

Bernard Casey's Remarks

Eyewitness to the US coup d'état in the Ukraine

Panel 1: "Myths vs Facts about Russia"

"US-Russia Relations: Where are we headed?" Forum

Orinda Community Auditorium in Orinda, California

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to thank Rick Sterling, Chair of the International Issues Committee, at the Mount Diablo Peace and Justice Center, and Sharon Tennison, Founder and President of the Center for Citizen Initiatives (CCI) for arranging this vitally important "US-Russia Relations: Where are we headed?" Forum, and for inviting me to speak today and share the stage with such distinguished colleagues.

Although I have been traveling to Russia and its former territories for over two decades, and have been a member of the Russian Orthodox Church for over one decade, I have been asked to speak today primarily on events in the Ukraine from November 2013 to the present, as these events and false narratives about them in the West, were the catalyst for the recent deteriorating relations between the US and Russia.

In November 2013, I arrived in Kiev, Ukraine, agreeing to accept the position of President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. This was just one day before the fateful Vilnius Summit, where the democratically elected President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement

(AA) and its corollary Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), which precipitated an unprecedented political, social and economic crisis in Ukraine. I have no doubt that it was Providentially arranged for me to be in Kiev, running an American NGO with close ties to the US Embassy, during this crisis.

I fully supported President Yanukovich's decision. In my report "Economic Integration of Russia and Ukraine", submitted to the governments of the Russian Federation and of Ukraine in 2011, I recommended "Ukraine's geopolitical support of Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization; Russia and Ukraine's joint building of a Common Economic Space or joint establishment of a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union; and Ukraine's subsequent accession to the Common Economic Space, or joint establishment of an FTA, with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan."

I warned against Ukraine independently entering into the EU association agreement with a deep comprehensive free trade agreement, which had only about the same level of popular support in Ukraine as did joining the Customs Union and eventual Eurasian Union. I also advocated that Ukraine move to federalism and subsidiarity – the principle that decisions should be made by the least centralized competent authority, which surprisingly is a principle of the administrative models in both the Orthodox Church and in the EU.

In December 2013, US Senator John McCain and Deputy Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland came to Kiev to meet with the revolution and coup d'état plotters – the CIA, US Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt, opposition politicians, and ultranationalists – and to stand on the Maidan

stage with neo-Nazis making anti-Putin threats, and to walk through the crowd passing out bread and cookies to the protestors. After the rally, McCain said this of the revolutionaries: "Those brave men and women should know that they are not alone. Their friends across the world stand in solidarity with them."

During this time, ultranationalists and opposition politicians routinely met with Ambassador Pyatt at the US Embassy to coordinate their actions. Neo-nazis also terrified the population by holding torchlight marches in support of the unfolding revolution.

In late January 2014, Right Sector ultranationalist troops seized and occupied Regional State Administration (RSA) buildings throughout Western and Central Ukraine. President Yanukovich refused to resort to the use of force to remove the militants.

The highlight of my time in the Ukraine was making a visit to the Russian Embassy in Kiev in early February, while the US Embassy in Kiev was orchestrating the Euromaidan Revolution, and about two weeks before the coup d'état that would put a neo-Nazi junta in control of the government. Even in the midst of the US trying to create a destabilized anti-Russian state in the Mother of all Russian cities, the Russian Government was still interested in discussing greater cooperation among Russian, Ukrainian, and American corporations.

Another experience I will never forget is being greeted by Right Sector ultranationalist shock troops in balaklavas, armed with baseball bats, after Saturday evening services at the Kiev Pechersk Lavra on February 15, 2014. The Kiev

Pechersk Lavra, or the Monastery of the Kiev Caves, the center of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, the sole canonical Church in the Ukraine, was starting at that time to become a target of the US-aligned ultranationalists.

On February 20, 2014, an EU delegation moderated negotiations between President Yanukovich and the protestors, agreeing to early elections – in May 2014 instead of February 2015.

On February 18-20, 2014, snipers massacred about 100 people on the Maidan, which means "Independence Square" in English. Although the US Ambassador and the opposition blamed the Yanukovich Administration, the evidence points to the shots coming from a hotel controlled by the ultranationalists, and the ballistics revealed that the protestors and the police were all shot with the same weapons.

Also on February 20, 2014, eight busloads of residents of Crimea, who had come to Kiev to participate in Anti-Maidan demonstrations, were returning home when Right Sector terrorists attacked the convoy, burning the buses, and brutally beating, torturing, and even killing some of the peaceful demonstrators. This horrific event, now memorialized as the "Korsun Massacre", was a turning point to Crimea's destiny. At the time, the same ultranationalist militias were threatening to go down to Crimea to launch attacks on ethnic Russians.

