



Ukraine and McCain
Guest: Daniel McADAMS
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WOODS: What was the Orange Revolution?

McADAMS: Actually, Tom, we can go back even further. We can go back to 1939, really, and talk about a part of western Ukraine at that had been Poland, that was given to the Soviet Union in that year. That's probably a better origin of the problem. You do have a country that's so strategically positioned between so-called East and West, between Russia and the EU, and there is a very strong divergence of opinion between, say, the largely Polish minority in the western part and the strongly pro-Russian, or more identifying with Russian, sections in the east and in the south. The Crimea, obviously very pro-Russian. But after the end of communism and a lot of the Soviet Union broke up, obviously, the different constituent republics went different ways. Some stayed closer and some moved further from Russia's orbit.

But the U.S., starting in the 2000s, really started fomenting what we now call the color revolutions. There was the Rose Revolution in Georgia, and really the signature one to place in Ukraine, as you say, in 2004, 2005, the Orange Revolution. And I think it is now openly admitted and openly available to see that the U.S. committed as much as \$60 million to help foment this revolution.

What happened, and I'm going to give kind of a real vulgar nutshell here, rather than go into a lot of heavy details, but breaking it down in the simplest way, there was a leader that had been closer to the U.S. He'd spent a lot of time over here in the U.S. As a matter fact, I met him, I guess back in 2001. Very close to the neocons here in the U.S. His name is Yushchenko. And there was another candidate competing for the election, Yanukovych, who had much closer ties to Russia. Well, the election was contested. The US, the EU, the rest of the world, said that Yanukovych, the more Russia-oriented, had cheated, didn't deserve to be president. And here come into the streets these U.S.-funded and equipped revolutionaries, protesters really, demanding a new election. And the first giveaway that this had some U.S. money behind it—Ukraine is a very, very impoverished country. Very, very poor. Shockingly poor, actually, in many places. But all of a sudden, you saw these enormous flat-screen TVs in the middle of Kiev by these so-called democracy protesters. And all of these color-coordinated orange hats and shirts and all of these things. So thank you, Uncle Sam.

Well, the protesters prevailed. They held new elections. The Orange coalition won. Yushchenko and his allies won. They proceeded to crash the economy. Several of them are now in prison under corruption charges, and as soon as the Ukrainians had the opportunity to vote again, they voted for Yanukovych, which is the guy whom arguably they had voted for the first time. The people who had fomented the Orange Revolution in the mid-2000s were not giving up, and as a matter of fact, I would suggest went back to do the same thing but in a much more radicalized way. And some people have even suggested that this is the new phase of the color revolution, so much more of a violent phase where the demonstrators go for a real revolution and overthrow and a coup in the streets, rather than simply calling for new elections. And I think there's plenty of evidence that that's taking place here.

WOODS: All right. So let's talk about exactly what is taking place here. There are riots in the streets and the blame for the violence has been placed by the Western powers on the regime in Ukraine. But you look at some of the footage and it really does seem like the protesters are initiating quite a bit of violence themselves. Sort this out for us.

McADAMS: Well, they are increasingly violent. Their leaders are heads of opposition parties in Ukraine. I should say that these opposition parties are noted for their extreme nationalism, for their extremism. They're also known for their very close ties to the U.S. As a matter fact, our great friend Senator John McCain was there in December, and he actually sat down with the leaders of these three parties, two of which are overtly anti-Semitic. There was an incident the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported last year where they were running around beating people's heads in with T-shirts saying "Beat the Zhids," which is slang for Jewish people. So these are the kinds of people that generally are not welcomed by the people at the State Department and the people in the Senate, but they are closely allied—McCain is meeting with them and talking with them.

But what happened is, in November there was an EU Association agreement that had been negotiated between the Yanukovich government and Brussels. There was a big decision as to whether they would accept the Association agreement, were the terms good enough, was it good for Ukraine, etc.? At the last minute, the president decided to postpone, not cancel, but postpone making this agreement. What it would have entailed is tens of millions of dollars from Brussels to help modernize manufacturing and that sort of thing in Ukraine. But you know, Ukraine's biggest trading partner is Russia, and in many ways it is a good fit because the Ukraine's manufacturing sector is not turning out things that are up to German standards. And at least at this point, there's more of a symbiosis. Well the Russians came in and offered a \$15 billion bailout—orders of magnitude greater than the EU offer. The government found it attractive and accepted it. But as soon as they had rejected the offer in November of the EU Association, that's when these people took to the streets and started protesting and ratcheted it up. And as you point out, there have been thousands of people killed. As a matter of fact, Wednesday of this week, another police officer was killed. One had been killed on Friday a week before. So several cops have been killed. Several protesters have been killed. As you know, Tom, at the Ron Paul Institute we don't get carried away. We don't take sides in these things. But we do point out the hypocrisy of the U.S. in fomenting this unrest and financing and funding a lot of these opposition parties and training them and giving them the tools to do these things. We're noninterventionists so we don't like that and we don't like people like McCain, who encourage these people to get more and more violent.

