rights acts meant that the police were not reeducated to the new standards of public behavior now sanctioned by law.

To do so would have required more than simply increasing the number of black officers to at least match the racial demographics of American cities. It would have required extensive retraining and testing of those who sought to be part of law enforcement.

There is an entire industry out there to train and test people to safely drive cars. I know of nothing beyond piecemeal efforts to train police to act in an equitable and lawful manner toward all the different sorts of people they come into contact with (plus to handle other problems that seem to affect the police as a group, such as stress and anger management).

Nor are standardized ways of testing candidates applied so as to make sure that only the trustworthy in this regard are on the street. Because we do not do this, we risk having police who themselves may act in a criminal manner toward economically disadvantaged classes, thus expressing discrimination in a way that is violent enough to trigger mass unrest.

Indeed, as of now the preferred personality type for the position of police

officer seems to be the same as that for professional soldier, which may be why it has been so easy to “militarize” American police forces. This effort, along with the “home security” business, has become a multibillion-dollar industry (major players in which are Israel companies, which now train an increasing number of U.S. police departments in techniques developed while enforcing the occupation of Palestine).

Police departments and their suppliers have teamed up to lobby cash-poor municipalities for all manner of lethal gewgaws ranging from automatic weapons to armored cars. Military-grade riot-control equipment is now de rigueur for most large police departments. So great is the demand for these deadly toys that the Defense Department now has a committee appointed by the president to look into what constitutes appropriate equipment to hand out to the cop on the beat.

What Can Be Done?

What this sad story tells us is that the United States has a very big problem of discrimination and exploitation of the urban poor that goes beyond the ideologically induced greed of a capitalist class. That is not to say that the capitalist structure of the American economy hasn't played havoc with the aspirations of poor blacks to get out of poverty. There is a very good essay by Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute that provides insight into the government's role in this aspect of the problem.

However, it is wrong to believe that after 300 years of racist acculturation the problem of endemic discrimination would disappear if, however unlikely, the nation was to move in another economic direction. Americans would still have retrain themselves in order to overcome the racist cultural addictions acquired over their history.

It is relatively easy to write down some of the things that would have to be done to break these addictions. For instance:

– Tolerance and an attitude of community inclusiveness have to be taught to American children and done so consistently for multiple generations. This has to be done with consistency and not interpreted by the political efforts of those who believe teaching kids tolerance of other racial, ethnic and religious groups is doing the work of the Devil.

– The educational opportunities (including affirmative action programs), job training and meaningful low-cost housing programs that have been implemented piecemeal for the last 50 years have to be seriously revived, and seriously funded by taxing the wealthy upper 20 percent of the population. Alternatively, the money can be taken from the bloated defense budget.

– No one should become a police officer (and while we are at it, a prison guard) without undergoing rigorous screening. And that screening should look to eliminate all those who have authoritarian personalities underlain with problems of impulsive anger. This is such a no-brainer that one wonders why it is not already being done. Perhaps part of the problem is that, in most cases, the police set their own criteria for admission into what has become a trade organization with the characteristics of a college fraternity.

Cultures can be both wonderful and horrible things. They tell us who we are and how we should act. To exercise some control over cultural evolution to accentuate commonsense beneficial ends such as tolerance and community inclusiveness is a worthwhile undertaking. But isn't it a restraint on individual freedom to insist that people not behave in racist and intolerant ways?

Sorry, that sort of "freedom" has already been made illegal at the institutional level within the public sphere. But it is not enough. We must insist that the effort go further until the culture is wholly transformed.

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America as Dangerous Flailing Beast

Despite pretty talk about "democracy" and "human rights," U.S. leaders have become the world's chief purveyors of chaos and death from Vietnam through Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine and many other unfortunate nations, a dangerous dilemma addressed by John Chuckman.

By John Chuckman

When I think of America's place in the world today, the image that comes to mind is of a very large animal, perhaps a huge bull elephant or even prehistoric mammoth, which long roamed as the unchallenged king of its domain but has become trapped by its own missteps, as caught in a tar pit or some quicksand, and it is violently flailing about, making a terrifying noises in its effort to free itself and re-establish its authority.

