

# Ukraine Rightists Kill Police; Putin Blamed

**Exclusive:** As rightists riot in Ukraine killing three policemen in a protest against making any concessions to ethnic Russians in the east The New York Times had to move nimbly to again foist all the blame on Russia's President Putin, but the Times was up to the propaganda task, writes Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

As I read the latest example of The New York Times' propagandistic coverage of the Ukraine crisis on Tuesday, it struck me that if these same reporters and editors were around in 1953, they would have cheered the coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh as a popular "revolution" putting the beloved and benevolent Shah back on the Peacock Throne.

Similarly in 1954, these credulous journalists would have written about another people's "revolution" in Guatemala removing President Jacobo Arbenz and restoring law and order behind well-regarded military commanders. The Times would have airily dismissed any suggestions of U.S. manipulation of events.

And, for decades, that was how the Central Intelligence Agency wanted American journalists to write those stories and the current crop of Times' journalists would have fallen neatly into line. Of course, we know historically that the CIA organized and financed the disorders in Tehran that preceded Mossadegh's removal and pulled together the rebel force that drove Arbenz from office.

And, the evidence is even clearer that U.S. government operatives, particularly Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt, helped orchestrate the 2014 coup that overthrew Ukraine's elected President Viktor Yanukovich. Indeed, journalists knew more about the coup-plotting in Ukraine in real-time than we did about the coups in Iran and Guatemala six decades ago.

In the Ukraine case, there was even an intercepted phone call just weeks before the Feb. 22, 2014 coup revealing Nuland handpicking the new Ukrainian leaders "Yats is the guy," she said referring to Arseniy Yatsenyuk, who would become the post-coup prime minister as Pyatt pondered how "to midwife this thing" and Nuland dismissed the European Union's less aggressive approach with the pithy remark, "Fuck the EU!"

Several months earlier, on Sept. 26, 2013, Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy (a U.S. government-funded operation that was financing scores of Ukrainian activists, journalists and business leaders),

stated in a Washington Post op-ed that Ukraine was “the biggest prize” and would serve as a steppingstone toward eventually destabilizing Russia and removing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

After Gershman’s op-ed pronouncement, Nuland and Sen. John McCain personally cheered on anti-government protesters in Kiev’s Maidan square. Nuland literally passed out cookies, and McCain, standing on stage with right-wing extremists from the Svoboda Party, told the crowd that the United States was with them in their challenge to the Ukrainian government. Meanwhile, Pyatt advised the coup-makers from the U.S. Embassy.

The U.S. interference was so blatant that George Friedman, founder of the global intelligence firm Stratfor, called Yanukovich’s ouster “the most blatant coup in history.”

Blatant to anyone, that is, who wasn’t part of the U.S. government’s propaganda team, which included the foreign desk of The New York Times and virtually every mainstream U.S. media outlet. Following the script of the State Department’s propagandists, the Times and the MSM saw only a glorious people’s “revolution.”

### **Resistance to the Coup**

However, ethnic Russians from Crimea and eastern Ukraine, the key bases of support for Yanukovich, resisted the new order in Kiev. The people of Crimea organized a referendum in which 96 percent of the voters favored seceding from Ukraine and rejoining Russia, ties that went back to the Eighteenth Century. When Putin and Russia agreed to accept Crimea, the Times and the MSM announced a “Russian invasion,” although in this case the Russian troops were already stationed in Crimea under the Sebastopol port agreement.

Ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine also rose up demanding independence or at least autonomy from the hostile regime in Kiev. The new government responded by labeling the dissidents “terrorists” and mounting an “Anti-Terrorist Operation,” which killed thousands and was spearheaded by neo-Nazi and Islamist militias. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “Ukraine Merges Nazis and Islamists.”]

Although the Times at times would acknowledge the key role played by the neo-Nazis and other ultra-nationalists, that troublesome information along with the Nuland-Pyatt phone call and other evidence of the coup would disappear into the Memory Hole when the Times was summarizing the Ukraine narrative or was decrying anyone who dared use the word “coup.”

As far as the Times was concerned, what has happened since February 2014 was simply a glorious “revolution” with “pro-democracy” Ukrainian idealists on one side and propaganda-deluded ethnic Russian automatons on the other,

depersonalized and ready for the killing. And behind all the bloodshed was the evil Putin.

The Times reprised its propagandistic narrative on Tuesday in an article by Andrew E. Kramer, who tried to put the best face possible on a violent protest by neo-Nazis and other right-wing nationalists against a proposed constitutional change that would grant more autonomy to eastern Ukraine as part of the Minsk II peace agreement reached last February between German, French, Ukrainian and Russian leaders.

Authorities identified a member of Sych, the militant arm of the right-wing Svoboda Party (John McCain's old friends), as the person who threw a grenade that killed three police officers, but the Times made clear that the real villain was Vladimir Putin. As Kramer wrote:

"The [autonomy] measure is fiercely opposed by Ukrainian nationalists and many others, who loathe any concession to Mr. Putin and see him as the driving force behind a civil war that has claimed more than 6,500 lives. President Petro O. Poroshenko had conceded the constitutional change, which is included in the text of the Minsk agreement, with a metaphorical gun to his head: thousands of Ukrainian soldiers surrounded by Russian-backed rebels near the Ukrainian railroad town of Debaltseve.

"Supporters of the change say granting special status to the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk would co-opt the rebels' major selling point, blunting the drive for separatism. Yet the war has angered Ukrainians to such an extent, opinion polls show, that members of Parliament are struggling to win support from voters for any concession."

While the Times' narrative paints Putin as the instigator of all the trouble in Ukraine, it also portrays him as a villain who is on the run because his "aggression" led to Western sanctions, which along with lower oil prices, are collapsing the Russian economy.

Kramer wrote: "Hopes for a peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis have been rising lately in Europe as oil prices have sunk, increasing financial pressure on Mr. Putin. With the Russian economy reeling, the thinking goes, he should be more willing to compromise on eastern Ukraine, the source of damaging Western economic sanctions. But that thinking was not shared by many in Ukraine.

"As Parliament approved the concessions, protesters outside the building scuffled with police, and shouted, 'Shame! Shame!' The demonstrators grew more agitated. Some tore helmets from the riot police and threw them on the paving stones. 'They are trading in our blood and our corpses,' said a veteran of the

war in the east, Volodymyr Natuta, referring to members of Parliament who supported the measure. 'They sold out Ukraine.'

"It [the right-wing killing of the first police officer on Monday] was the first death in politicized street violence in the capital since the 2014 revolution. Officially, the Russian government denies having any hand in propping up the two enclaves in eastern Ukraine. But Ukrainians, not to speak of virtually every Western government and NATO, universally reject that, holding Moscow responsible for all the carnage in the east."

So, having brushed aside the evidence of a U.S.-backed coup and ignoring the role of right-wing Ukrainian nationalists in both overthrowing an elected leader and launching attacks against ethnic Russians, the New York Times has settled on the only permissible view of the crisis: that it is all Vladimir Putin's fault. Perhaps history will know better.

**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](#).**

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## Phase Two of Iran-Deal Sabotage

Neocons and Republican opponents of the Iran nuclear agreement have so worked themselves into a frenzy that their efforts to sabotage the deal are likely to continue even if it survives Congress as new schemes are devised, writes ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar.

By Paul R. Pillar

Anyone tired of hearing about the agreement to restrict Iran's nuclear program is not going to get relief soon, despite the Congressional voting this month that is supposed to decide the matter. It now appears likely that even if the Republican-controlled Congress enacts a resolution of disapproval, any such resolution would not survive a presidential veto, which means the agreement itself will come into force. It also is possible that opponents will fail to get the 60 votes needed to get such a resolution through the Senate in the first place, in which case the outcome would be decided even earlier.

If the Iranian nuclear issue were one that people with honestly expressed substantive differences had been addressing consistently in a sober and well-reasoned fashion, one might expect that those on the losing side of that outcome would accept the result and turn their attention to how they can participate effectively in vigorous oversight of the agreement's implementation. There are indeed substantial opportunities for Congress to exercise such oversight.

But debate on this matter has had a deficit of sobriety and honesty. Some of the principal sources of opposition to the agreement have involved wanting the Iranian nuclear issue to fester indefinitely or for the Obama administration to fail in its efforts to do something about it.

The voting and possible vetoing that will take place later this month thus will mark only the end of one chapter in a continuing political contest. Opponents of the agreement will continue to try to subvert it even after it enters into force.

The partisan divide in sentiment on the issue, which, as Jim Lobe points out, has become increasingly sharp as reflected in opinion polls over the past year, will be one of the drivers of continued opposition. The issue has exhibited a familiar pattern in which members of the public who have little substantive knowledge of the matter of question take their cues from leaders of the party with which they most identify.

A self-reinforcing cycle of adamant opposition by Republican politicians and consequent opposition by a cue-taking Republican base has put the Iranian nuclear issue on a similar trajectory as the Affordable Care Act, i.e., endless preoccupation by the Congressional portion of half the political spectrum with killing it rather than implementing it, no matter what experience may show is working or not working.

Efforts to kill the Iran agreement, after the votes this month that will determine whether the agreement will go into effect, will center on getting the United States not to live up to its end of the agreement. Given that the United States has no obligations under the agreement other than to end some of the punishment it has been inflicting in the form of economic sanctions, the agreement-killing strategy will entail slapping new sanctions on Iran until Tehran is pressed passed the limits of its tolerance for such accord-circumventing behavior.

The specific tactics may involve in effect restoring some of the nuclear-related sanctions that are due to be relaxed under the agreement, but under some new label such as terrorism or something having to do with other Iranian behavior. Ideas have already been advanced along these lines. Other creative ideas of

opponents include having states rather than the federal government sanction Iran.

All such maneuvers will make it difficult for Iranian leaders committed to observance of the agreement to deflect charges from their domestic opponents that the United States snookered Iran and that it is not in Iran's interests to continue to live up to the agreement.

U.S. opponents of the agreement will supplement their sanctions maneuvers with continued efforts to play up any bit of Iranian behavior that is objectionable or can be portrayed as such. The prominence that already has been given to the opponents' contention that sanctions relief will be a "financial windfall" that will fund increased "nefarious" Iranian activity in the region sets the stage, of course, for later drawing attention to just about anything that Iran will actually or allegedly be doing in the Middle East that can be objected to.

The argument will be that any such behavior is a direct consequence of the "windfall," regardless of how much it actually is a matter of Tehran reacting to events not of its own making and has little or nothing to do with Iranian finances. This will all be in addition to making public issues out of anything that can be construed as an Iranian violation of the nuclear agreement itself (which is different from the necessary process of sustained, careful, responsible oversight).

We have already gotten a preview of this sort of tactic with many such construals regarding Iranian observance of the Joint Plan of Action, the preliminary agreement reached in 2013, on which the actual Iranian record of compliance has been excellent.

The U.S. presidential election calendar has given diehard opponents of the nuclear agreement added incentive to inflict lethal sabotage on the agreement within the next 16 months. The prospect of a Republican entering the White House in January 2017 may in this respect present more of a vulnerability than an opportunity for opponents.

Republican presidential candidates have been competing with each other in telling the primary-voter party base how quickly and peremptorily they would renounce the agreement with Iran, with the only differences being whether it would be on the very first day in office, whether renunciation would take place before or after consulting with advisers, etc.

It would be tough for any of these candidates, if elected, to back down from such an oft-repeated pledge. But such a presidential renunciation would be a more direct and blatant unilateral U.S. renegeing on a multilateral accord than

even some of the more aggressive sanctions-restoring tactics mentioned earlier. And such a renunciation would come after three years (counting from when the JPOA came into effect) of Iran living up to its commitments under the agreement and *not* moving to make a nuclear weapon.

The discomfort that the future president would be feeling in this situation would reflect what has been the underlying concern of confirmed opponents of the nuclear agreement all along: not that the accord will fail, but that it will succeed.

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