

APPLYING THE LOYAL OPPOSITION TRADITION TO FOREIGN POLICY: A U.S.-UKRAINE CASE STUDY (PART II)

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Abstract

This two-part research project analyzes U.S. foreign policy during the Ukraine Crisis from the viewpoint of loyalty to democracy. By applying the standards expected of loyal opposition parties to the U.S., the foreign policy approach taken is shown to have been disloyal to Ukraine's fragile democracy, as it contributed to an undemocratic transition of power in the form of a coup d'état. Ultimately, the failure of the U.S. to remain loyal to Ukraine's democratic process (the way a "loyal opposition state" would have) is explained by the Obama administration's liberal imperialist approach to foreign policy, whose first loyalty was to U.S. interests, not Ukrainian political sovereignty.

Keywords: Ukraine Crisis; democracy; loyal opposition; U.S. foreign policy; liberal imperialism

Introduction

This research comprises the second half of the author's two-part master's thesis on applying the standards of expected of a loyal opposition party to the foreign policy approach of the U.S. during the early stages of

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the Ukraine Crisis. The first half of this research introduced the precariousness of Ukraine's position as a borderland between Russia and the West. It then provided a literature review germane to loyal power-sharing and the development of the loyal opposition tradition. Finally, the first half of this research concluded with standards by which to judge the "loyalty" of a democratic state in regards to other democratic or democratizing states.¹

The second part of this research begins by reiterating the standards expected of a "loyal opposition state" developed in the first half. Following this, the methodological approach for this qualitative research is put forward. Centering on a case study—i.e. the foreign policy approach of the U.S. during the early stages of the Ukraine Crisis—the methodology ultimately seeks to apply the standards expected of a loyal opposition party to the U.S. as a "loyal opposition state." This application centers on four main research questions regarding former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's legitimacy and ouster, as well as U.S. involvement and the nature of its approach during the Ukraine Crisis.

This research answers each of these questions at length and then applies the standards expected of loyal opposition parties to the U.S. in order to determine whether or not it acted as a "loyal opposition state" would have. Following this, the results of this unique application are then placed within the context of the two major foreign policy approaches of the U.S. since the end of the Cold War: neo-conservatism and liberal imperialism. This foreign policy context is then followed by a conclusion that reviews the most salient points made in both research articles, including a few brief remarks on the research limitations of this project.

The Standards for a "Loyal Opposition State"

In short, a "loyal opposition state" is a state whose opposition to another democratic (or democratizing) state's regime is constructive, responsible, and bounded by loyalty to fundamental interests and principles, especially those concerning democracy and political sovereignty.

¹ Isaiah Winters, "Applying the Loyal Opposition Tradition to Foreign Policy: A U.S.-Ukraine Case Study" in *Studia Europaea*, vol. 63, iss. 1, 2018, pp. 235-250.

Methodology

As noted above, the principle aim of this qualitative research is to apply the loyal opposition tradition found within democratic governments to foreign policy—namely, that of the U.S. in regards to Ukraine during the Ukraine Crisis—so as to identify whether or not the foreign policy approach of the U.S. was loyal to Ukraine’s democracy by these standards. To achieve this, the following section will present a case study which will focus on events surrounding the Ukraine Crisis from late 2013 to early 2014. This case study will answer the following four research questions:

- Was President Yanukovich legitimately elected?
- Is it fair to call President Yanukovich’s ouster a coup?
- To what extent was the U.S. involved in the coup?
- Was the U.S. Ultimately Disloyal to Ukrainian Democracy?

Through the analysis of numerous primary and secondary sources germane to the above research questions, this paper highlights the fact that the U.S. foreign policy approach taken was ultimately disloyal to the democratic process in Ukraine. After establishing this, the subsequent section focuses on the reasons why the specific foreign policy approach of the U.S. fell short of expectations for a “loyal opposition state.” This foreign policy approach, which was liberal imperialist in nature, is shown to have prioritized loyalty to U.S. interests over Ukraine’s political sovereignty in a manner that disregarded the prudent cost-benefit analyses advocated by the realist approach.

President Yanukovich’s Ouster in the Context of Loyalty

This section presents a case study which seeks to: a) answer the aforementioned research questions; and b) apply the standards expected of a loyal opposition party to the U.S. based on its foreign policy. The first section shows that former President Yanukovich’s 2010 election was widely considered to be fair and his mandate legitimate, which, as a result, garnered his regime loyalty from other states. Next, the second section shows that the events surrounding President Yanukovich’s ouster constituted

a *coup d'état* rather than a democratic transition of power, and that support for such a transition of power by another state would constitute an act of grave disloyalty. Following this, the third section assesses the degree of U.S. involvement in events surrounding the *coup d'état*, which is shown to have been extensive both before and after President Yanukovich's ouster. Finally, the fourth section establishes that the foreign policy approach of the U.S. was ultimately disloyal to Ukraine's democratic processes, as it promoted regime change by undemocratic means before President Yanukovich had lost legitimacy.

Question 1: Was President Yanukovich Legitimately Elected?

There is ample evidence suggesting that, by most measurements, President Yanukovich was the legitimately elected leader of Ukraine. Firstly, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which works to monitor and safeguard elections across the continent, found the 2010 presidential elections in Ukraine to be in good standing with most international commitments.² The president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, João Soares, called the process an "impressive display of democratic elections" and a "victory" for everyone in Ukraine.³ The heads of delegations such as the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the European Parliament, as well as the head of the election observation mission for the OSCE, all gave similar praise to the election process in Ukraine.⁴

Civil Network OPORA, a non-partisan group of activists in Ukraine, released a report on the 2010 elections detailing the irregularities found at the over 1,000 polling stations observed. To be sure, many voting irregularities were indeed found, however their scale was minor in

² OSCE, *Ukraine's presidential election meets most international commitments*, 18 January 2010, [<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/51830>], 5 February 2017.

³ OSCE, *Run-off confirms that Ukraine's presidential election meets most international commitments*, 8 February 2010, [<http://www.osce.org/node/51888>], 5 February 2017.

⁴ Council of Europe, *Run-off confirms that Ukraine's presidential election meets most international commitments*, 8 February 2010, [<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=2753&lang=2>], 5 February 2017.

comparison to those found in 2004.⁵ The European Network of Elections Monitoring (ENEMO) reported the same, noting significant improvements in the first round of voting⁶ and even better election practices for the run-off elections held one month later.⁷ Together, these sources show that although the 2010 presidential elections in Ukraine had their faults, they were broadly hailed as improvements, thus giving the winner, President Yanukovich, far more legitimacy than he has been given credit for since his ouster.

As a result of his legitimate electoral success, Yanukovich and his regime garnered much loyalty, if only rhetorically, from numerous foreign governments. Among those which openly recognized the legitimacy of the 2010 presidential elections were, for example, the Obama White House, which issued a press release wishing the new president “success in carrying out his mandate.”⁸ Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada,⁹ Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the U.K., and President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia similarly sang paeans to the free and fair elections in Ukraine.¹⁰

Regardless of the illiberal policies that President Yanukovich would go on to implement in the following years, the 2010 elections were undoubtedly a high point in Ukraine’s young democracy strictly in terms of electoral procedures. Initially, the foreign policy approach of the U.S.

⁵ OPORA, *Election Day Report of Civil Network OPORA*, 2010, 18 January 2010, [https://www.oporaua.org/novyny/448-4322-1446977788-2010-01-18], 5 February 2017.

⁶ ENEMO, *Ukrainian Presidential Elections: ENEMO Election Day Findings Preliminary Report*, 18 January 2010, [https://www.ndi.org/files/ENEMO_Report_on_the_2010_Presidential_Election_in_Ukraine.pdf], 5 February 2017, p. 1.

⁷ ENEMO, *Ukrainian Presidential Elections: ENEMO Election Day Findings Preliminary Report*, 8 February 2010, [https://www.ndi.org/files/ENEMO_Report_Ukraine_Presidential_Runoff.pdf], 5 February 2017, p. 1.

⁸ White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Readout of the President’s call with President-elect Yanukovich of Ukraine*, 11 February 2010, [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/readout-presidents-call-with-president-elect-yanukovich-ukraine], 3 April 2017.

⁹ Government of Canada, *Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada*, 15 February 2010, [https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2010/02/statement-prime-minister-canada-513099.html?=&wbdisable=true], 3 April 2017.

¹⁰ Luke Baker, “EU welcomes Ukraine’s Yanukovich”, *Reuters*, 12 February 2010, [http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-election-west-idUKTRE61B2F720100212?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Reuters%2FUKTopNews+%28News+%2F+UK+%2F+Top+News%29&utm_content=Google+International], 3 April 2017.

was characterized by its loyalty to and support for a regime which had established an incipient democratic precedent. A prudent “loyal opposition state” headed by responsible statesmen likely would have maintained this stance into the latest stages of the Euromaidan so as to avoid provoking a destabilizing revolution and regime change by undemocratic means. As we shall see, this was not the case, for the foreign policy approach of the U.S. favored less principled means of regime change that prioritized its own interests over Ukrainian political sovereignty.

Question 2: Is it Fair to Call President Yanukovich’s Ouster a Coup?

The four-letter word which most public figures have been reluctant to use when describing President Yanukovich’s ouster is, of course, coup. Those who have uttered the four-letter word may be few, but they are not insignificant figures. For starters, Russian President Vladimir Putin is a high-profile (and highly tendentious) adherent to this view.¹¹ Less obvious supporters are political scientist John Mearsheimer,¹² American scholar of Russian studies Stephen Cohen,¹³ editor of *The Nation* magazine Katrina Vanden Heuvel,¹⁴ linguist Noam Chomsky,¹⁵ and *Stratfor* founder George Friedman.¹⁶ Although former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has never

¹¹ Blake Neff, “Putin says US backed a coup d’état in Ukraine”, *The Hill*, 23 May 2014, [<http://thehill.com/policy/international/207053-putin-says-us-backed-a-coup-in-ukraine>], 5 February 2017.

¹² John J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault”, *Foreign Affairs*, 18 August 2014, [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault>], 5 February 2017.

¹³ Zoe Schlanger, “The American Who Dared Make Putin’s Case”, *Newsweek*, 10 March 2014, [<http://europe.newsweek.com/american-who-dared-make-putins-case-231388?rm=eu>], 5 February 2017.

¹⁴ Katrina Vanden Heuvel, “Rethinking the cost of Western intervention in Ukraine”, *Washington Post*, 25 November 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/katrina-vanden-heuvel-rethinking-the-cost-of-western-intervention-in-ukraine/2014/11/25/b92f8496-741a-11e4-9c9f-a37e29e80cd5_story.html], 5 February 2017.

¹⁵ Noam Chomsky, “Noam Chomsky: We’re facing a new Cold War”, *Salon*, 15 April 2015, [http://www.salon.com/2015/04/15/noam_chomsky_were_facing_a_new_cold_war_partner/], 5 February 2017.

¹⁶ “Stratfor: Ukraine Coup Plotted by US Over Russian Stance on Syria”, *Sputnik*, 19 December 2014, [<https://sputniknews.com/politics/201412191016024377/>], 5 February 2017.

expressly labeled President Yanukovich's loss of power a coup, he has been an outspoken critic of the West's attempt to pull Ukraine away from Russia's orbit and into organizations like NATO.¹⁷

Though small in number, these and other public figures who have uttered the four-letter word stand on firm ground. Article 108 of Ukraine's constitution states the four cases in which an acting president can be removed from power, and clearly none of them applies in the case of President Yanukovich's ouster. The one that would have been most applicable in this case, i.e. impeachment proceedings, is outlined in Article 111; however, the procedure it mandates was clearly not followed.¹⁸ For one, no investigatory commission was established and the courts did not get involved as they should have. Instead, a bill was simply passed removing President Yanukovich from power. The bill, however, was not ratified by three-quarters of the Rada, as required by Article 111.^{19,20}

Given all this, it is clear that the four-letter word is indeed valid in this circumstance. Though it almost goes without saying, state support for regime change by coup—i.e. by a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power by unconstitutional procedures—would constitute disloyalty if the standards applied to an opposition party were applied to foreign democratic states. As for the U.S., loyalty to Ukraine's democratic and constitutional procedures would not prove to be as high a priority as loyalty to its own interests. Therefore, to have supported the process by which President Yanukovich was removed from power would mean that the U.S. had not played the role of a constructive and responsible "loyal opposition state" bounded by loyalty.

¹⁷ Jacob Heilbrunn, "The Interview: Henry Kissinger", *The National Interest*, 19 August 2015, [<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-interview-henry-kissinger-13615?page=2>], 5 February 2017.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, *Constitution of Ukraine*, 8 November 2013, [https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2013/11/08/constitution_14.pdf], 5 February 2017.

¹⁹ David Morrison, "How William Hague Deceived the House of Commons on Ukraine", *Huffington Post*, 9 May 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/david-morrison/ukraine-william-hague_b_4933177.html], 5 February 2017.

²⁰ Daisy Sindelar, "Was Yanukovich's Ouster Constitutional?", *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 11 May 2014, [<http://www.rferl.org/content/was-yanukovychs-ousterconstitutional/25274346.html>], 5 February 2017.

Question 3: To What Extent Was the U.S. Involved in the Coup?

A few key events suggest that the U.S. played a significant role in shaping circumstances in Ukraine both before and after the coup. For one, Arizona Senator John McCain paid a visit to Kiev amid growing tensions in mid-December 2013 and expressed his support for the opposition in bringing about “a peaceful transition” in Ukraine.²¹ Whether Senator McCain was referring to the presidential elections set to take place in late March 2015 or to a premature transition of power by other constitutional or unconstitutional means is uncertain. Obviously, referring to a transition of power by constitutional means would have been an affirmation of loyalty to Ukrainian democracy, whereas reference to unconstitutional means would have constituted disloyalty.

In late January 2014, just a few weeks before the height of protests in Kiev, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland was scheduled to visit the Ukrainian opposition “to encourage agreement on a new government” and to discuss other plans for further integrating Ukraine into the West.²² The aim was to get President Yanukovich to agree to the formation of a new government that involved key members of the opposition. In early February 2014, a bugged phone conversation between Assistant Secretary Nuland and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt was leaked, revealing significant U.S. influence in choosing which members of the opposition should be included (i.e. Arseniy Yatsenyuk) and which should be excluded (i.e. Vitali Klitschko and Oleh Tyahnybok) in case a deal with President Yanukovich could be arranged.^{23,24,25}

²¹ Guardian Staff and Agencies, “John McCain tells Ukraine protesters: ‘We are here to support your just cause’”, *The Guardian*, 15 December 2013, [<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/15/john-mccain-ukraine-protests-support-just-cause>], 6 February 2017.

²² U.S. Department of State, *Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs: Travel to Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Czech Republic, and Ukraine, January 31 – February 7*, 31 January 2014, [<https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/221073.htm>], 13 April 2017.

²³ Jonathan Marcus, “Ukraine crisis: Transcript of leaked Nuland-Pyatt call”, *BBC*, 7 February 2014, [<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957>], 6 February 2017.

²⁴ John Hudson, “The Undiplomatic Diplomat”, *Foreign Policy*, 18 June 2015, [<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/18/the-undiplomatic-diplomat/>], 4 April 2017.

Interestingly, the State Department made no attempt to deny the authenticity of the recording and, when questioned personally, Assistant Secretary Nuland laughed off the incident, calling it “pretty impressive tradecraft,” presumably referring to the efforts of Russian intelligence services.²⁶ Despite the rift Assistant Secretary Nuland’s call created between the U.S. and the E.U., eventually President Yanukovych did agree to make extensive concessions in a deal brokered by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland. Among the concessions were a return to the 2004 constitution within forty-eight hours; the formation of a government of national unity within ten days after that; a new constitution by September; new presidential elections by December; and agreements to launch an investigation into the recent violence and to not call a state of emergency.²⁷

Nevertheless, the deal did not last very long. Protests reached a fever pitch shortly after its signing, as many of the protesters saw anything short of the president’s resignation as unacceptable, and by the end of the day President Yanukovych had fled the country to Russia. Until this point, the deal that had been brokered just before the coup at least appeared to have been made with loyalty to Ukraine’s democratic processes in mind. After all, the opposition parties were involved, the president willingly signed the deal, and new elections were agreed to by all. The integrity of such an arrangement, in reality, was at best dubious, as it involved foreign states power-brokering for regime change that, at its core, sought the ouster of a democratically elected president at a time when he was under considerable duress.

Although Assistant Secretary Nuland originally sought the legitimacy of the U.N. “to help glue this thing,”²⁸ the deal was eventually brokered by foreign ministers from the E.U., which Assistant Secretary Nuland had initially dismissed vulgarly in her leaked phone call. It would come as no surprise to many if the E.U. ministers’ role in reaching a deal

²⁵ Peter Conradi, *Who Lost Russia? How the World Entered a New Cold War*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2017, p. 254.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ “Agreement on the Settlement of Crisis in Ukraine – full text,” *The Guardian*, 21 February 2014, [<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/agreement-on-the-settlement-of-crisis-in-ukraine-full-text>], 4 April 2017.

²⁸ Jonathan Marcus, “Ukraine crisis: Transcript of leaked Nuland-Pyatt call”, *BBC*, 7 February 2014, [<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957>], 6 February 2017.

had been orchestrated by the U.S. in order to both “glue this thing” and absolve itself for the leaked slur from Assistant Secretary Nuland. Whatever the case, there is little doubt that the U.S. was heavily involved in the deal brokered at President Yanukovich’s 11th hour. In fact, in his own words, President Obama acknowledged that “we’d brokered a transition of power in Ukraine”²⁹ just prior to President Yanukovich fleeing the country.

Following the coup, the role of the U.S. in Ukrainian affairs only intensified. In the government that followed, the intrigues leaked in Assistant Secretary Nuland’s call to Ambassador Pyatt were met out and Arseniy Yatsenyuk did in fact become prime minister. In April 2014, just two months after the coup, the IMF stepped in and offered Ukraine a \$17 billion loan in exchange for reforms, no doubt as an act of economic one-upmanship over Russia’s earlier loan.³⁰ Also in April, just two weeks after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, NATO and Ukraine agreed “to implement immediate and longer-term measures in order to strengthen Ukraine’s ability to provide for its own security.”³¹ Also worth mentioning is the addition of Hunter Biden that same month to the board of Burisma Holdings, one of Ukraine’s largest natural gas companies. This came at the same time when Hunter’s father, Vice President Joe Biden, was railing against corruption in Ukraine. Almost simultaneously, Burisma Holdings had its bank accounts in London frozen as part of an independent government investigation into money laundering.³²

When one considers the U.S.-friendly political, economic, and security outcomes in Ukraine immediately after the Euromaidan, it appears that the U.S. was highly successful at having its interests met. The odds that these outcomes are just a coincidence are miniscule. The ends reveal that the U.S. foreign policy approach in Ukraine was based on the self-interested pursuit of relative gains by almost any means necessary—the

²⁹ Fareed Zakaria, “Interview with President Barack Obama”, *CNN*, 1 February 2015, [<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1502/01/fzgps.01.html>], 7 April 2017.

³⁰ “IMF Survey: Ukraine Unveils Reform Program with IMF Support”, *IMF News*, 30 April 2014, [<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2014/new043014a.htm>], 7 April 2017.

³¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers*, 1 April 2014, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_108501.htm], 8 April 2017.

³² James Risen, “Joe Biden, His Son and the Case Against a Ukrainian Oligarch,” *The New York Times*, 8 December 2015, [<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/09/world/europe/corruption-ukraine-joe-biden-son-hunter-biden-ties.html>], 7 April 2017.

fact that international support was sought from the U.N. and later the E.U. is most probably just cover for the aggressive pursuit of interests spearheaded by the U.S. Therefore, the role of the U.S. leading up to and immediately after the ouster of President Yanukovich was about as far from that of a “loyal opposition state” as imaginable, as it undermined the democratic processes and political sovereignty of Ukraine.

Question 4: Was the U.S. Ultimately Disloyal to Ukrainian Democracy?

Although the blurry, fast-changing events that took place during the Euromaidan raise more unanswerable questions than is desirable, in the end, a strong case can still be made that the U.S. was in fact disloyal to Ukrainian democracy. In order to finalize this case, two more crucial points require special attention: a) that President Yanukovich certainly did lose his legitimacy before the coup; but also b) that the U.S. sought irregular regime change in Ukraine well before President Yanukovich’s legitimacy was beyond salvaging.

Regarding the first point, it is important to note that free and fair elections alone do not make for a vibrant, functioning democracy, as what occurs between elections is just as crucial as the elections themselves. Indeed, President Yanukovich was directly responsible for many policies that undermined Ukraine’s transition from authoritarianism. For example, after winning the 2010 presidential elections, President Yanukovich quickly began reversing the reforms made during the Orange Revolution under former President Yushchenko:

Between 2010 and 2013, Yanukovich rapidly concentrated power and put an end to democratic rule under Yushchenko. Press freedom declined and electoral fraud increased, while parliament took on “a largely rubber-stamp role.” In late 2010, Yanukovich successfully pushed through a reversal of the 2004 constitutional reforms. Finally, Yanukovich’s tenure witnessed “the dramatic and sudden increase in criminal prosecutions of high-level politicians” —including Yuriy Lutsenko and Yulia Tymoshenko.³³

³³ Lucan Way, *Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015, p. 78.

These are certainly damning policies on the part of President Yanukovich that fair elections alone cannot rectify. The one consolation to President Yanukovich's regressive policies was that he was up for reelection in early 2015—a little more than a year after his ouster—and the Ukrainian people could have been encouraged to organize and put a stop to all this. Beyond that hope, there was little about President Yanukovich's regime apart from its democratic election that merited the loyalty it initially received from foreign democratic states.

And yet it is important to bear in mind that these regressive policies did not engender a loss of faith on the part of the West, as the E.U. was still set to sign its association agreement with President Yanukovich as late at November 2013—long after the above-stated regressive policies had been passed. Nor have regressive policies or halfhearted reforms been loyalty deal-breakers for the pro-West regime that has followed President Yanukovich. Much like the failures of President Yushchenko to make significant reforms following the Orange Revolution, the regime of President Poroshenko and former Prime Minister Yatsenyuk has been greatly criticized for its slow and halfhearted responses to corruption in Ukraine.³⁴³⁵³⁶

In effect, it was not President Yanukovich's regressive policies between elections that lost him his international legitimacy in the final stages of the Euromaidan, for the E.U. and the U.S. were still favorably disposed to the Yanukovich regime so long as it remained favorably disposed to the West. Domestically, Ukrainians turned most sharply against President Yanukovich after "the government's unprecedented step of shooting protesters in broad daylight radically increased the costs of loyalty, motivating open defection."³⁷ There is little even a democratically elected leader can do to salvage his legitimacy in the face of protests as

³⁴ Mikheil Saakashvili, "Why Ukraine Is Losing the War on Corruption", *The New York Times*, 16 November 2016, [<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/17/opinion/why-ukraine-is-losing-the-war-on-corruption.html>], 10 April 2017.

³⁵ Oleg Bazaluk, *Corruption in Ukraine: Rulers' Mentality and the Destiny of the Nation, Geophilosophy of Ukraine*, Tamara Blazhevych (trans.), Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, Chapter 4.

³⁶ Agnia Grigas, *The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017, p. 190.

³⁷ Lucan Way, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

ardent and potentially volatile as those that took place during the Euromaidan, especially when that regime's orders led to dozens of civilian deaths from February 18th onward. In short, President Yanukovich did in fact lose legitimacy, but the timing of this is crucial, especially when considering the foreign policies of the other states involved.

This brings us to the second point regarding the timing of U.S. support for regime change in Ukraine. The important factor to keep in mind is the timeline of events, as the U.S. was openly advocating this regime change well before events turned extraordinarily violent.³⁸ Rather than encourage Ukrainian voters to voice their righteous indignation in the following year's presidential elections (as a "loyal opposition state" should have done), the U.S. proved to be disloyal to Ukraine's democratic process by seeking regime change through undemocratic means before the violent orders on behalf of the Yanukovich regime lost the president his people's confidence—though not even a majority of his people's confidence, it should be noted. It is a little-known fact that not even 50% of Ukrainians supported the protests in February, and a substantial portion of the population, especially those in the south and east, saw the post-Yanukovich regime as illegal.³⁹

To summarize, the case study presented in this section shows that the position of the U.S. was initially openly supportive at the time of President Yanukovich's election, and remained largely unperturbed during his years of illiberal reforms. It then switched to being increasingly disloyal only after his regime pivoted to Russia, and this active disloyalty culminated in a last-minute power brokering that used a multilateral guise to legitimize the premature removal of a democratically elected leader by dubious means. The intensity of U.S. disloyalty was odd because President Yanukovich's unpopular decision not to sign the E.U. association agreement could easily have been corrected by the Ukrainian people at the ballot box in the following year's elections.

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs: Press Conference*, 7 February, 2014, [<https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2014/feb/221468.htm>], 13 April 2017.

³⁹ Lucan Way, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

Nevertheless, President Yanukovych was ousted in a coup and then “formally” removed from power by unconstitutional means which the U.S. did not dispute. Following this, a more Western-oriented regime came to power in Ukraine and quickly agreed to further integration with Western institutions. For the U.S., the self-interested ends justified the undemocratic means, as its foreign policy approach did not prioritize loyalty that was constructive, responsible, and bounded to democratic principles the way a loyal opposition party is expected to do. What are the specific facets and shortcomings of this disloyal foreign policy approach? The following section is devoted to answering this question.

Prudent and Imprudent Foreign Policy Approaches

While it is fair to say that the foreign policy of the U.S. was ultimately disloyal to Ukrainian democracy, loyalty was still very much a crucial factor for the U.S.—that is, loyalty to its own interests. What explains this case of disloyalty on the part of one democracy toward another (albeit deeply flawed) democracy? In short, the failure of the U.S. to play the more prudent role of the “loyal opposition state” is explained by its two major foreign policy approaches since the end of the Cold War: the neo-conservative approach and the liberal imperialist approach.

The Neo-Conservative and Liberal Imperialist Approaches

Both the neo-conservative and liberal imperialist approaches are similar in that they seek to maintain U.S. hegemony and spread liberal democracy around the globe, often with little regard for moral contradictions or prudent statecraft. Adherents to these approaches appropriate the notion of American exceptionalism, couch it in the “language of good and evil,”⁴⁰ and then seek to make the world over in America’s image. There is, however, a crucial difference between these approaches in that neo-conservatives favor pursuing the above aims

⁴⁰ Jack Kerwick, “The Neoconservative Conundrum” in *Modern Age*, vol. 55, nos. 1-2, 2013, p. 8.

unilaterally,⁴¹ while liberal imperialists favor doing so multilaterally.⁴² These post-Cold War approaches were greatly influenced by Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" and Charles Krauthammer's "The Unipolar Moment," which portrayed Western liberal democracy as the apogee of human government, and the U.S. as the global enforcer of that standard, respectively.⁴³

As for neo-conservatism, it reached its zenith with the Bush Doctrine, which favored the imposition of liberal democracy through largely unilateral military force. In his book *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It*, Douglas Murray quotes Norman Podhoretz's portrayal of this doctrine as being based on "a repudiation of moral relativism and an entirely unapologetic assertion of the need for and the possibility of moral judgment in the realm of world affairs."⁴⁴ Elliott Abrams put it more simply when he said "The United States is the greatest force for good among the nations of the Earth."⁴⁵ This combination of benevolence and power, Jim Lobe notes, is "not just a matter of protecting our national security. It is a moral imperative."⁴⁶ Neo-conservatism is therefore "revolutionary" in the Trotskyite sense, as it seeks U.S. global hegemony through the imposition of its values and systems internationally, with the ends justifying the means.⁴⁷ As Lobe said when summarizing the essential elements of neo-conservatism, "democracy is desirable, but it always depends on who wins."⁴⁸

As for the liberal imperialist approach, President Bill Clinton was its first post-Cold War adherent. This approach marked a break from the offshore balancing approaches of presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, and is characterized by the pursuit of U.S. global dominance,

⁴¹ Richard K. Betts, "The Realist Persuasion" in *The National Interest*, no. 139, 2015, p. 47.

⁴² John J. Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design" in Justine A. Rosenthal (ed.), *The National Interest*, no. 111, 2011, p. 19.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁴⁴ Douglas Murray, *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It*, New York: Encounter Books, 2006, p. 95.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Davidson, "One-Dimensional Men: Neoconservatives, Their Allies and Models", in Michael Thompson (ed.), *Confronting the New Conservatism: The Rise of the Right in America*, New York: New York University Press, 2007, p. 250.

⁴⁶ Jim Lobe, "American Neoconservatives: A History and Overview" in *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, vol. 35, iss. 3, 2016.

⁴⁷ Jack Kerwick, "The Neoconservative Conundrum" in *Modern Age*, vol. 55, nos. 1-2, 2013, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸ Jim Lobe, *op.cit.*

though with greater reliance on international institutions and greater reluctance to engage in nation-building.⁴⁹ President Clinton's former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summarized the ethos of liberal imperialism when she said "If we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us."⁵⁰ Somewhat more prudent than the neo-conservative approach, liberal imperialism favors greater selectivity for military engagements, and seeks to avoid unilateral "big-stick diplomacy" in favor of domination through multilateral institutions.

The liberal imperialist approach made a clear comeback in 2008 under the Obama administration. While working under the Obama administration, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's foreign policy approach was in effect a resurrection of her husband's. Sounding every bit the liberal imperialist, Secretary Clinton said the following in a 2010 speech⁵¹ to the Council on Foreign Relations:

Solving foreign-policy problems today requires us to think both regionally and globally, to see the intersections and connections linking nations and regions and interests, to bring people together as only America can. I think the world is counting on us today, as it has in the past. When old adversaries need an honest broker or fundamental freedoms need a champion, people turn to us. When the earth shakes or rivers overflow their banks, when pandemics rage or simmering tensions burst into violence, the world looks to us.

Naturally, the liberal imperialist approach was the one taken by the Obama administration during the Ukraine Crisis. Assistant Secretary Nuland's emphasis on getting help from international institutions "to help glue this thing" — with the "thing" being an undemocratic regime change involving U.S.-approved candidates—was illustrative of this approach, as

⁴⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design" in Justine A. Rosenthal (ed.), *The National Interest*, no. 111, 2011, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁰ Micah Zenko, "The Myth of the Indispensable Nation", *Foreign Policy*, 6 November 2014, [<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/the-myth-of-the-indispensable-nation/>], 23 May 2017.

⁵¹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *A Conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton*, Council on Foreign Relations, 8 September 2010, [<https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-us-secretary-state-hillary-rodham-clinton-2>], 24 May 2017.

was the Obama administration's reluctance to unilaterally invade Ukraine and install a new government, as the neo-conservative approach may have advocated.

Though there are indeed important distinctions between these two post-Cold War approaches, it is important to highlight the considerable fungibility of liberal imperialists and neo-conservatives. Few careers exemplify this better than that of Assistant Secretary Nuland. David Rieff⁵² takes note of this in his article *Obama's Liberal Imperialism*:

[Nuland] was Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott's chief of staff during the Clinton administration, principal deputy foreign-policy advisor to Vice President Cheney and then ambassador to NATO under George W. Bush, and first State Department spokesperson and then Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs under Barack Obama.

Since the end of the Cold War (and possibly even earlier), the careers of advocates of either foreign policy approach have been remarkably impervious to the party affiliations and foreign policy nuances of subsequent presidential administrations. Again, probably no clearer example of this exists than Assistant Secretary Nuland, whose husband, Robert Kagan, is an arch neo-conservative associated with many Republican leaders. In short, if there is an ideological war raging between the advocates of these two post-Cold War approaches, neither side is likely to win as there is far too much fraternizing with the enemy.

Three Key U.S. Interests in Ukraine

According to Mearsheimer,⁵³ based on its liberal imperialist approach, the three key interests of the U.S. during the Ukraine Crisis were to shift Ukraine's economic, political, and security orientation westward. Economically, the aim was to ensure that Ukraine further integrated with

⁵² David Rieff, "Obama's Liberal Imperialism", *National Interest*, 11 February 2014, [<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/obamas-liberal-imperialism-9861?page=2>], 24 May 2017.

⁵³ The University of Chicago, *John Mearsheimer: UnCommon Core: The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine Crisis*, YouTube video, 25 September 2015, [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrMiSQAGOS4>], 6 February 2017.

the E.U. and other Western financial institutions. This would bring Ukraine deeper into the West's largest economic bloc and increase its financial dependency on the West. Politically, the aim was initially to provoke a new Orange Revolution, ostensibly with loyalty to the democratic process in mind. That this provoked a coup against a democratically elected president instead is secondary to the fact that the "winner" was pro-West and thus more amenable to U.S. interests. The security-based interest was, of course, NATO expansion, which had already been underway but then gained more traction following the coup,⁵⁴ much to the chagrin of the Russian government.

The greatest obstacle to these interests was, of course, President Yanukovich once he pivoted towards Russia, thereby costing him U.S. loyalty. With President Yanukovich gone, the process of orienting Ukraine westward in these three areas has become more assured, though to varying degrees. Of the three aims, NATO accession is by far the most dangerous because of the very real risk that the Article 5 guarantee of collective defense may be tested. If the frozen conflicts in the Donbass were to suddenly heat up again, then what was once a proxy war largely consigned to the Ukrainian-Russian border could become a direct war involving many states. Therefore, with the Russo-Georgian War in mind, NATO expansion to Ukraine should give the West greater pause.

For the Russian government, the constant expansion of NATO is obviously of great concern, as NATO is, at its core, a military alliance whose principal de facto adversary is still located in Moscow. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, a convoluted historical debate has emerged over whether the West ever explicitly promised the Soviets/Russians not to expand NATO eastward.⁵⁵ While there is no such written agreement in existence, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has called NATO expansion into Eastern Europe "a violation of the spirit of the statements

⁵⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Relations with Ukraine*, 8 December 2015, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm], 6 February 2017.

⁵⁵ Uwe Klußmann, Matthias Schepp, Klaus Wiegrefe, "NATO's Eastward Expansion: Did the West Break Its Promise to Moscow?", *Spiegel*, 26 November 2009, [<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-s-eastward-expansion-did-the-west-break-its-promise-to-moscow-a-663315.html>], 6 February 2017.

and assurances made to us in 1990.”⁵⁶ And yet NATO seems to know no bounds in Eastern Europe: it has expanded eastward in two big stages—one in 1999 and another in 2004—with stated plans for further expansion in Georgia in addition to Ukraine. As Noam Chomsky quipped, “the implication [of the above broken promise] is that if you’re dumb enough to accept a verbal, gentleman’s agreement with the United States, that’s your problem.”⁵⁷

Realism as a Prudent Counter-Approach

With hindsight granting observers 20/20 vision, the ouster of President Yanukovich shows that the economic, political, and security interests of the U.S. have been largely successfully met, though at the cost of rupturing Ukraine’s fragile democratic precedent, an event which precipitated both the Russian annexation of Crimea and the frozen conflicts in pro-Russian separatist regions of the Donbass. Moreover, the fulfillment of these interests engendered a total breakdown of the 1994 Budapest Memorandums on Security Assurances, which were explicit promises agreed to by the U.S., Russia, and the U.K. to respect the territorial, political, and economic independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.⁵⁸ Given that the liberal imperialist approach prioritizes U.S. dominance, the ends nevertheless justified the means.

However, from the point of view of other international relations approaches, particularly the realist approach, there were major flaws with the liberal imperialist approach. Many realists like Mearsheimer are, in fact, opposed to NATO expansion,⁵⁹ because although it may be morally justifiable (largely on the absolutist liberal grounds that the U.S. is good

⁵⁶ Maxim Korshunov, “Mikhail Gorbachev: I am against all walls”, *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, 16 October 2014, [http://rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail_gorbachev_i_am_against_all_walls_40673.html], 6 February 2017.

⁵⁷ Noam Chomsky, *Noam Chomsky discusses Ukraine and Russia*, YouTube video, 14 December 2014, [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-IKRsmCx4E>], 6 February 2017.

⁵⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, *Budapest Memorandums on Security Assurances, 1994*, [<http://www.cfr.org/nonproliferation-arms-control-and-disarmament/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484>], 5 December 1994.

⁵⁹ Richard K. Betts, “The Realist Persuasion” in *The National Interest*, no. 139, 2015, p. 54.

and Russia is bad), such an act does not prudently weigh the consequences in terms of national interests and survival.⁶⁰ The “categorical morality”⁶¹ of the realist approach rejects both liberal imperialism and neo-conservatism, as these display greater disregard for the prudent cost-benefit analyses key to realism. Therefore, as mentioned above, pushing to expand NATO’s Article 5 for collective defense to countries which have had very recent military tensions with Russia (i.e. Georgia and Ukraine) is something that should be avoided.

Secretary Kissinger, another prominent realist, similarly rejects the liberal imperialist approach taken in Ukraine because it disregarded both the internal issues of this “cleft country,” and its special character in the Russian mind.⁶² A more prudent foreign policy in Ukraine, former Secretary Kissinger argues, would consider examining the possibility of some cooperation between the West and Russia in a militarily nonaligned Ukraine. This would respect the nascent development of Ukrainian identity and acknowledge Russia as the great power that it is. To provoke the overthrow of Ukraine’s inchoate democracy, as the self-assured liberal imperialist approach did, failed on both of these levels and destabilized international order in the process.

In contrast to prudent realism, the liberal imperialist approach of the U.S. ultimately proved to be too blinded by its own self-righteousness to maintain loyalty to Ukraine’s political sovereignty, and the fallout from this has created a seemingly unbridgeable schism between the U.S. and Russia. In former Secretary Kissinger’s own words, the “most fundamental problem of politics ... is not the control of wickedness but the limitation of righteousness.” Those who are convinced of their moral superiority, former Secretary Kissinger’s words suggest, are more apt to make imprudent decisions based on their absolutist convictions, something responsible statesmen should seek to forestall by reconciling what is just with what is possible.⁶³

⁶⁰ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th Edition, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson, W. David Clinton, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006, p. 12.

⁶¹ Richard K. Betts, “The Realist Persuasion” in *The National Interest*, no. 139, 2015, pp. 47-48.

⁶² Jacob Heilbrunn, “The Interview: Henry Kissinger”, *The National Interest*, 19 August 2015, [<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-interview-henry-kissinger-13615?page=2>], 5 February 2017.

⁶³ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, New York: Random House, 2001, pp. 134-137.

In a similar vein, Hans Morgenthau noted that “to know that nations are subject to the moral law is one thing, while to pretend to know with certainty what is good and evil in the relations among nations is quite another.”⁶⁴ In Morgenthau’s view, the supreme virtue of politics is not to apply universal moral principles to states in the abstract. Instead, the embodiment of political morality comes through the prudent weighing of consequences with consideration to “the concrete circumstances of time and place.”⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the post-Cold War approaches of the U.S. have “studiously neglected political and diplomatic history,” as they have failed to regulate the present, failed to see the future, and forgotten the past.⁶⁶ The latter is especially true in the case of Russia, whose long-term strategic goals were ignored, even just five years after they were clearly manifested in the Russo-Georgian War.

Crimea is one of Russia’s long-term strategic interests that needs to be remembered when weighing the consequences of actions in Ukraine. A Russian parliamentarian and political scientist made that clear as recently as May 2017, when he warned at the Bratislava Global Security Forum that Moscow could resort to using nuclear arms to defend Russia’s interests if forces led by the U.S. or NATO intervened in Crimea or eastern Ukraine.⁶⁷ It should come as no surprise that Russia would be willing to go to extreme measures to defend these regions given their importance to Russia’s past, present, and future.

The naval station at Sevastopol, Crimea, is of immense strategic importance to Russia, which lacks an abundance of warm-water ports. Through the annexation of Crimea, Russia can better entrench itself as a regional force that, along with its naval station in Syria, now has greater mobility and influence in the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean. There is a strong emotional connection to Crimea as well. Sevastopol was founded in

⁶⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, “Morgenthau (1948)”, in Howard L. Williams and Moorhead Wright (eds.), *A Reader in International Relations and Political Theory*, 1993, Canada: UBC Press, p. 199.

⁶⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th Edition, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson, W. David Clinton, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006, p. 12.

⁶⁶ David M. Jones, M. L. R. Smith, “Return to reason: reviving political realism in western foreign policy” in *International Affairs*, vol. 95, iss. 5, 2015, p. 948.

⁶⁷ Tom O’Connor, “Russia Conflict with NATO and U.S. would immediately result in nuclear war, Russian lawmaker warns”, *Newsweek*, 30 May [http://www.newsweek.com/russia-politician-nuclear-weapons-us-nato-crimea-617613], 31 May 2017.

1783 by Russian Empress Catherine the Great, who formally annexed Crimea the following year.⁶⁸ From 1853 to 1856, the Crimean War was waged, with the final siege on Sevastopol resulting in a stinging Russian defeat.⁶⁹ From the first census of the Russian Empire in 1897 to the most recent Ukrainian census in 2001, the Russian population in Crimea has grown from a plurality to a majority of nearly 60%.⁷⁰ Ultimately, to ignore the emotional and strategic importance of Crimea in the Russian mind would likely be catastrophic.

Conclusion

This research project has sought to frame the foreign policy of the U.S. during the early stages of the Ukraine Crisis within the novel context of loyalty. Loyal opposition, as practiced by political parties within mature democratic governments, provides a useful moral context for pointing out the hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy which, in either of its post-Cold War manifestations, prioritizes loyalty to U.S. interests over loyalty to democratic processes—even when those interests are purportedly to “spread liberal democracy.” Each section of this research project has been composed with specific aims in mind which, when considered as a whole, hopefully constitute a persuasive case.

