

Eastern Europe: From Soviet satellites to American?

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It should have come as no surprise at all the recent disclosure that the Bush administration has spent more than \$65 million in the past two years to aid political organizations in Ukraine, to train groups and individuals opposed to the Russian-backed government candidate, to bring opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko to meet US leaders, and to help to generate an exit poll indicating that he won the November 21 disputed election (thus seizing the initiative in the propaganda battle with the regime).{1}

All the usual suspects were involved: the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the Agency for International Development (AID), George Soros, Freedom House, et al.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States has undertaken a relentless campaign to bring Moscow's former republics and satellites into the fold of globalization and American military outposts, and in some cases to be part of highly-prized oil pipelines.

In the early 1990s, the governments of Bulgaria and Albania were overthrown for not appearing to be suitable enough candidates for such honors.{2} In 1999, Yugoslavia was bombed for much the same reasons. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Washington has used the weapons of political and economic subversion.

The standard operating procedure in a particular country has been to send in teams of specialists from US government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), American labor unions, or private organizations funded by American corporations and foundations; NED, AID, and the Open Society organizations of George Soros, American citizen and billionaire, are the leading examples.

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These teams go in with as much financial resources as needed and numerous carrots and sticks to wield; they hold conferences and seminars, hand out tons of material, and fund new NGOs, newspapers and other media, all to educate government employees and other selected portions of the population on the advantages and joys of privatizing and deregulating the economy, teaching them how to run a capitalist society, how to remake the country so that it's appealing to foreign investors, how to fall happily into the embrace of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The American teams have been creating a new class of managers to manage a new market economy, as well as providing the capital and good ol' American know-how for winning elections against the non-believers. They undertake to unite the opposition behind a single candidate to optimize the chance of unseating the government; they pass information and experience from one country to another; thus the Soros organization -- which has offices throughout the former Soviet domain -- had people from Serbia, who had been involved in the successful campaign to oust Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, share their experiences with people in Georgia who were seeking to oust Eduard Shevardnadze in 2003, and were likewise successful.

This transfer of techniques, including an acclaimed video shown on Georgian independent television, was cited by participants in Georgia as playing a vital role in their toppling of Shevardnadze.^{3}

The demonstrations in Ukraine in protest of the flawed election and in favor of Yushchenko have laser lights, plasma screens, sophisticated sound systems, rock concerts, tents to camp in, and huge quantities of the orange clothing which has come to symbolize their protest movement; yet we are told that it's all spontaneous by the Western media, which give the events extensive serious coverage.^{4}

Compare this to the coverage and treatment in the United States of those questioning the American election of last month.

Yushchenko's ties to the United States are close to home. His wife, Ekaterina (Katherine) Chumchenko, is an American, a long-time committed conservative activist, who was employed at the Reagan State Department and the Bush, Sr. White House. In 1991, she created the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation, whose announced mission includes encouraging free market reform. Most of the foundation's American funding has come from NED and AID.

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Just why do terrorists terrorize?

It can't be repeated or emphasized enough. The biggest lie of the "war o-n terrorism", although weakening, is that the targets of America's attacks have an irrational hatred of the United States and its way of life, based o-n religious and cultural misunderstandings and envy.

To add to the already large body of evidence to the contrary, we now have a report from the Defense Science Board, "a Federal advisory committee established to provide independent advice to the Secretary of Defense." The report states:

"Muslims do not hate our freedom, but rather they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as o-ne-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights, and the long-standing, even increasing, support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan and the Gulf states. Thus, when American public diplomacy talks about bringing democracy to Islamic societies, this is seen as no more than self-serving hypocrisy."

"No public relations campaign can save America from flawed policies," the report concludes.{5}

The Pentagon released the study after The New York Times ran a story about it o-n November 24. The Times reported that although the board's report does not constitute official government policy, it captures "the essential themes of a debate that is now roiling not just the Defense Department but the entire United States government."

