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Ukraine's Orange Revolution and Foreign Policy of U.S.

Ukrayna'nın Turuncu Devrimi ve Amerikan Dış Politikası

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A B S T R A C T

Following the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine, people took streets in what is to be known as the Orange Revolution. The non-violent series of protests ensured fair and transparent elections and the transition of power from Leonid Kuchma to Viktor Yushchenko. The events that preceded the Orange Revolution and the protests themselves came under the international spotlight, setting an example of a nation that pursues democratic trajectory. This paper looks into the Orange Revolution with a particular emphasis on the U.S.' relations with Ukraine throughout that period.

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ÖZ

2004 yılında Ukrayna'da gerçekleşen başkanlık seçimlerinin ardından geniş halk kitlelerinin sokaklara çıktığı Turuncu Devrim olarak bilinen süreç yaşanmıştır. Söz konusu sokak gösterilerinin şiddet içermediği, adil seçimler talep ettiği ve iktidarın Leodind Kuchma'dan Viktor Yushchenko'ya devredilmesine yönelik gerçekleştiği görülmektedir. Turuncu Devrim'in öncesinde yer alan gelişmeler ve gösteriler, uluslararası ilginin odağı haline gelmiş ve demokrasi yönünde eğilim gösteren bir milletin tezahürü olmuştur. Bu çalışma Turuncu Devrimi ele almakta ve konuya ilişkin ABD'nin politikalarını değerlendirmektedir.

1. Introduction

The 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine gained widespread international attention as the protests unfolded resulting in what is known today as the Orange revolution. A series of protests led to the political crisis in Ukraine as a direct consequence of the presidential elections which were considered to be fraudulent, media-biased and followed by voter intimidation. The scandalous elections and presidential campaigns ahead of the vote well portrayed the situation in Ukraine in the 2000s. The country was divided between the East and the West, Russia and the Western allies, notably the U.S. and the EU. Ukraine's East was predominantly Russian with Russian-speaking population and policymaking that went to Kremlin's favour. The western part of the country, on the other hand, adhered to the Western values and democracy, leading to increasingly spread distrusts towards Russia. These elections, therefore, could also be seen

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through the geopolitical lens, as the competition between the Western allies and Russia's aspirations to dominate in their neighborhood.

The first round of the elections took place on 31 October 2004, with the two main contenders being incumbent Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovych, and the opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. The two pretenders to the presidential position had a different background and campaign approach. Viktor Yushchenko was considered a progressive, pro-Western politician and an educated politician-democrat who spent a considerable amount of time speaking to people, with his criminal past, Viktor Yanukovych was perceived as a puppet of the Russian government, particularly due to his criminal past, but was portrayed in the media as a prime minister who is capable of sustaining Ukraine's stable future (Paniotto, 2004).

President Putin openly backed Viktor Yanukovych and congratulated him on the victory. During the presidential campaign, President Putin visited Ukraine twice and supported the political campaign of Viktor Yanukovych (Myers, 2004). Russia allegedly supplied half the campaign expenses for Viktor Yanukovych, while Putin's political technologists helped write the illegal censorship directives for the Ukrainian media and gave tactical advice to both Kuchma and Yanukovych (Fraser, 2006).

Viktor Yushchenko, on the other hand, made clear that the relations with Moscow shall be subordinated to a "Euroatlantic" course, while the concept of multi-vectorism would be abandoned altogether (Hartel, 2010), but at the same time he did not neglect historic links with Russia: "It would be a mistake to not use the Russian market," but it would also "be a mistake if Ukraine didn't find a key to open the door" to the EU market" (Deutsche Welle, 2005). Following the Orange revolution, the relations with the EU did not improve neither did the president secure political support from Brussels. The lack of membership perspective thus played out in Russia's favour as Kremlin had the opportunity to maintain the public dissatisfaction with NATO and the EU, particularly in the Eastern parts of the country.

The Orange revolution and the protests all together received substantial support from the U.S. The harsh criticism of American deep involvement in the Ukrainian electoral process and subsequently Orange revolution, the U.S. officials claimed to have invested both money and resources to the promotion of democracy. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher noted that "our [U.S.] money doesn't go to candidates. It goes to the process, the institutions that it takes to run a free and fair election, so we do not fund candidates". Unlike Kremlin who openly supported and financially backed only one candidate, the U.S. refrained from favoring any particular contender and rather worked with civil society organisations and young movements. The efforts of local NGOs were riding to an extent on general globalization processes and on the pulling power of Western capital and political institutions, which gave them a multiplier effect to offset the crude, cash-spending advantages of the incumbent regime (Wilson, 2006: 30).