Despite the signing of an agreement between Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and the opposition – the ultranationalist protesters, and their American sponsors, rejected it, and stepped up their campaign of violence. In the evening of February 21, 2014, President Yanukovich, believing that his life was in danger, fled

Kiev for Kharkov, then traveled to Crimea, before taking exile in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. In subsequent interviews, both President Yanukovich and Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that military forces were pursuing the Ukrainian President, and that, therefore, his ouster can be considered as nothing other than a coup d'état.

For me, personally, it was a time of feeling helpless. I was hoping and praying that God would save us from the fascists who had come to power. Therefore, when Russia responded by securing Crimea on Saturday, February 22, 2014, I was euphoric. On March 16, 2014, a referendum on the status of Crimea was held. Over 95% Crimeans voted to reunite with Russia.

Incredulously, US President Barack Obama blamed Russia for the crisis in the Ukraine, and signed executive orders applying sanctions on Russian individuals and businesses on March 6, 2014, April 28, 2014, and July 17, 2014. The EU and other Western nations quickly followed suit.

In my official capacity as President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, I tried to maintain a balancing act between my core Russian Orthodox beliefs, and the expectations of pro-American, anti-Russian stakeholders. The Chamber made a decision to reiterate our apolitical charter, and remain politically neutral during the crisis. However, as it turned out, even the mere attempt to remain apolitical was interpreted by some Ukrainian ultranationalist partisans as a pro-Russian political statement in and of itself.

I routinely met with US Ambassador Pyatt and his officers, expressing my support for the democratically elected President Yanukovich, and my opposition to the

revolution that they were orchestrating. They refused to consider my views, and pressured me from arranging meetings between business executives and the legitimate government of the Ukraine.

I closely monitored the activities on the streets during the most violent days of the Euromaidan Revolution, but decided to close the office only for about 1 ½ days when lives were lost on the streets and public transportation was not fully operating. Upon the onset of the spread of the Ukrainian crisis to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, I spoke by phone a couple of times to the President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow to discuss how our common Members -- with operations in Russia, continental Ukraine, and Crimea – were responding to the situation.

I remember a conversation that I had in my office in Kiev with a Western official. I told him of my opposition to the coup, of my support of Crimea returning to Russia considering the peninsula's 200+ year history as a Russian territory, and of my opposition to US sanctions. He was indignant, and told me that I would not be welcome in Washington. I went on to explain to him how sanctions had been used over 200 times since World War I with limited success, and that those most likely to be hurt by US sanctions against Russia were the people of those economies economically integrated with Russia – Germany, the Baltics, and the Ukraine. He said that he didn't care. So, finally, I said to him, "You do realize, don't you, that US sanctions aren't going to change President Putin's behavior?" He answered, "Yes, we know. We just want to cause him a lot of pain."

On April 15, 2014, the junta leader Oleksandr Turchynov launched a military

campaign against the civilian population of the regions that had seized Regional State Administration (RSA) buildings in the cities of Lugansk, Donetsk, Mariupol, and other cities to express their rejection of the coup-installed regime in Kiev. There are allegations that this military campaign was ordered by the US Government, plausibly as an attempt to prevent the Crimean scenario, that is a peaceful, bloodless exercise of self-determination and reunification with their ancestral Russia.

Shortly after the start of the Kiev regime's invasion of Donbass (which is a historical name for the region of Eastern Ukraine including Donetsk and Lugansk), a friend of mine in the region called me to complain that the US Government had sent English-speaking troops to participate in the regime's military campaign against them. Other sources allege that, after Kiev's initial invasion of Donbass failed when Ukrainian soldiers from Donbass refused orders to fire on civilians and abandoned their tanks, US military advisors in the Ukraine advised the Ukrainian command to use only soldiers from Western Ukraine in their invasion of Donbass. Following this advice led to the bloody war of genocide against the civilian population of Donbass being conducted to this day by the Ukrainian armed forces in cooperations with neo-Nazi militias. Moreover, it is also alleged that US snipers continue to arrive in Donbass to this day, which, if true, would constitute a war crime, and a violation of the agreements made for ending the armed conflict.

On May 2, 2014, pro-government ultranationalist terrorists perpetrated the Odessa Union Trade House Massacre, in which hundreds of anti-Maidan activists, by some estimates, were burned alive. The current junta president Petro Poroshenko, and his sponsors in Washington DC, still refuse to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Nonetheless, on May 10 and May 11, 2014, in referenda, the residents of Lugansk, Donetsk, and Mariupol Ukraine voted in favor of independence from the Kiev junta.

In the past, I have been described as being "acceptable to both Russians and the West." Therefore, when the crisis erupted in Ukraine, it was not surprising that various stakeholders encouraged me to try to serve as a peacemaker. Accordingly, on May 30, 2014, I wrote a letter to Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk in which I conveyed "my availability to serve in an advisory capacity to help de-escalate the political and geopolitical crisis facing Ukraine at the moment, to reconcile all the parties to the conflict within and outside Ukraine, and to restore diplomatic and economic relations among Ukraine and all its neighboring countries." I still haven't heard back.