The introduction (in part I) provided general background knowledge regarding Ukraine’s particularly precarious position as a “borderland” between east and west. As a cleft country, Ukraine has challenges facing it on multiple fronts. Some (though surely not all) of the most salient challenges include its political, economic, and security realities. Politically, since the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine has developed tumultuous hybrid regimes

⁶⁸ Carolyn Harris, *When Catherine the Great Invaded the Crimea and Put the Rest of the World on Edge*, *Smithsonian*, 4 March 2014, [<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-catherine-great-invaded-crimea-and-put-rest-world-edge-180949969/>], 16 January 2017.

⁶⁹Crimea Historical Society, *Crimean War 1853-1856*, no date, [<http://www.crimeahistory.org/crimean-war/>], 20 June 2017.

⁷⁰ All Ukrainian Population Census, *Autonomous Republic of Crimea*, 2001, [<http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Crimea/>], 16 January 2017.

⁷¹ Gus Lubin, “How Russians Became Crimea’s Largest Ethnic Group, In one Haunting Chart”, *Business Insider*, 16 March 2014, [<http://www.businessinsider.com/crimea-demographics-chart-2014-3>], 16 January 2017.

that are prone to sudden oscillations and rampant corruption. Economically, cash-strapped Ukraine is caught in an economic proxy war between Russia and the West. As for security, Ukraine represents a potentially catastrophic final frontier between an ever-expanding NATO and a resurgent Russia. In light of all of these challenges facing Ukraine, and due to the nature of U.S. foreign policy, the country was and still is a geopolitical powder keg waiting to ignite.

The literature review (also in part I) referenced historical and contemporary luminaries closely associated with the traditions of loyal power-sharing and loyal opposition. This literature review provided the necessary context in which to judge the loyalty of U.S. foreign policy, and helped the author develop a basic set of standards by which to judge the “loyalty” of democratic states’ foreign policies. The intention was to later put this set of standards to the test in a case study involving the foreign policy approach of the U.S. during the Ukraine Crisis.

Part two began by providing the methodology for this qualitative research, which included four principle research questions whose answers helped determine whether or not the U.S. played the role of the “loyal opposition state” during the Ukraine Crisis. A democratic “loyal opposition state” that practiced what it preached would, when held to the same standards that opposition parties face when confronted with rival incumbent parties, have behaved in a way that was “constructive, responsible, and bounded by loyalty to fundamental interests and principles” germane to democracy and political sovereignty. Anything short of this would constitute disloyalty.

To the first question posed in the methodological section about whether President Yanukovich was legitimately elected, this research has shown that the answer is affirmative, as evidenced by the election practices which took place and the wide-scale international recognition of his 2010 mandate. Regardless of the faults of the ensuing regime, this research therefore asserts that, when judged by the standards expected of a loyal opposition party, any state which sought to undermine President Yanukovich’s mandate would have been disloyal to Ukrainian democracy. Second, in answer to the question of whether President Yanukovich’s ouster was a coup, this research asserts that it indeed was, and that any foreign democratic state which aided in such an undemocratic regime change

would be guilty of disloyalty. Third, as for the question regarding the extent of U.S. involvement in said coup, this research asserts that it was significant both before and after the regime change took place. Finally, in answer to the fourth question concerning whether the U.S. was definitively disloyal to Ukrainian democracy, this research shows that it was from fairly early on. Thus, the research herein shows that the U.S. failed to act as a “loyal opposition state” when judged by the standards expected of a loyal opposition party.

The subsequent section outlined the contemporary foreign policy approaches taken by the U.S., what loyalties these approaches prioritized, and what a more prudent foreign policy approach would have prioritized instead. The post-Cold War foreign policy approaches of the U.S.—liberal imperialism and neo-conservatism—were shown to prioritize U.S. dominance through the spread of liberal democracy, with the first doing so multilaterally and the second doing so unilaterally. These approaches were shown to have been byproducts of a euphoric post-Cold War U.S. convinced of its moral superiority. The lack of prudent statecraft practiced by states guided by a sense of self-righteousness was then contrasted with the realist approach, which favors a more responsible balance between what is just and what is possible. Therefore, as the stakes in Ukraine were extremely high on account of Russia’s considerable interests there, the morally self-assured foreign policy approach taken by the U.S. during the Ukraine Crisis was dangerous, irresponsible, and ultimately disloyal to Ukraine’s fragile democracy and political sovereignty.

Research Limitations

There are a few key limitations to this research worth mentioning. First, it is difficult to know exactly how all events played out during the Euromaidan, as well as the intentions of each actor involved. This leaves many of the events and influences behind them open to conjecture. For example, Senator McCain’s early expression of support for “a peaceful transition” of power is hazy as to its intentions. Was he advocating a peaceful transition of power in the following year’s presidential elections or a transition by any means necessary? Admittedly, the safest way forward would be to conjecture based on Senator McCain’s foreign policy track

record, which skews strongly neo-conservative. Still, there is no way to know for certain.

Similarly, does Assistant Secretary Nuland's outreach to the U.N., and then later to the E.U., in order "to help glue this thing" make the U.S. a less culpable player in the ill-fated deal with President Yanukovich, or was said outreach simply a multilateral mask for U.S. interests? Lacking omniscience and the power of instant replays for these and other cases, the author of this research has chosen to wield Occam's Razor and assume that the simplest, most obvious explanations are likely to carry the most explanatory power. Given Secretary Nuland's track record (and consideration of the E.U.), the author believes the assumptions made in this research are reasonable.

Lastly, the author acknowledges that the application of a tradition of loyalty found within democratic governments to their foreign policies is obviously not an apples-to-apples comparison, nor is it intended to be. The intention behind this application has been to highlight the discordance between the U.S. government's internal and external practices, and to show that when a state guided by hidebound moral convictions has its foreign policy subjected to its own domestic standards for loyalty to democracy, that foreign policy is likely to fall short. Self-reflection of this sort is sorely missing from much of U.S. foreign policy, something this research has hoped to rectify.

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