



YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

Creating Chaos: Covert Political Warfare, from Truman to Putin

Larry Hancock

Last accessed on Sunday December 9, 2018

9 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Yellow highlight | Location: 2,996

From a functional standpoint, NED served to route American government funding through organizations such as the Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), and Freedom House. It is important to note that the legislation which created the National Endowment for Democracy does not contain any language that would prohibit it from being used by the CIA in any fashion, nor does it forbid the employment or even participation of any active or retired CIA officer in its activities. The initial language in the bill did contain such a ban, based in concerns over prior CIA involvement with international economic and humanitarian programs including USAID. A last-minute call on the night before the bill was going to the floor reportedly changed that. House Foreign Affairs Committee chief sponsor Representative Dante Fascell (D-NY) reportedly relayed a message from CIA Director William J. Casey requesting that the ban language be removed—and it was indeed removed prior to passage.¹¹

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 3,104

The NGOs themselves (funded by both the American and European governments) provided funds and salaries that sustained a level of election involvement, which the local economy could not normally have supported. Training was provided on how to monitor the election process and on how to organize nonviolent government protests.²³ NGOs including the International Election Observation Mission (with representatives from the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the Organization for Security and

Cooperation in Europe) monitored the vote and supported exit polling. Beyond that, private NGOs played their own role, with the Open Society Institute (OSI) funded by open society and democracy advocate George Soros. The OSI provided democracy training for student activists, including the techniques that had toppled certain of the former Soviet-era leaders, including Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic.²⁴

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 3,126

In contrast, the initial Russian response to the political situation in Georgia was quite moderate. At the time President Putin himself appears to have had little confidence in the regime—or its ability to stay in power.²⁷ With his hold on government in dire straits, Shevardnadze personally called President Putin, and in response Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (a native Georgian) flew to Tbilisi and met with old acquaintances from various parties, in the end advising Shevardnadze that he had best negotiate a political solution.

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 3,136

The foreign minister's visit and Russian influence are amply documented; Russia clearly exercised political action, but it was of a very soft form. After his election in 2003, new President Mikheil Saakashvili immediately traveled to Moscow, where he made statements of appreciation to President Putin, along with a commitment to government reforms. Soft Russian political action in response to the regime change had apparently been more than sufficient to deal with the situation, even though Putin certainly was aware of the role of the NGOs (and the Bush administration) and in particular the fact that democracy advocates and their media reach had seriously undermined the regime's control of the election results.

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 3,206

Certainly there was western NGO political activity in the Ukraine as well. Once again the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) trained local and international election monitors, organized exit polls, and worked with opposition parties to prepare them for the types of public protests that could be used to contest election results. It also

appears that there were factions within Ukrainian ministries, security services, and even Ukrainian intelligence who were opposed to the overtly pro-Russian campaign being run by Yanukovich. Not only did they provide information to the opposition candidate's camp, but during the elections played a critical role in the government's security response.

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 3,730

While military posturing and economic competition might be considered soft forms of political warfare, they certainly are not in the same category as active destabilization or hybrid warfare practices. In 2014, events in Ukraine triggered a Russian turn to exactly such practices, resulting in a type of political warfare not seen since the Cold War, using new tools to create a level of political chaos not achieved by even the most successful covert operations of the CIA or KGB. The events that ignited this new era are factually clear but will be debated for decades. Inside Ukraine, it began with essentially a repeat of the events of 2004, with the same participants and the same disagreements. In 2004 Viktor Yanukovich had been the pro-Russian Ukrainian candidate, personally and openly supported by Putin. In the end, to the embarrassment of Putin, Yanukovich had not become president. Yet there was considerable pro-Russian sympathy in Ukraine, especially in its eastern Russian-speaking regions, and over the next few years Yanukovich managed to reassert himself with those voters and was elected to the premiership within eighteen months. It was during this period that American political and communications consultants began to be employed in the Ukrainian political jousting. At the time, the turn to American consultants was seen as little different as the previous employment of Russian political "technologists." One of those new consultants—Paul Manafort—earned millions of dollars from his Ukrainian consulting while becoming increasingly visible in American domestic politics.