Any observer immediately knows the animal ultimately cannot succeed but certainly is frightened by the noise and crashing that it can sustain for a

considerable time.

I think that is the pretty accurate metaphor for the situation of the United States today, still a terribly large and powerful society but one finding itself trapped after a long series of its own blunders and errors, a society certain ultimately to become diminished in its prestige and relative power with all the difficulties which that will entail for an arrogant people having a blind faith in their own rightness.

America simply cannot accept its mistakes or that it was ever wrong, for Americanism much resembles a fundamentalist religion whose members are incapable of recognizing or admitting they ever followed anything but the divine plan.

America has made a costly series of errors over the last half century, demonstrating to others that the America they may have been in awe of in, say, 1950, and may have considered almost godlike and incapable of mistakes, has now proved itself indisputably, in field after field, as often not even capable of governing itself. The irony of a people who are seen as often unable to govern themselves advising others how to govern themselves brings a distinct note of absurdity to American foreign policy.

America's establishment, feeling its old easy superiority in the world beginning to slip away in a hundred different ways, seems determined to show everyone it still has what it takes, determined to make others feel its strength, determined to weaken others abroad who do not accept its natural superiority, determined to seize by brute force and dirty tricks advantages which no longer come to it by simply superior performance.

Rather than learn from its errors and adjust its delusional assumptions, America is determined to push and bend people all over the world to its will and acceptance of its leadership. But you cannot reclaim genuine leadership once you have been exposed enough times in your bad judgment, and it is clear you are on the decline, just as you cannot once others realize that they can do many things as well or better than you.

In the end, policies which do not recognize scientific facts are doomed. Policies based on wishes and ideology do not succeed over the long run, unless, of course, you are willing to suppress everyone who disagrees with you and demand their compliance under threat. The requirement for an imperial state in such a situation is international behavior which resembles the internal behavior of an autocratic leader such as Stalin, and right now that is precisely where the United States is headed.

Stalin's personality had a fair degree of paranoia and no patience for the views

of others. He felt constantly threatened by potential competitors and he used systematic terror to keep everyone intimidated and unified under him.

Stalin's sincere belief in a faulty economic system that was doomed from its birth put him in a position similar to that of America's oligarchs today. They have a world imperial system that is coming under increasing strain and challenge because others are growing and have their own needs and America simply does not have the flexibility to accommodate them.

America's oligarchs are not used to listening to the views of others. Stalin's belief in a system that was more an ideology than a coherent economic model is paralleled by the quasi-religious tenets of Americanism, a set of beliefs which holds that America is especially blessed by the Creator and all things good and great are simply its due.

Dominion over the Earth?

Americanism blurrily assumes that God's promise in the Old Testament that man should have dominion over the earth's creatures applies now uniquely to Americans. Such thinking arose during many years of easy superiority, a superiority that was less owing to intrinsic merits of American society than to a set of fortuitous circumstances, many of which are now gone.

In Vietnam, America squandered countless resources chasing after a chimera its ideologues insisted was deadly important, never once acknowledging the fatal weaknesses built right into communism from its birth. Communism was certain eventually to fail because of economic falsehoods which were part of its conception, much as a child born with certain genetic flaws is destined for eventual death.

America's mad rush to fight communism on all fronts was in keeping with the zealotry of America's Civic Religion, but it was a huge and foolish practical judgment which wasted colossal resources.

In Vietnam, America ended in something close to total shame literally defeated on the battlefield by what seemed an inconsequential opponent, having also cast aside traditional ethical values in murdering great masses of people who never threatened the United States, murder on a scale (3 million) comparable to the Holocaust.

The United States used weapons and techniques of a savage character: napalm, cluster bombs, and secret mass terror programs. The savagery ripped into the fabric of America's own society, dividing the nation almost as badly as its Civil War once had. America ended reduced and depleted in many respects and paid its huge bills with devalued currency.

Following Vietnam, it has just been one calamity after another revealing the same destructive inability to govern, the same thought governed by zealotry, right down to the 2008 financial collapse which was caused by ignoring sound financial management and basically instituting a system of unlimited greed. The entire world was jolted and hurt by this stupidity whose full consequences are not nearly played out.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were completely unnecessary, cost vast sums, caused immense misery, and achieved nothing worth achieving. We now know what was kept hidden, that more than one million Iraqis died in an invasion based entirely on lies. These wars also set in motion changes whose long-term effects have yet to be felt. Iraq, for example, has just about had its Kurdish, oil-producing region hived off as a separate state.

Mishandling Russia

America's primitive approach to the Soviet Union's collapse, its sheer triumphalism and failure to regard Russia as important enough to help or with which to cooperate, ignored America's own long-term interests. After all, the Russians are a great people with many gifts, and it was inevitable that they would come back from a post-collapse depression to claim their place in the world.

So how do the people running the United States now deal with a prosperous and growing Russia, a Russia which reaches out in the soundest traditional economic fashion for cooperation and partnership in trade and projects? Russia has embraced free trade, a concept Americans trumpeted for years whenever it was to their advantage, but now for Russia is treated as dark and sinister.

Here America fights the inevitable power of economic forces, something akin to fighting the tide or the wind, and only for the sake of its continued dominance of another continent. Americans desperately try to stop what can only be called natural economic arrangements between Russia and Europe, natural because both sides have many services, goods, and commodities to trade for the benefit of all. America's establishment wants to cut off healthy new growth and permanently to establish its primacy in Europe even though it has nothing new to offer.

America's deliberately dishonest interpretation of Russia's measured response to an induced coup in Ukraine is used to generate an artificial sense of crisis, but despite the pressures that America is capable of exerting on Europe, we sense Europe only goes along to avoid a public squabble and only for so long as the costs are not too high.

The most intelligent leaders in Europe recognize what the United States is doing

but do not want to clash openly, although the creation of the Minsk Agreement came pretty close to a polite rejection of America's demand for hardline tactics.

The coup in Ukraine was intended to put a hostile government in control of a long stretch of Russian border, a government which might cooperate in American military matters and which would serve as an irritant to Russia. But you don't get good results with malicious policy.

So far the coup has served only to hurt Ukraine's economy, security and long-term interests. It has a government which is seen widely as incompetent, a government which fomented unnecessary civil war, a government which may have shot down a civilian airliner, and a government in which no one, including in the West, has much faith.

Its finances are in turmoil, many important former economic connections are severed, and there is no great willingness by Europe, especially an economically-troubled Europe, to assist it. It is not an advanced or stable enough place to join the EU because that would just mean gigantic subsidies being directed to it from an already troubled Europe.

And the idea of its joining NATO is absolutely a non-starter both because it can't carry its own weight in such an organization and because that act would cross a dangerous red line for Russia.

Kiev is having immense problems even holding the country together as it fights autonomous right-wing outfits like the Azov Battalion in the southeast who threaten the Minsk Agreement, as the regime tries to implement military recruiting in western Ukraine with more people running away than joining up, as it finds it must protect its own President with a Praetorian Guard of Americans from some serious threats by right-wing militias unhappy with Kiev's failures, as it must reckon with the de facto secession of Donetsk and the permanent loss of Crimea all this as it struggles with huge debts and an economy in a nosedive.

America is in no position to give serious assistance to Ukraine, just plenty of shop-worn slogans about freedom and democracy. These events provide a perfect example of the damage America inflicts on a people with malicious policy intended only to use them to hurt others.

There is such a record of this kind of thing by America that I am always surprised when there are any takers out there for the newest scheme. One remembers Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1975 encouraging the Iraqi Kurds to revolt against Saddam Hussein and then leaving them in the lurch when the dictator launched a merciless suppression.

I also think of the scenes at the end of the Vietnam War as American helicopters took off in cowardly fashion from the roof of the embassy leaving their Vietnamese co-workers, tears streaming down their faces, vainly grasping for the undercarriages of helicopters, a fitting and shameful end to a truly brainless crusade.

Messing up Ukraine

I don't know but I very much doubt that the present government of Ukraine can endure, and it is always possible that it will slip into an even more serious civil war with factions fighting on all sides, something resembling the murderous mess America created in Libya. Of course, such a war on Russia's borders would come with tremendous risks.

The American aristocracy doesn't become concerned about disasters into which they themselves are not thrust, but a war in Ukraine could easily do just that. In ironic fashion, heightened conflict could mark the beginning of the end of the era of European subservience to America. Chaos in Ukraine could provide exactly the shock Europe needs to stop supporting American schemes before the entire continent or even the world is threatened.

I remind readers that while Russia's economy is not as large as America's, it is a country with a strong history in engineering and science, and no one on the planet shares its terrifying experiences with foreign invasion. So it has developed and maintains a number of weapons systems that are second to none. Each one of its new class of ballistic missile submarines, and Russia is building a number of them, is capable of hitting 96 separate targets with thermo-nuclear warheads, and that capability is apart from rail-mounted ICBMs, hard-site ICBMs, truck-mounted missiles, air-launched cruise missiles, sea-launched cruise missiles, and a variety of other fearsome weapons.

Modern Russia does not make threats with this awesome power, and you might say Putin follows the advice of Theodore Roosevelt as he walks softly but carries a big stick, but I do think it wise for all of us to keep these things in mind as America taunts Russia and literally play a game of chicken with Armageddon.

I don't believe America has a legitimate mandate from anyone to behave in this dangerous way. Europe's smartest leaders, having lived at the very center of the Cold War and survived two world wars, do understand this and are trying very carefully not to allow things to go too far, but America has some highly irresponsible and dangerous people working hard on the Ukraine file, and accidents do happen when you push things too hard.

The Israel Obsession

In another sphere of now constant engagement, instead of sponsoring and promoting fair arrangements in the Middle East, America has carried on a bizarre relationship with Israel, a relationship which is certainly against the America's own long term interests, although individual American politicians benefit with streams of special interests payments – America's self-imposed, utterly corrupt campaign financing system being ultimately responsible – in exchange for blindly insisting Israel is always right, which it most certainly is not.

An important segment of Israel's population is American, and they just carried over to Israel the same short-sightedness, arrogance and belligerence which characterize America, so much so, Israel may legitimately be viewed as an American colony in the Middle East rather than a genuinely independent state.

Its lack of genuine independence is reflected also in its constant dependence on huge subsidies, on its need for heavily-biased American diplomacy to protect it in many forums including the United Nations, and on its dependence upon American arm-twisting and bribes in any number of places, Egypt's generous annual American pension requiring certain behaviors being one of the largest examples.

Here, too, inevitability has been foolishly ignored. The Palestinians are not going anywhere, and they have demonstrated the most remarkable endurance, yet almost every act of Israel since its inception, each supported by America, has been an effort to make them go away through extreme hardship and abuse and violence, looking towards the creation of Greater Israel, a dangerous fantasy idea which cannot succeed but it will fail only after it has taken an immense toll.

Despite America's constant diplomatic and financial pressure on other states to support its one-sided policy here, there are finally a number of signs that views are turning away from the preposterous notion that Israel is always right and that it can continue indefinitely with its savage behavior.

Recently, we have had a great last effort by America and covert partners to secure Israel's absolute pre-eminence in the Middle East through a whole series of destructive intrusions in the region the "Arab Spring," the reverse-revolution in Egypt, the smashing and now dismemberment of Iraq, the smashing and effective dismemberment of Libya, and the horrible, artificially-induced civil war in Syria which employs some of the most violent and lunatic people on earth from outside and gives them weapons, money and refuge in an effort to destroy a stable and relatively peaceful state.

I could go on, but I think the picture is clear: in almost every sphere of American governance, internally and abroad, America's poor political

institutions have yielded the poorest decisions. America has over-extended itself on every front, has served myths rather than facts, has let greed run its governing of almost everything, and has squandered resources on achieving nothing of worth.

I view America's present posture in the world supporting dirty wars and coups in many places at the same time and treating others as game pieces to be moved rather than partners as a desperate attempt to shake the world to gain advantages it couldn't secure through accepted means of governance and policy.

America is that great beast, bellowing and shaking the ground, and for that reason, it is extremely dangerous.

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