WOODS: Well, Daniel, forgive me if I'm especially thick here, but it want to make sure I'm following this. If you're saying that a lot of these protesters are aligned with right-wing parties that are, to put it mildly, pretty unfashionable in elite European circles, then what policy toward the EU do these people want? I mean, wasn't the Ukrainian government already moving toward basically an anti-EU position? What position do the protesters want the government to have taken?

McADAMS: Well it is strange. I mean, in many ways, it reminds me of what's going on in Syria, where the US and its allies are financing radical jihadists. You know, the ISIS, the Islamic Front, people that have aligned with al-Qaeda, you have to wonder, well, why on earth are they siding with these people? You know, it doesn't make any sense. And I think it's a marriage of convenience. They need these people on the street to overthrow the existing order.

WOODS: But I guess my question is, why are these people, of all people, on the street? I mean, if you're telling me that Ukraine is more interested in being friendly with Russia than it is being part of the EU, wouldn't a nationalist support that decision? What are they complaining about?

McADAMS: Well the extreme Ukrainian nationalists despise Russia. They are not pro-Russia.

WOODS: Oh. So even that's too open to the world. Okay. I get it now.

McADAMS: Yeah. You have that faction that is very Ukrainian nationalist, and it gets into this, as you say, very extreme, right-wing, national identity, blood and soil sort of thing. So that, there is definitely an element in that.

WOODS: Now why does the U.S. feel like it has a dog in this hunt? Why does this matter to the U.S.? Is it that they really want to see Ukraine integrated into the EU? I mean, who cares? Why do they care? What's the U.S. interest?

McADAMS: Sure. It's a very good question. And I think part of it is just policy inertia. There's no new thinking in the foreign-policy establishment in the U.S. There's still this obsessive Russophobia, our enemy is Russia and we have to do anything we can to stick our thumb in their eye. We saw it a few years ago when McCain was jumping up and down about Georgia, who had provoked the Russian attack back in 2008. And you see the U.S. putting missiles and all of these things in Poland. So there is the sort of reflection of anti-Russian sentiment, which really is unnecessary and counterproductive. Especially how many years since communism has ended.

WOODS: And yet, it would seem to me—and I insert this cautionary note: I'm a sentimental sap—that given the history between Russia and Ukraine, when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, we all know the terrible history they endured in the early 1930s. Millions of them were starved to death on purpose. Just read Robert Conquest. It's unbelievable what was done to these people. And yet, here we are within one human lifetime with the possibility of some kind of reconciliation, where they want to draw closer together, have closer economic ties. Is that bad? Maybe this terrible, awful history that they've had can really now be replaced by friendship. I'm sorry for being so sappy and sentimental, but yet I get the sense that the U.S. government doesn't share my sentiments here.

McADAMS: But you know, trade is a great healer, isn't it? It's the great diplomat. The real irony is that there really shouldn't have been an either/or proposal given to Ukraine. There's absolutely no reason why Ukraine couldn't serve in a position in between the two. You know, where you can't put NATO troops up to Russia's border, but there could be trade and good relations between both sides. Modernization. There's certainly much to benefit from both sides. Russian has all of the gas and the natural resources and western Europe, the EU, has the technology and they don't have, their finances aren't so hot lately, they're not as rich as they'd like

to believe they are, but they certainly do have the ability to help modernize Ukraine. So really it should be a win-win. But there's this zero-sum mentality, that I think is particularly true among Western politicians.

You know what's even more ironic is you have people like Barroso and you have the whole EU commission hierarchy who's screaming about democracy in Ukraine and how they need to restore democracy, but none of these people are elected to their positions in the first place. None of these EU bureaucrats have been democratically elected, yet they feel suited to go around in Ukraine telling people that they need to restore democracy and this sort of thing.

WOODS: Daniel, I'm not sure if you're familiar with a website whose creator I featured on the program a couple of weeks ago: GoldenRuleNews.org. It's called the Golden Rule News Network. It will take a real news story on foreign policy and change the names and the countries involved so as to make an American reader think: what would it be like if we were treated this way? How would we feel? Well, I think you could take this kind of story and say, whoever's in charge of the U.S. is probably some crummy jerk, but would we really be super happy if the Russians were funding some kind of murky movement of anti-Semitic right-wingers to take to the streets to try to replace it with somebody the Russians want? We have our problems, but you know what? We'll solve them ourselves.

