

Retired Intelligence Officer Reflects On How We Came to the Current Crisis

Ray McGovern, co-founder of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), was interviewed by EIR Berlin Bureau Chief Rainer Apel in Berlin, Germany, on Sept. 6, where McGovern had been invited to speak to anti-war groups.

EIR: You worked for a long time in the analysis section of the CIA. Maybe you can tell our audiences a bit more about what you have been doing, and especially, when did the shift come, that you decided to become one of those who speak out? You're also a founder or co-founder of the whistleblowers award. So if you could tell us more about it, this would certainly be interesting.

Ray McGovern: Sure. Well, let me start with the posting I had here in Germany, in Munich, in Pulach, where I was the *Verbindungsmann*, I was a liaison officer to the Auswertung [analysis division] of the BND [Germany's intelligence service]. So in other words, I wasn't engaged in the operational activity, but rather was in control of the substantive exchange of the analysis between what we did in Washington, and what the analysis division, the Auswertung, did for the BND.

So that distinction is important, because it relates to the primary function of the CIA, and that has to do with being able to give the President an appreciation of what's going on in the outside world, without fear or favor. In other words: telling it like it is, speaking truth to power, all those clichés.

Well, people find it hard to believe, but I worked in the vineyard, where the byword was speaking truth to power. I had career protection for telling it like it is, and many times I would. Because I tried to speak the truth, it would not go down very well with the generals with three or four stars on their lapels. They would come to my supervisors and say, "You have to silence this McGovern, he doesn't know that we're winning the war in Vietnam"; and my superiors would say, "No, we think he's right, we stand behind him." So it was a very,

very—well what should I say—enthusiastic atmosphere, it was a very unusual atmosphere in Washington, because we had no axes to grind.... We had no political agenda other than to tell the truth.

And when you tell someone that in Washington, the response is: "Yeah, right, everybody has an agenda, come on!" Well, to the degree we had an agenda, it was to tell the truth. And that's really hard for people to appreciate. That doesn't speak to the operations people.... That doesn't speak to the people who were case officers, and their stock-in-trade is playing around with the truth. So, that's a different sort of thing.

I was able to do that starting under President Kennedy when I came to Washington and started at the CIA. Up until Bill Casey and Robert Gates took over the analysis, and that was in the '80s, and in those days, the analysis started to become a little strange, because they thought that the Russians, the Soviet Union, was just as bad as the Nazis....

The real professionals, the ones who I knew worked on Soviet matters, could see that [former Soviet President Mikhail] Gorbachov was the real deal, okay? And they were able to speak with their own voice, so that people weren't completely surprised when the Soviet Union fell. But that was about the time that I saw that the political winds were letting malleable managers sort of float to the top. And the reason that I mention that, is because it takes about 20-25 years to corrupt an institution. Now, Casey [CIA Director 1981-87] and Gates [Deputy Director 1986-89] came in 1981. So, if you fast-forward 21 years, you're at 2002, when Dick Cheney and George Bush said, "We want to make a war on Iraq, and it's your job to manufacture the intelligence to support that war."

The Intelligence Was Not Mistaken

So, please realize that the intelligence was not mistaken. The intelligence that said that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, or that Saddam Hussein

had operational ties with al-Qaeda—no, *that* was a fairytale; these were fairytales specifically designed to justify the kind of war that Nuremberg called a “war of aggression.”

I watched that. I had retired by then, and some of my colleagues said: This is not only a corruption of our analysis profession, it’s a prostitution of it, because what they’re doing is selling this to our Congress to trick them on the matter of their constitutional prerogative to declare or otherwise authorize war. And there is nothing more important than this.

And that’s when we formed Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity. We just put our 32nd corporate issuance out. That’s not too many, 12 years, 32 memos; we’re very, very particular about which subjects we address.

This last one, we addressed to [German Chancellor] Angela Merkel, because we wanted to tell her, “Look, we’re eight intelligence officers, retired, with the combination of 225 years of serious intelligence work. If you want our advice, you would be very careful before you believed the kind of ‘evidence’ that people like [NATO Secretary-General] Anders Fogh Rasmussen are serving up with these blurry photographs, that indicate a ‘Russian invasion’ of eastern Ukraine.”

The story on that is very simple: It was not the case that the Ukrainian forces were winning, that they were going to mop up the resistance in southeastern Ukraine. The rebels, so-called—they’re called pro-Russian separatists, but that’s not right. They don’t want to separate from Ukraine, they don’t want to be part of Russia. They may be pro-Russian because they have Russian roots and they speak Russian, but what they are is anti-coup, all right? They don’t like coups d’état in Kiev orchestrated by the West. And nor do they like people in Kiev who are obviously anti-Russian.