In light of this, the paper analyses the Orange Revolution from an international perspective, placing a special emphasis on the Western responses throughout the beginning of 2000. It argues that the Orange revolution, primarily meant to spur the democratic change in Ukrainian society, only gave colour to the existing geopolitical clash between the West and Russia following fine-tuned presidential elections. The theoretical part of the paper discusses the meaning of the term *revolution* and explains it through a historical perspective. The main part of the paper seeks to describe the events that preceded the Orange revolution as well as the protests themselves. It looks into the international reactions and analyses Ukraine relations with both the EU and the U.S. during that time so as to put the Western foreign policy moves into perspective. Given that the 2004 presidential elections revealed a deep divide of the Ukrainian society which was also reflected in the two main pretenders to the presidential post, the Russian factor is integrated into the paper, thus giving a geopolitical touch to the Orange revolution and providing a broader introspective into the Revolution and beyond.

2. Theory of Revolution

In political science, the revolution refers to a swift change in power caused by the rebellion of the people against their government and usually results in the change of constitution. Given the revolution's multidisciplinary character, its definitions span across sociological, political, philosophical and even economic perspective. It is a concept that has been discussed and thought through as early as in the Classical period of Ancient Greece. In his Book V of the *Politics*, Aristotle discusses the concept of revolution, arguing that the superiority is a cause of the revolution when "one or more persons have a power which is too much for the state and the power of the government". He also claims that revolutions are affected in two ways, either by force or by fraud. While force may be applied at the time of making the revolution or afterwards, fraud comes in two shapes: citizens are deceived into accepting the government only to find out afterwards that they are held in this situation against their will, or they are persuaded at first only afterwards to retain their goodwill by the repetition of this persuasion (Aristotle, B.C.E 350). The four main Marxist theorists (Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Mao), three of which led successful revolutions, consider the essential features of every revolution to be the following: i) probability of a successful revolution is high if correct theory, strategy and tactics for overthrowing the ruling class are in place; ii) Marxism should not be taken as a dogma but rather applied to a specific context under specific conditions; iii) the spontaneous upsurge and creativity of masses to take power into their own hands is of utmost importance (Aarons, 1972: 18-19).

Drawing on the 18th-century French Revolution, Alexis De Tocqueville defines revolution as an overthrow of the legally constituted elite which initiated a period of intense social, political, and economic change (Tocqueville, 1955: 8). In their work *A Theory of Revolution*, Tanter and Midlarsky distinguish four types of revolutions, mass revolution, revolutionary coup, reform coup, and palace revolution, depending on the mass participation, duration, domestic violence and intentions of the insurgents (Taner and Midlarsky, 1967: 265). Interestingly enough, only in the Palace Revolution, where no force is being applied, there are no changes in the existing environment, which means that no positive outcomes can be expected if force is not used. James

C. Davies (1962) goes along this argument and defines revolution as violent civil disturbances that cause the displacement of one ruling group by another that has a broader popular basis for support. He argues that for a revolution to happen, a mixture of dissatisfied, frustrated people who differ in their degree of objective, tangible welfare and status must exist. In this respect, *dissatisfied state of mind* is more crucial for the revolution than the provision of "adequate" or "inadequate" supplies of food, equality or liberty (Davis, 1962: 6).