For a discussion of this issue see my essay, "Myth and Denial in the War Against Terrorism: Just why do terrorists terrorize?" < <http://members.aol.com/essays6/myth.htm> >

Religion and morality

Here we have Michael Gerson, a man who has the dubious honor of having crafted almost all of

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President Bush's major speeches since 2000, speaking about criticisms of the many references to God in those talks:

"Scrubbing public discourse of religious ideas would remove o-ne of the main sources of social justice in our history.

Without an appeal to justice rooted in faith, there would be no abolition movement or civil rights movement or pro-life movement."{6}

This is highly debatable, not to mention highly ignorant. There can be no question that numerous non-believers were activists and leaders in the abolition and civil rights movements, myself being o-ne example of the latter.

There are also undoubtedly many atheists who are pro-life, as well as many believers who are pro-choice. But what is more disturbing about Gerson's remark is the intimation that atheist folk cannot live lives as morally imbued as religious folk can. I would ask: Who is the more virtuous -- the person who lives righteously because he is afraid of God's wrath or hopes for God's rewards, or the individual who lives thusly because it disturbs him to act cruelly and it is in keeping with the kind of world he wants to help create and live in?

The God-awful (no pun intended) war in Iraq is the current case in point: Who takes a moral stand against the horror? Who supports it?

Bush's "mandate"

President Bush, meeting in Canada with Prime Minister Paul Martin November 30, told his international critics that the US election was an endorsement of his administration's foreign policy.

"We just had a poll in our country where people decided that the foreign policy of the Bush administration ought to stay in place for four more years."

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The fatal flaw of this idea is that inasmuch as his opponent held virtually identical views on foreign policy the American public's vote for Bush can not be interpreted as any kind of endorsement of such policies. Moreover, the president's repeated declaration that he now has a "mandate" is equally meaningless inasmuch as four years ago, when he lost the popular vote, he didn't declare that he did not have any kind of a mandate, but proceeded from Day one as if he had one not only from the American people but from his Lord.

The frivolous use of the word "frivolous"

The Pentagon expressed concern on December 13 over a criminal complaint filed in Germany against US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other officials over the Abu Ghraib prison scandal.

Declared Lawrence DiRita, the Pentagon's spokesman:

"If you get an adventurous prosecutor who might want to seize onto one of these frivolous lawsuits, it could affect the broader relationship. I think that's probably safe to say."

"I think every government in the world," DiRita added, "particularly a NATO ally, understands the potential effect on relations with the United States if these kinds of frivolous lawsuits were ever to see the light of day." {7}

For years now, especially since the founding conference of the International Criminal Court in 1998, which the United States shuns and lambasts at every opportunity, "frivolous lawsuits" has been the mantra repeated by Washington officials to keep the dragon of indictments of Americans at bay. They know they have no legal or moral argument to use to explain why the United States and its officials should be exempt from international law and justice, so they insist that all such indictments are by definition "frivolous" or "politically motivated"; i.e., without sufficient merit to take seriously and undertaken purely out of some perverse anti-Americanism.

Their real concern of course is not that charges of war crimes will be made against American

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civilian and military officials "frivolously", but that they will be made "seriously" and that there are indeed quite a few American officials who would qualify.

The hidden intellectual side of George W.

Fred Burks is retiring from government service after 18 years of interpreting for top US officials. He interpreted for Bush at an Oval Office meeting with Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri in 2001, at which, he says, Bush displayed such a detailed grasp of Indonesian issues that Burks came away thinking that the president must have been fed information through a hidden earpiece. White House spokesman Sean McCormack dismissed Burks's allegation with a laugh and a one-word comment: "Nonsense." {8}

This can now of course be added to the similar allegation made about Bush during his recent election debate with John Kerry. Burks did not speak about any bulge in the back of Bush's jacket.

Royalty makes conspiracy theories acceptable

In a 1992 tape, made public by NBC in November, Princess Diana spoke about Barry Mannakee, a policeman who was assigned to protect her. Reports that Diana had an affair with Mannakee surfaced in Britain in 1998, a year after she died.