So, it’s an anti-coup federalist that we’re talking about, and the anti-coup-federalists were beginning to win the war about two weeks ago. And it became clear about one week ago—my God, what happened? The Western press and the Western statesmen were all saying that Kiev is winning, and now they are not only losing, they’re losing big-time. They’re surrounded, they’re fleeing, they’re writing letters home, saying “Mommy, I’m coming home.” You know, these colonels don’t know what they’re doing, and they’re leav-



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ing their rockets and open cases. How do you explain that?

Obviously, “The Russians are coming! The Russians did come, the Russians came in with their tanks and their self-propelled artillery.” *That’s all a big fable.* Are there Russians there? Yeah, they are supporting; but we don’t see any invasion. The federalists didn’t need any invasion, they were doing quite well. And in turning the tide of the battle, they got [Ukrainian President Petro] Poroshenko’s attention; and thank God, yesterday, they worked it out, so there is a ceasefire. There is a better chance of this ceasefire persisting than it has been with the earlier ceasefires.

So that takes you around to why we exist, why we told Angela Merkel, “Really, be aware that there is no Russian invasion.”...

When the Wall Fell

EIR: Two days ago you were at an event here in Berlin, and you told a story about the Malta summit between George Bush the elder, and Gorbachov, at which summit, apparently some deal was struck (although many people say the deal was never struck). The deal, in short, would have been no extension of NATO, in return for the unification of Germany. I think you have an interesting background story on that.

McGovern: Well, it's very clear to me, that when the Berlin Wall fell, just 25 years ago now, there was a chance for peace. Now, in hearing myself say that, I have this real wrenching sensation in my stomach, because that was the most profound disappointment in my professional life. George H.W. Bush had talked about peace: Europe, whole and free, from Portugal to the Urals. That was in Mainz, six months before the Berlin Wall fell, but you could see that Eastern Europe was falling apart. . . . You could see possibilities already happening, and then the Wall falls! What does George H.W. Bush do? He calls up Gorbachov and says, "Mikhail, I'm really sorry about your trouble. Rest assured, we wouldn't try to take advantage of it," actually his words were, "I'm not going to dance on the Berlin Wall." Wow!

"Now Mikhail, we need to get it together right quick, because we're afraid you've got the 24 divisions in East Germany and we know what happened in Hungary in '56; we know what happened in Prague in '68. We don't want you to do any of this stuff, and so I'm going to send my Secretary of State, James Baker. How soon can you see him?"

Now, this is early December. Three weeks after the Berlin Wall fell, and Gorbachov said: "Well, give me two months, and I'll talk this over with my folks, and we'll be ready for Baker in two months."

First week of February, Baker shows up. Who else was there? Jack Matlock, the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union at that time, and later to Russia. He, too, was in Malta for the summit in early December. So two months later, Baker shows up and, according to Matlock, who was with him when he made this proposal, they said: Look, we are going to ask you to not give us any trouble over the reunification of Germany. We know that's a bitter pill for you. I'm old enough to remember that you had some problems with Germany—like they killed 25 million of you Russians—but once you accept the reunification of Germany, how would it be, if we promise not to move NATO one inch further east than Germany?

And Gorbachov said: I don't know about that, and I'm going to have to sell that to my military and the others. And Baker said: Listen, if there's a reunified Germany, we keep it in NATO, that means, they won't develop their own nuclear potential, they will be a much better Germany. We'll keep NATO control of it and, you know, we won't move NATO one inch. Of course you're going to have to pull your 24 divisions out of

East Germany, but I think you were going to do that anyway. . . .

So, what happens is, Gorbachov says to Baker: Look, give me another day, I need to go back and talk to my folks. And as he leaves, Matlock turns to Baker and says: My guess is, you got a deal, you got a deal.

Next day, the deal was concluded: No NATO encroachment further east, in return for a Germany in NATO, unified, and those 24 divisions—that comes to about a 260,000 highly recognized people. So, this was a big deal. You can imagine the generals, how they thought about that, protecting the route into the Soviet Union, and now Russia, from the likes of Hitler and Napoleon and whoever else wanted to come through there. Pull all those troops out? Well, they did! Okay, that was the deal.

Now, a couple of years later, Bill Clinton comes into office, and the Poles and the Czechs and the Hungarians say: You know, we would like to be in NATO. Meanwhile, the Warsaw Pact, which involved the Eastern European countries and Russia, dissolved. There was no more need for the Warsaw Pact, because NATO was very benign and NATO promised not to move further east! Wow! . . .

A couple of years later, you have those three; then 8 or 10 years later, you have 12 new members of NATO, all of them more than one inch to the east of the reunited Germany.

So next thing that happened, 2008—so that is just six years ago—there are rumors that Ukraine and Georgia are going to be invited into NATO. Now, these are pretty much close to the soft underbelly of Russia and the Soviet Union earlier on, and so Sergei Lavrov, the foreign minister in 2008, and still today the foreign minister, he calls the US ambassador in—it was Bill Burns at that time; he is now Deputy Secretary of State. So he said: Ambassador Burns, we're hearing a lot of rumors that you are going to incorporate Ukraine and Georgia into NATO. Let me put it this way: *Nyet*. And *nyet* means *nyet*. Because if you do that, there's going to be hell to pay. It will split the population in Ukraine, they will be at each other's throats, and we'll have to face the possibility of having to intervene there, because we just can't afford to have NATO on that kind of doorstep. So, *nyet* means *nyet*.

An Illegal, Unconstitutional Putsch

Now, how do we know all this? Well, WikiLeaks! WikiLeaks furnished the cable. It was a cable from

Moscow, it looks exactly like all the cables from Moscow and there must be 5,000 of them, that I read through my career. And it's sent with "Immediate precedence"—that means very important. There is routine, there is priority, and there is immediate. This goes back to Washington, and Bill Burns, the ambassador, plays it straight, he says: This is the red line for the Russians. And he titled the cable "Nyet means nyet."

And so that was Feb. 1, 2008. April 3, 2008, NATO meets in Bucharest, issues a declaration: Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO. So, Russian concerns were not taken very seriously.

So that's the root of the crisis, because when there was an illegal, unconstitutional putsch, a coup d'état in Kiev on the 22nd of February, and the Assistant Secretary of State of European Affairs, Victoria Nuland, named, in an intercepted conversation, "He's the guy, Yats," Yatsenyuk, he becomes the prime minister; four cabinet post are filled by proto-fascist people, who led the riots on the last day on the Maidan. And then they start making noises about prohibiting Russian as an official language. Some of them even said: Let's kick the Russians out of Crimea.

Red line! Red line! Russians aren't going to tolerate that, okay?

Now, that was the 22nd of February. It was, if memory serves, almost a month later, that the Crimeans voted for rejoining Russia, and the point is simply, that there was no evidence at all, before the coup on the 22nd of February, that Putin, or any other Russian, had any notion of taking the Crimea back.

So, [some people] start history with Russia grabbing territory for the first time since World War I—but you know, that's not where you start. You start with the putsch! And the Russian reaction to that was totally predictable. . . .

The so-called neo-conservatives don't like that at all, so they were predisposed to blacken Putin, and if it turns out that they can accuse him now of grabbing territory and invading eastern Ukraine, they will do that, and they will have a very, very docile mainstream press, in the United States, in Germany, in Britain, which will tell us the fairytale, that Putin wants to reestablish the Soviet Empire, which is very far from the truth; it's quite the opposite.

NATO, the EU, and the United States would like to expand; *they're an empire*, and just went one coup too far. We don't say "coup," we say regime change, one

regime change too far, when they kicked out a duly elected president [of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich]. Sure, he was corrupt, but if you're a democracy, you don't get him out by a coup, you have an election, right? And you elect a new person, hopefully not so corrupt. Well, in this case, they chose a coup, and the reaction of Putin was totally predictable, and they were just not going to do without their one and only [Black Sea] port in Crimea. . . .

Conspiracy Against Peace

EIR: Don't we have here a case of a conspiracy against peace? I must say that in Germany, conspiracy against peace is a crime against the Constitution. If Germany had something like an impeachment, that would be an impeachable offense. For the USA, what would be the logical consequences of making sure that people who have acted like this can no longer act in the future? . . .

McGovern: Now, having failed to impeach and convict a President guilty of such war crimes [as in Iraq—G.W. Bush], and I use the term advisedly, now Obama comes in, and we have great hopes for him. And what does he do? Well, he makes nice noises about closing Guantanamo. Is it closed? No. Is torture going on? He doesn't like torture. . . . People have been forced. That's torture. People are wanting to leave Guantanamo in a box just so that they can get out of there. That's pretty serious. . . .

Worse still, our President is violating the Fourth Amendment against unreasonable searches and seizures by the NSA, and the Fifth Amendment, which says no one shall be killed, or deprived of life or property without due process. Now, the fancy lawyers say, "Well, that doesn't say, 'judicial process.'" Up until now, it's always said judicial process. So, we do have a judicial process, thank you very much. "We have a list every Tuesday: The President approves of [killing] these five suspected terrorists, so, we do have due process right here, so, thank you very much." Crazy!

So, what I'm saying here is that impeachment is what our forefathers realized would have to happen, every generation, they expected. The Executive is vested with such powers, that human nature being what it's like, they said at every generation they would have to impeach someone for cheating his authority, his power as the Executive, and that's Congress's duty, because it is where the people speak. . . .