On July 17, 2014, Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, disappeared from radar when flying over the Ukraine. The US reflexively blamed Russia, claiming that they supplied the freedom fighters in Eastern Ukraine with a Buk missile launcher used to shoot down the plane, without providing any evidence. However, the Russian manufacturer of Buk missiles said that the model of missile used to down the plane was no longer in use by the Russian military. Furthermore, in September 2016, Russia provided radar images that showed the missile was fired from territory controlled by the junta.

On September 5, 2014, and on February 15, 2015, at summits in Minsk, Belarus, the junta leaders of Ukraine, and the legitimate leaders of Russia, France, and Germany agreed to packages of measures for ending the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine known as the Minsk Protocols 1.0 and 2.0. To this date, the junta leaders in Kiev

have yet to fulfill their obligations thereunder.

Why did the US orchestrate a coup d'état in Kiev, oppose federalism and instead support a "unitary" state in the Ukraine? Because the US Government wanted to completely control the Ukraine; to rupture relations between the Ukraine and Russia in the Military-Industrial Complex; to install NATO bases and offensive missiles in the Ukraine, including a take over of the naval base of the Russia Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea; to take over shale gas fields and agricultural land in the Ukraine; and to foment Islamic extremism in the North Caucasus – all with the ultimate goal of overthrowing President of Russia Vladimir Putin – and that, to achieve these goals, the US is willing to fight for Donbass to the last Ukrainian.

My warnings about the perils of the Ukraine turning away from Russia and towards the EU were not heeded, and now the Ukraine's economic and trade relations with its largest investor and trading partner, Russia, have deteriorated; subsidized gas and cheap credits have been exchanged for market rate gas and promises of IMF loans with socially disastrous conditions; de-industrialization has resulted in drastically lower gross domestic product, corporate profits, and tax revenue to the state; becoming a raw materials appendage to the West has not replaced the lost economic output from de-industrialization; and even the mainstay economic sector of agriculture is collapsing.

In short, the current government of the Ukraine has taken a nation that was once ranked 13th in the world as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1989, a nation with G20 economic potential, a nation with close to 50 percent of the former USSR's industry and military-industrial complex, a nation in which the USSR and

Russia had invested close to \$100 billion, a nation that is one of only nine countries with a civil aviation industry and one of only seven countries that regularly launches satellites, a nation with more than one-fourth of the world's fertile black soil, a nation with more than enough energy and mineral resources for self-sufficiency – and somehow managed to turn it into sub-Saharan Africa.

In the past, I was asked to comment on a proposal for a Marshall Plan for the Ukraine, modeled after the original Marshall Plan (or European Recovery Program, ERP), wherein the US donated \$17 billion to help rebuild Europe after the end of the Great Patriotic War (or World War II, as we call it in the US). In response, I remind everyone that the aid provided for under the original Marshall Plan was not given to the fascists in Europe while they were still in power, but rather to the successor governments after the fascists had fallen. Therefore, it is premature to discuss a Marshall Plan for the Ukraine while a fascist junta remains in power, and continues its war of genocide on the Russian-speaking population from Lugansk to Odessa (that is, in all of Novorossiia or New Russia), its campaign of persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, and its oppression and execution of peace activists and opposition politicians. Once the junta has fallen and faced a military tribunal for its war crimes, a government representing all Ukrainians has been elected, and the Ukraine has initiated the process of reconciliation and economic re-integration with Novorossiia and Russia, then the West is welcome to contribute to rebuilding lives and infrastructure in Novorossiia.

Although I returned to California in late November 2014, I am still dismayed by the disinformation about the crisis in the Ukraine that the US Government and

media continue to propagate. For example, the truth is not reported that the Kiev junta is the party that refuses to implement the Minsk protocols, including the start of a real direct dialogue with Donetsk and Lugansk, amnesty to participants in the conflict, special status for the Donetsk People's Republic (or DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (or LPR), and the joint elaboration of a law on local elections, withdrawal of heavy weapons from the conflict zone, and withdrawal of all foreign troops (including US troops) from the country. As for the DPR and the LPR, they have both fulfilled their obligations under the Minsk protocols.

To date, the US-orchestrated coup d'état and civil war in the Ukraine has killed tens of thousands of innocents, and injured tens of thousands more, and created millions of refugees, most of whom have fled to Russia. The Kremlin, no doubt, recognizes that the Kiev regime will not implement the Minsk protocols of its own volition, and will not be pressured to do so by the US or the EU, and that the Kiev regime will continue to escalate its use of heavy artillery against the civilian population of Donbass. Therefore, I expect, that Russia will continue to take measures aimed at saving lives in Donbass, such as continuing to deliver humanitarian aid in addition to the 67,000 tons that they have already provided, and to take measures to facilitate the settlement of refugees, such as their recent recognition of official documents from the DPR and the LPR.

I look forward to your questions in the Q & A period.

Thank you.