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 4,251

As early as 2005, Paul Manafort began working as a paid consultant to an extremely wealthy Russian metals billionaire, Oleg Deripaska. By profession Paul Manafort is a lawyer, his extensive career has also involved positions as a lobbyist and political consultant. In fact, Manafort was a political consultant and advisor to the presidential

campaigns of Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H. W., Bush and Bob Dole, and clearly he has broad personal connections at the top of the American political spectrum. Oleg Deripaska owned several mills and factories in Russia and was an early supporter of Vladimir Putin. By 2005 his own public image inside Russia was not all that positive and Manafort was hired as a political/image consultant. In the mid-2000s Russian/U.S. business dealings like these had become quite common. Manafort made introductions for Deripaska, who traveled internationally and met with numbers of influential Americans and Europeans, including politicians such as Senator John McCain. Eventually Manafort and his business partner Rick Gates became involved in a joint effort to purchase New York City's Drake Hotel, which ended with Deripaska in court with a legal action against the partnership.¹⁹ Deripaska's close ties to the Russian leadership and the importance of his connections were further confirmed in April, 2018 when he and his metals company (Rusal) were signaled out for special American financial

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 4,261

sanctions. Manafort's most intensive political consulting was in Ukraine. Press reports there indicate that Manafort was first hired by Rinat Akhmetov, whose iron ore and steel business gave him an estimated worth of some \$2.8 billion. Manafort was ostensibly hired as an advisor on corporate communications for one of Akhmetov's companies, System Capital Management. In reality, Akhmetov was a major supporter of Yanukovych and the pro-Russian Party of Regions. Through Akhmetov, Manafort offered political advice to Yanukovych. Apparently disillusioned with Russian political technologists efforts in the 2004 election, Yanukovych felt that an American political advisor might be of more assistance. Manafort's consulting in the Ukraine began in 2006 and would continue into 2012. As reported in his own financial statements, he earned over \$17 million in professional fees during that period.²⁰ In 2014, Manafort became a subject of interest to the FBI, partly as an outgrowth of a U.S. investigation of Yanukovych, whose pro-Russian regime had been ousted amid street protests. Yanukovych's Party of Regions was accused of corruption, and Ukrainian authorities claimed he had hidden millions of dollars in foreign accounts outside the country. Investigators conducted extensive probes of the possible roles played by Manafort's firm and other Ukraine-associated U.S. lobbyist and consulting groups

(including the Podesta Group and Mercury Public Affairs LLC) in illegal foreign transactions and money-laundering. One of the things that began to emerge from those inquiries was that the firms had not registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. That failure alone could have potentially exposed the two men to compromise and recruitment.

Note:

Yellow highlight | Location: 4,279

In and of itself, Manafort's work for pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine is interesting and consistent with the practice of soft political action—the use of politically connected individuals in an effort for imaging and shaping positive perceptions. However, his outreach to the American ambassador in an effort to temper the State Department's view of Ukraine was something else. More important, his position as a senior political advisor in both a national American political campaign and his potential direct policy advisory reach to an American president is potential shaping of an entirely different magnitude. This potential for serious pro-Russian policy influence came into play when Manafort volunteered his consulting services—at no charge—to the 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump. Reportedly Manafort's offer was extended via Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. The offer was accepted and in March 2016 Manafort joined the campaign's effort to obtain delegates to the Republican Party National Convention, an effort in which Manafort reportedly played a key role. Following Trump's successful effort to obtain the Republican presidential nomination, Manafort was promoted in June 2016 to the position of campaign manager. Manafort's business partner Rick Gates also assumed a role as an official in the campaign. The FBI's initial 2014 interest in Manafort had involved his services as a business consultant and lobbyist for the pro-Russian Ukrainian party of Viktor Yanukovich. By 2016 Yanukovich was in exile in Russia, obtained through his personal friendship with Putin. And reportedly, at some point during 2016, the FBI was advised by the NSA that Manafort was involved in a number of ongoing conversations with Russian political operatives. Beyond that, internal communications between Russian figures (exactly who they are is obviously heavily classified) were also monitored by the NSA.²²

Note:
