

“Human rights” imperialism in Ukraine

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In remarks delivered Wednesday and Thursday, representatives of the Obama administration and the Ukrainian government have sought to stoke up a new Cold War atmosphere against Russia, while proclaiming the right-wing regime in Kiev, brought to power by US and European imperialism in a coup spearheaded by neo-fascist groups, as the front line of the “free world.”

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk set the tone in meetings Wednesday in Washington with Vice President Biden at the White House, and with the editorial board of the *Washington Post*, where he denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin and alleged Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine.

“Putin is playing with the far-right nationalistic sentiment that still exists in Russia,” Yatsenyuk declared—this from a representative of a government that is the distillation of “far-right nationalistic sentiment” in Ukraine. Only last month, the Kiev regime banned the display of Soviet-era military decorations and awards for those who fought in the Red Army against Hitler’s invasion of the USSR, while declaring that the Ukrainian anti-communists who collaborated with the Nazis and slaughtered Jews and Poles were the true national heroes.

Yatsenyuk told the *Post* editors that Ukraine, while not a member of NATO, had become NATO’s front line against Russia. “If we fail, this will be a failure of the entire free world,” he said.

The *Post* responded with an editorial Thursday demanding US military aid to Ukraine and criticizing Obama because “The president has ceded leadership on the issue to Germany and France and overridden those in his administration and Congress who support arms deliveries.”

Yatsenyuk’s theme was then taken up by Samantha Power, the Obama administration’s own ambassador to the United Nations, in an hour-long speech in Kiev

yesterday, delivered to an audience of rabid Ukrainian nationalists. Power is the personification of “human rights” imperialism, having first come to public notice as a critic of the Clinton administration’s refusal to intervene in the Rwandan genocide of 1994—a slaughter that was bound up with the rivalry between French and American imperialism in the region.

Power, an Obama foreign policy aide for a decade, is identified with campaigns for US intervention in Sudan under the pretext of preventing genocide in Darfur, as well as similar efforts in central Africa, Libya, Syria, Nigeria and now Ukraine. Like all defenders of US imperialist interests, Power maintains a crass double standard where the crimes of US allies are concerned (to say nothing of the crimes of US imperialism itself in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries). She has shown no outrage over mass slaughters by Israel in Gaza or by Egyptian military dictator al-Sisi, and she supports the ongoing campaign of starvation and bombing by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

Even by these standards, Power’s speech in Kiev Thursday was remarkable for its duplicity and hypocrisy. She denounced as “myths” the well-grounded contention of Russian officials that “the Maidan protesters were pawns of the West,” and that “Euromaidan had been engineered by Western capitals in order to topple a democratically-elected government.”

In fact, State Department official Victoria Nuland boasted that her agency had bankrolled the Ukrainian movement against the pro-Russian elected president Viktor Yanukovich. She was recorded discussing with the US ambassador to Kiev plans to make “Yats”—as she then referred to opposition leader Arseniy Yatsenyuk—the leader of a new pro-American government.

Power declared that the Maidan movement was directed against “the concentration of power in the

hands of a few oligarchs,” while avoiding any mention of the Ukrainian president who came to power as a consequence: billionaire Petro Poroshenko, known as the “chocolate king,” who personifies the corrupt oligarchy whose grip on Ukraine has only been strengthened.

Turning to the current political crisis in Ukraine, provoked by massive cuts in social spending and living standards demanded by the country’s creditors, including the IMF, EU and United States, Power declared that this was the fulfillment of the Maidan movement of 2013-2014. “It is about moving from demanding change to actually making change,” she declared. “You are still living in the revolution.”

Power’s suggestion that Ukrainians continue to “make change” came only days after the eruption of mass protests against US-backed austerity measures and dictatorial measures adopted by its puppet government in Kiev. There are reports of widespread draft refusal by Ukrainian youth who do not want to be forced into the military to fight their neighbors in the east. Last week, moreover, an LGBT pride parade was assaulted by far-right militias allied with the government.

One can easily imagine what the US reaction would be if these events had taken place in Russia. They would be the occasion for a massive media-orchestrated campaign. Since they occurred in Ukraine, however, they were ignored by the media, while the US presses ahead with its war plans.

Power’s entire speech, along with the statements of Yatsenyuk and the *Washington Post*, turn reality on its head. In the Orwellian world of the strategists of the American ruling class, a right-wing regime installed by an imperialist-backed putsch and facing deep popular opposition at home is a beacon of the “free world,” and the relentless militarization of Eastern Europe by the US and its NATO powers is a necessary response to “Russian aggression.”

All of this serves as the preparation for an even more bloody military escalation. From the beginning, the operation in Ukraine was intended to lay the groundwork for war against Russia.

These plans are now entering a new phase. Earlier this week, the G-7 powers met to denounce Russian “aggression” and declare their readiness to implement new sanctions. And behind the scenes, the US is

developing plans to reintroduce nuclear missiles in Europe and launch preemptive strikes under the pretext of alleged Russian violations of a nuclear weapons treaty.

Behind its increasingly threadbare and naked propaganda, American imperialism is preparing a global catastrophe.



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