McADAMS: Yes. You know, that's a perfect fit for that, because McCain himself, who has encouraged these protesters from the beginning, as they occupy cabinet ministries in Ukraine, they are occupying the justice ministry and have kicked out all the people who work there. They've basically taken over the government and McCain is encouraging it. But you know, this whole Golden Rule thing is perfect, because on several occasions when peaceful protesters have attempted to enter McCain's territorial offices, he's called the cops quicker than you can wink an eye and had them all thrown out.

WOODS: Right. Of course that's how he would act. And it's how he would act if he were in charge in Ukraine. He'd be doing exactly the same thing that he's criticizing them for doing. Well, in fact, what has been the Ukrainian government response? Are we dealing here with a regime that is just so brutal that we have to abandon our normal, neutral posture and say this regime is just so brutal that I'm secretly rooting for the evil, right-wing anti-Semites to take over? Is that what we're facing?

McADAMS: Well, what's interesting is, I can imagine them starting to lose their support because they've been too accommodating. Just in the past couple of days, the Ukrainian president has fired the prime minister and all of his government ministers and he's offered prime minister and deputy prime minister positions to the leaders of the opposition. He pushed forth an amnesty bill that would let off the hook all of these people that are burning down the ministry buildings, and they repealed these laws that made it more difficult to protest with masks on and these sort of things, so if anything, he's proven himself much more accommodating. But each time he gives something to them, they demand more because he's adding more oxygen to the fire.

WOODS: Has there been any official Russian response to the interference of the U.S., to visits of John McCain over to Ukraine? Russia obviously has a bit of an interest in what goes on in Ukraine. Have they had any choice words for McCain or anybody else in the U.S. administration, as far as you know?

McADAMS: They've criticized U.S. involvement in it. And of course, the U.S. says that it's all Russia that's doing the manipulation. And no doubt, Russia has some interest in what goes on next door. We would feel the same way if it were Mexico or Canada. But we featured on the Ron Paul Institute site today an excellent interview that one of our advisors, Professor Mark Almond, did today, and he points out that Russia really views this as an economic deal between Russia and Ukraine, whereas the EU and the US use it as a geostrategic repositioning, as a fight for geo-strategy. So you the have the two sides with very, very different things in mind.

WOODS: So the U.S., then, does not want to see Ukraine grow more friendly and more closely allied with Russia, and so we could tolerate the possibility of a regime in Ukraine that is—I don't know these right-wing parties. Maybe they're not xenophobic. Maybe they're just wonderful people who like Ukrainian history. So I don't want to smear them. However, knowing what I know, probably we're not dealing with the most savory people. But the U.S. would rather have those people in charge, if that's what it takes to keep some kind of a division alive between Ukraine and Russia? Is that the motivation?

McADAMS: Well, I think these people could be easily dropped. I think they're going to find that they have been duped by this whole thing. They think that they will be placed into power, but the reality is they are very unsavory and I think they'll find themselves shoved to the side. I mean, we saw this in several places after the so-called Arab Spring, where the people whom the U.S. had sponsored to get out in the street had found themselves without anything once the revolution took place. So my guess is that's the case. It's important to point out, Tom, that obviously you and I really don't care less because it's, who wins because it's not our fight.

WOODS: It's none of my business. Right.

McADAMS: However, I've actually gotten a lot of hate mail because I've been critical of U.S. policy. They say that I am against democracy. But even by their own standards, you have probably about 10,000 people in the street on a regular basis in Kiev who are protesting this, but Ukraine is a country of 45 million people. So, say a gang of 10,000 people were so angry over Obamacare that

they started burning down the different buildings in Washington, D.C. and attacking them. That doesn't necessarily give them democratic legitimacy. Even if you might agree with their cause, you can't say that democracy's involved because you can't measure a mob in a street and say that that's a majority. That's just not how it's done.

WOODS: What does your crystal ball tell you? How you see this turning out?

McADAMS: I think it will get appreciably worse in the next few days. I think the concessions have only encouraged the opposition to ask for more. I think there's a possibility that the president himself may resign. Who knows. I don't know if he has the stomach for this fight. But absent that, and absent something dramatic happening to set these people back, I think they will continue to ratchet it up. And you may see the other 44.9 million people finally getting irritated that their capital has been trashed, and you may actually see some serious civil unrest in the streets.