"It was all found out and he was chucked out. And then he was killed," Diana said on the tape. "And I think he was bumped off. But, um, there we are. I don't ... we'll never know. He was greatest fella I've ever had." {9}

Mannakee died in a motorcycle accident in 1987, after being transferred from his post as Diana's guard. Imagine that the same charge was made by anyone other than Diana herself. Can there be any doubt that the American media would either completely ignore the person making the accusation or would mock him as a -- yes -- another "conspiracy theorist"?

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Diana died in a Paris car crash in 1997. What will we learn about that someday? Speculation that that too was not an accident has been put forth, but o-nly by conspiracy nuts of course.

Stockbrokers security

During the current heated discussions concerning possible social security privatization, which promise to get yet more heated in the near future, I think it's good to keep the following in mind: When the system was set up in the 1930s it was called social "security" for good reason. It was not called social "investment", or social "speculation", or social "gambling". It was designed to assure the elderly of America of at least a minimum amount of financial security in their old age. As such it been the most successful poverty reduction program the United States has ever had.

Hell hath no fury like a corporation scorned

The head of the Cleveland Clinic, heart surgeon Toby Cosgrove, has criticized the presence of a McDonald's in the lobby of the hospital renowned for its cardiac care. So he decreed the fast-food joint had to go. McDonald's struck back.

They defended their food as healthful and also suggested that Cosgrove is racist for targeting the African-American small businessman who owns the franchise at the clinic, raised the specter of unemployment for its 40 low-wage workers, and that closing down will hurt Ohio beef producers.{10}

As this dispute continues will we be hearing from McDonald's that attacking their menu also leads to gang violence, hunger, and increased global warming?

Happy New Year

It's going to be a fun fun year, 2005. And to better prepare yourself for all the merrymaking here is a calendar of some of the more delightful things to look forward to.

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JANUARY 5: Bush announces that Iran, Syria, North Korea, Sudan and Cuba all possess weapons of mass destruction, are an imminent threat to the United States, have close ties to al Qaeda and the Taliban, are aiding insurgents in Iraq, were involved in 9-11, played a role in the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the attack on Pearl Harbor, and are all "really bad guys".

JANUARY 21: 150 people at a PTA meeting in Des Moines, Iowa arrested in marijuana raid.

FEBRUARY 15: Michael Moore assassinated by man named Oswald Harvey.

FEBRUARY 18: Oswald Harvey, while in solitary confinement and guarded round the clock by 1200 policemen, killed by man named Ruby Jackson.

FEBRUARY 26: Ruby Jackson suddenly dies of a rare Asian disease heretofore unknown in the Western Hemisphere

MARCH 6: Congress passes a law requiring that all persons arrested in anti-war demonstrations must be sterilized. President Bush says it is "God's will". John Kerry votes for the law but declares that he has misgivings because there's no provision for a right of appeal.

MARCH 20: 11 nuns in Glad Valley, South Dakota arrested in marijuana raid.

APRIL 1: Military junta overthrows Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Washington decries the loss of democracy.

APRIL 2: US recognizes the Venezuelan military junta, sells it 100 jet fighters.

APRIL 3: Revolution breaks out in Venezuela endangering the military junta; 40,000 American marines land in Caracas to quell the uprising.

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APRIL 14: ExxonMobil, ChevronTexaco, General Electric, General Motors, Ford and IBM merge to form "Free Enterprise, Inc."

APRIL 16: Free Enterprise, Inc. seeks to purchase Guatemala and Haiti. Citigroup refuses to sell.

APRIL 18: Free Enterprise, Inc. purchases Citigroup.

APRIL 30: Dick Cheney announces that the United States has discovered large caches of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. "So all those doubters can just go "F" themselves," he declares, displaying his much-lauded new moderation in language. But the vice-president can not provide any details of the find because, he says, to do so might reveal intelligence sources or methods.

