

Colored Revolutions:

A New Form of Regime Change, Made in USA

by *Eva Golinger*

In 1983, the strategy of overthrowing inconvenient governments and calling it "democracy promotion" was born

Through the creation of a series of quasi-private "foundations", such as Albert Einstein Institute (AEI), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), Freedom House and later the International Center for Non-Violent Conflict (ICNC), Washington began to filter funding and strategic aid to political parties and groups abroad that promoted US agenda in nations with insubordinate governments.

Behind all these "foundations" and "institutes" is the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the financial branch of the Department of State. Today, USAID has become a critical part of the security, intelligence and defense axis in Washington. In 2009, the Inter-agency Counterinsurgency Initiative became official doctrine in the US. Now, USAID is the principal entity that promotes the economic and strategic interests of the US across the globe as part of counterinsurgency operations. Its departments dedicated to transition initiatives, reconstruction, conflict management, economic development, governance and democracy are the main venues through which millions of dollars are filtered from Washington to political parties, NGOs, student organizations and movements that promote US agenda worldwide. Wherever a coup d'etat, a colored revolution or a regime change favorable to US interests occurs, USAID and its flow of dollars is there.

How Does a Colored Revolution Work?

The recipe is always the same. Student and youth movements lead the way with a fresh face, attracting others to join in as though it were the fashion, the cool thing to do. There's always a logo, a color, a marketing strategy. In Serbia, the group OTPOR, which led the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic, hit the streets with t-shirts, posters and flags boasting a fist in black and white, their symbol of resistance. In Ukraine, the logo remained the same, but the color changed to orange. In Georgia, it was a rose-colored fist, and in Venezuela, instead of the closed fist, the hands are open, in black and white, to add a little variety.

Colored revolutions always occur in a nation with strategic, natural resources: gas, oil, military bases and geopolitical interests. And they also always take place in countries with socialist-leaning, anti-imperialist governments. The movements promoted by US agencies in those countries are generally anti-communist, anti-socialist, pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist.

Protests and destabilization actions are always planned around an electoral campaign and process, to raise tensions and questions of potential fraud, and to discredit the elections in the case of a loss for the opposition, which is generally the case. The same agencies are always present, funding, training and advising: USAID, NED, IRI, NDI, Freedom House, AEI and ICNC. The latter two pride themselves on the expert training and capacitation of youth movements to encourage "non violent" change.

The strategy seeks to debilitate and disorganize the pillars of State power, neutralizing security forces and creating a sensation of chaos and instability. Colonel Robert Helvey, one of the founders of this strategy and a director at AEI, explained that the objective is not to destroy the armed forces and police, but rather "convert them" -- convince them to leave the present government and "make them understand that there is a place for them in the government of tomorrow". Youth are used to try and debilitate security forces and make it more

difficult for them to engage in repression during public protests. Srdja Popovic, founder of OTPOR, revealed that Helvey taught them ". . . how to select people in the system, such as police officers, and send them the message that we are all victims, them and us, because it's not the job of a police officer to arrest a 13-year old protestor, for example. . . ."

It's a well-planned strategy directed towards the security forces, public officials and the public in general, with a psychological warfare component and a street presence that give the impression of a nation on the verge of popular insurrection.

Venezuela

In 2003, AEI touched ground in Venezuela. Colonel Helvey himself gave a 9-day intensive course to the Venezuelan opposition on how to "restore democracy" in the country. According to AEI's annual report, opposition political parties, NGOs, activists and labor unions participated in the workshop, learning the techniques of how to "overthrow a dictator". This was a year after the failed coup d'etat -- led by those same groups -- against President Chavez. What came right after the AEI intervention was a year of street violence, constant destabilization attempts and a recall referendum against Chavez. The opposition lost 60-40, but cried fraud. Their claims were pointless. Hundreds of international observers, including the Carter Center and the OAS, certified the process as transparent, legitimate and fraud-free.

In March 2005, the Venezuelan opposition and AEI joined forces again, but this time the old political parties and leaders were replaced by a select group of students and young Venezuelans. Two former leaders of OTPOR came from Belgrade, Slobodan Dinovic and Ivan Marovic, to train the Venezuelan students on how to build a movement to overthrow their president. Simultaneously, USAID and NED funding to groups in Venezuela skyrocketed to around \$9 million USD. Freedom House set up shop in Venezuela for the first time ever, working hand in hand with USAID and NED to help consolidate the opposition and prepare it for the 2006 presidential elections. ICNC, led by former Freedom House president Peter Ackerman, also began to train the youth opposition movement, providing intensive courses and seminars in regime change techniques.

That year, the newly-trained students launched their movement. The goal was to impede the electoral process and create a scenario of fraud, but they failed. Chavez won the elections with 64% of the vote, a landslide victory. In 2007, the movement was relaunched in reaction to the government's decision to not renew the broadcasting license of a private television station, RCTV, a voice of the opposition. The students took to the streets with their logo in hand and along with the aid of mainstream media, garnered international attention.

Several were selected by US agencies and sent to train again in Belgrade in October 2007. Student leader Yon Goicochea was awarded \$500,000 USD from the right-wing Washington think tank, Cato Institute, to set up a training center for opposition youth inside Venezuela.

Today, those same students are the faces of the opposition political parties, evidencing not only their clear connection with the politics of the past, but also the deceit of their own movement. The colored revolutions in Georgia and the Ukraine are fading. Citizens of those nations have become disenchanted with those that took power through an apparent "autonomous" movement and have begun to see they were fooled.

The colored revolutions are nothing more than the red, white and blue

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