

USAID and NGOs for Narrative Control and War

by Professor Glenn Diesen,* Norway



Glenn Diesen.
(Picture ma)

President Trump's decision to cut funding to USAID revealed the extent to which the US government has been financing media, protests and other means to hijack civil society around the world. In Ukraine, USAID had a key role in toppling President Yanukovich in

2014 and has since financed between 85–90% of Ukrainian media to ensure narrative control. The Georgian Prime Minister has also been warning that Western NGOs have been activated to topple the government and convert Georgia into a second front against Russia.

There is also overwhelming evidence that the US government established "non-governmental organisations" (NGOs) since the 1980s that are financed by the US government, staffed with people linked to the US intelligence community, and pursue US geopolitical interests under the guise of promoting democracy and human rights. One of these "NGOs" is the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED) established by *Reagan* to take over some of the tasks of the CIA. These organisations are instruments for the US to govern the societies of other nations and pursue regime change when necessary.

Subverting Democracy and Pursuing War

When Volodymyr Zelensky won a landslide victory in the 2019 presidential election on a peace platform, the US activated its NGOs to ensure that Zelensky would reverse and abandon his



Via USAID, NGOs are financed to manipulate civil societies and prevent peace. (Picture ma)

peace mandate. Zelensky had won 73% of the votes by promising to engage in talks with Donbas, make peace with Russia, and implement the *Minsk peace agreement*. Furthermore, Zelensky argued in favour of preserving language rights and religious rights to prevent divisions in society. Immediately, protests emerged with NGOs presenting Zelensky's peace platform as "capitulation".

One of the US-financed "NGOs" was the *Ukraine Crisis Media Centre* which had been established allegedly to "promote the development of a self-sufficient Ukrainian state and society", something I would certainly support. However, this is yet another NGO created by the US to subvert society and prevent peace from breaking out.

The *Ukraine Crisis Media Centre* threatened Zelensky and warned him against delivering on his election promises: "As civil society activists, we present a list of 'red lines not to be crossed'. Should the President cross these red lines, such actions will inevitably lead to political instability in our country and the deterioration of international relations."¹

These red lines included

- "holding a referendum on the negotiations format to be used with the Russian Federation and on the principles for a peaceful settlement;
- conducting negotiations without the Western states;
- making concessions to the detriment of national interests;
- failing to implement the security and defence policies of the former government;

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delaying, sabotaging, or rejecting the strategic course for EU and NATO membership;

initiating any actions that might contribute to the reduction or lifting of sanctions against the aggressor state by Ukraine's international partners;

attempting to review the language law or supporting the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine;

ignoring dialogue with civil society" etc.

Simply put, abandon the peace platform supported by the overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian population, otherwise the US-funded NGOs would make sure Zelensky is also ousted from power.

This threat from the US-financed NGO was countered with death threats from US-financed far-right groups. Zelensky eventually abandoned the peace mandate, ignored the Minsk peace agreement and fell in line with US policy.

The donors to the *Ukraine Crisis Media Centre* that financed the cancellation of Zelensky's peace mandate include USAID, the *National Endowment for Democracy*, the US embassy, and various Nordic governments. On the list of donors is also The *Institute for Statecraft*, the discredited organisation behind the *Integrity Initiative*. The Integrity Initiative was caught in a covert operation of creating "clusters" of loyal politicians, journalists and academics to manufacture the impression of an established consensus to control the narrative. The Integrity Initiative was also working with UK intelligence agencies to target dissent in politics and the media.

My Encounter with these "NGOs"

USAID, NED and other NGOs also operate in countries allied with the US to prevent dissent and preserve bloc discipline. The *Ukraine Crisis Media Centre* wrote an entire article smearing me in its project of "Shady horses of Russian propaganda", which listed false accusations such as being a "defender of Russia's aggression". The evidence for the absurd accusations included my conversations with Professor *John Mearsheimer* and former US Senator *Ron Paul*, which are labelled Kremlin "mouthpieces" by this NGO.² The Norwegian government (my own government) is also listed as a donor to this project of intimidation and smears.

The US foreign ministry, the *National Endowment for Democracy*, and my own government also finance the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee*, another "human rights NGO", which has pursued

a project of systematic intimidation against me for the past 4 years.

Their tactics against me include regular smear pieces in the media, almost weekly tweets labelling me a propagandist for Russia, letters and phone calls to the head of my university to end my position as a professor, calls on other academics to go against me, efforts to cancel me from events where I have been invited to speak, etc.

After successfully whipping up hatred in the public, the police advised me to hide my address and phone number. At this point, an employee at the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee* published a picture of my house on social media.

These are the activities that my own government finances under the guise of supporting an "NGO" that promotes democracy and human rights. In response to the purge of academic freedom, I am now in the process of acquiring another citizenship to relocate to a country where civil society is not outsourced to fake NGOs pushing war propaganda and censorship.

What was my great crime? I have been deeply critical of NATO's policies towards Ukraine since the NGO-backed "Orange Revolution" in 2004.

For years I criticised the efforts to pull Ukraine into NATO's orbit when only a small minority of Ukrainians wanted to join the military alliance, and NATO was aware it would likely trigger a war.

I criticised the EU's rejection of Ukraine's proposal for a trilateral EU-Ukraine-Russia agreement in 2013 that would have made Ukraine a bridge rather than a frontline. I warned that the NGO-backed toppling of *Yanukovych* in 2014 would result in Russia's seizing Crimea and war.

For 7 years, I insisted that sabotaging the Minsk peace agreement would result in a military solution to the conflict. Since 2022, I have argued that the sabotage of the *Istanbul peace agreement* and the boycott of all diplomacy and negotiations would result in Russia destroying Ukraine in a war of attrition. From my perspective, these are pro-Ukrainian arguments that would have preserved Ukrainian sovereignty, territory and lives.

The people who advocated for the policies that destroyed Ukraine and has taken us close to nuclear war have a monopoly on the media, and all dissent is crushed with smears, censorship and cancellation. We have more newspapers

than I can count, yet they all write the same thing and cite the same “NGOs”.

Even now, it is still considered controversial and suspicious to argue for peace negotiations, even as the majority of Ukrainians want negotiations, the war has been lost, and Ukraine suffers greatly with the loss of men and territory every day.

Criticism of the NATO war narratives is not met with counterarguments, rather it is met only with accusations of having evil intentions, being “controversial” and “pro-Russian”, legitimising the invasion, not caring about Ukrainians, spreading propaganda etc. These crude and pathetic attacks do not have to be substantiated as the assault on free speech and academic freedom are always wrapped in moralistic language and claims about defending democracy.

Everything I have argued played out as predicted, including why the sanctions were destined to fail. I can confidently argue why my analyses have been correct and why my policy recommendations would have prevented this disaster. However, I do not live in an open society with the free exchange of ideas. I live in a society where government-sponsored smears, censorship and cancellation are permitted as long as an NGO is used as a middleman.

Source: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/p/usaid-and-ngos-for-narrative-control>, 10 February 2025

¹ *Joint statement by civil society representatives on the first political steps of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky | UACRISIS.ORG*

² *Kremlin Shady Horse's: Glenn Diesen - Russian pro paganda aligned rhetoric, defender of Russia's aggression, blames NATO for expansionism | UACRISIS.ORG*