MAY 9: The Democratic Party changes its name to the Republican Lite Party, and announces the opening of a joint bank account with the Republican Party so that corporate lobbyists need make out o-nly o-ne check.

MAY 11: China claims to have shot down an American spy plane over the center of China. State Department categorically denies the story.

MAY 12: State Department admits that an American plane may have "inadvertently" strayed 2,000 miles into China, but denies that it was a spy plane.

MAY 13: State Department admits that the plane may have been a spy plane but denies that it was piloted by a US government employee.

MAY 14: State Department admits that the pilot was a civilian employee of a Defense Department contractor but denies that China exists.

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MAY 27: 16-year-old boy sentenced to life imprisonment in Mississippi for smoking marijuana.

JUNE 5: President Bush delivers the John Ashcroft Distinguished Emeritus Address on Separation of Church and State at Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC.

JUNE 11: Homeland Security announces plan to take the DNA at birth of every child born in the United States.

JULY 1: The air in Los Angeles reaches so bad a pollution level that the rich begin to hire undocumented workers to breathe for them.

JULY 4: 12-year-old girl put to death in Utah for smoking marijuana.

AUGUST 7: Deserters from US military service seeking political asylum in Canada now number 15,000. Declaring "You're either with us or you're against us", President Bush issues a thinly-veiled warning to the Canadian government.

SEPTEMBER 1: The draft is reinstated for males and females, ages 16 to 45. Those who are missing a limb or are blind can apply for non-combat roles.

SEPTEMBER 4: Riots break out in 24 American cities in protest of the draft. 100,000 American troops who are brought home from Iraq to put down the riots ... join them.

OCTOBER 6: The Bush twins arrested in a marijuana raid on a DC disco.

OCTOBER 8: The Supreme Court declares all marijuana laws unconstitutional, retroactively.

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OCTOBER 19: Cops the world over form a new association, Policemen's International Governing Society. PIGS announces that its first goal will be to mount a campaign against the notion that a person is innocent until proven guilty, in those countries where the notion still dwells.

NOVEMBER 10: Military junta overthrows President Luiz In?cio Lula in Brazil. Washington decries the loss of democracy.

NOVEMBER 11: US recognizes the Brazilian military junta, sells it 200 tanks.

NOVEMBER 12: Revolution breaks out in Brazil endangering the military junta; 50,000 American marines land in Rio to quell the uprising.

DECEMBER 1: Supreme Court rules that police may search anyone if they have reasonable grounds for believing that the person has pockets.

DECEMBER 25: US prison population reaches 2.5 million; it is determined that at least 70 percent of the prisoners would not have been incarcerated a century ago, for the acts they committed were then not criminal violations.

NOTES

{1} Associated Press, December 11, 2004

{2} William Blum, "Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II", chapter 51.

{3} Ian Traynor, "US campaign behind the turmoil in Kiev ", The Guardian (London), November 26, 2004; Washington Post, November 25, 2003, p.22; Wall Street Journal, November 24, 2003, p.1; Neil Clark, "Profile -- George Soros", New Statesman (London), June 2, 2003; the "Central and Eastern Europe" section of the Annual Reports of the National Endowment for Democracy, beginning 1991, mention many of these programs.

{4} John Laughland, "The western media's view of Ukraine's election is hopelessly biased", The Guardian (London), November 27, 2004

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- {5} Christian Science Monitor, November 29, 2004
- {6} Washington Post, December 12, 2004
- {7} Deutsche Welle (German international broadcaster), December 14, 2004
- {8} Washington Post, December 9, 2004
- {9} Associated Press and MSNBC.com, November 29, 2004
- {10} Washington Post, December 15, 2004

William Blum is the author of: Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2

Rogue State: A Guide to the World's o-nly Superpower
West-Bloc Dissident: A Cold War Memoir

Freeing the World to Death: Essays o-n the American Empire
www.killinghope.org

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