In Turkish case, a clear example of top-down revolution comes to the fore. Mustafa Kemal's military success in War of National Independence against British sponsored Greek army in Anatolia earned him an unquestionable political power. Even before the end of the War, the Grand National Assembly headed by Mustafa Kemal in 1922 abolished the sultanate and gave an end to 600 years old Ottoman dynasty's rule. Following the proclamation of Turkish Republic on 29th of October of 1923 which was a decision solely given by Mustafa Kemal himself even without consulting his fellow fighters such as Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kazım Karabekir, Refet Bele, Rauf Orbay, he successively accomplished sweeping Westernized reforms. In 1925 he closed down the Islamic monasteries, banned the traditional fez and replaced it with modern hat by law. In this period, 7500 opponents of the Turkish Revolution were detained and 660 of them were hanged by independence tribunals. In 1926, European calendar, Swiss civil code were imported besides the Mussolini's penal code. Moreover the traditional titles such as 'Bey', 'Efendi', 'Paşa' were banned (Zürcher, 2016: 248, 256). In 1924, the caliphate was abolished and the members of Ottoman dynasty were expelled from the country. Arab alphabet was replaced by Latin alphabet in 1928 to maintain the integration with the Western world. By 1934 the women were given right to elect and elected in general elections (Kinross, 2017: 492, 515). Turkish revolution gives insight on authoritarian modernization where Atatürk set the goal for the nation as "reaching to the level of contemporary civilizations". There is no doubt that by civilizations he referred to the Western civilization. Turkish revolution is a typical example of an authoritarian top to down model where a leader that controls the military power besides the political power, is using force to implement certain reforms to change the status-quo and character of the ongoing regime.

The consensus on whether the revolutions are achievable without using force has not been reached among the scholars so far. Many scholars argue that revolutions are doable without armed struggle and violence. Gene Sharp (2005) notes that non-violent struggles are highly likely to succeed when the strategic calculations and planning are made and strategies devised (Sharp, 2005: 11). Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) go to great lengths in explaining why civil resistance works, underlining that the main mechanisms by which resistance campaigns extract major concessions from regimes are much likelier to occur when a campaign is nonviolent. Moreover, groups that seek to challenge oppressive regimes or foreign occupations with nonviolent resistance have much better odds than those fighting with asymmetrical violence (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2006: 252).

In this respect, the Orange Revolution can be described as a non-violent movement, remaining peaceful until the very end, i.e. the acceptance of victory of the opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. Previous studies have agreed that the Orange Revolution represented a democratic breakthrough in a sense that it replaced a semi-authoritarian regime, achieved by fair and free elections (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Hale 2006). Sociologist Kurt Schock defines nonviolent action as the active collective pursuit of political and social objectives without the use of physical force (Schock, 2003: 705). One of the reasons why the protests remained non-violent lies in the choices made by the security apparatus of Viktor Yanukovych's government. In 2004, after people took the streets, Viktor Yanukovych sought to use government's military service to crush the protests, but the large parts of military were no longer supporting him and rather chose to align with Viktor Yushchenko. Rather than using the violence against the demonstrators, the military service chose to use the force to protect them (Dahl, 2014). It is also because of that why the security services became more and more fragmented as the protests were gaining more and more strength. Using nonviolent methods, however, presupposes the mass mobilization of people whose aim is to support the cause and bring about a certain social and/or political change.

The Orange revolution, which was one in a series of *coloured revolution*s that took place in various countries, proved to be efficient for as it succeeded in the political regime change with nonviolent means. Unlike an ordinary political demonstration, coloured revolutions were legitimized as movements for greater democracy that sought to remove incumbent political leadership, targeted electoral procedures and gathered a mass base of young people (Lane, 2009: 114). Their success also lies in the fact that they were largely supported by the West, especially by the U.S. (in the case of Ukraine). The Orange revolution paved a way for peaceful demonstrations in search of democratic change. Only ten years after the Orange revolution, Euromaidan took place, achieving the same goal – bringing about a political change – but with substantially bigger loses due to the use of violence. The answer to the question about whether either violent or nonviolent means serve the cause better remains thus open.

3. Run up the Orange: The Casette Scandal

In the run-up to the presidential elections of 2004 and the Orange Revolution, a couple of events contributed to the awareness-raising campaign in Ukrainian society. Already in 2001, back then-President Kuchma was recorded to have planned the assassination of Georgiy Gongadze. He was Ukrainian opposition journalist, founder and first editor-in-chief of the Internet publication "Ukrayinska Pravda". Georgiy Gongadze was critical of Leonid Kuchma administration and spoke on several occasions about the problems Ukrainian journalists were facing. In 1999, he travelled to the U.S. where he met with State Department officials and again denounced the lack of press freedom in Ukraine (World Bank Institue, 2002). The disappearance and murder of the journalist in September 2000 were followed by the allegations that President Kuchma stands behind the wrongdoing, thus causing a major political crisis known as "Cassette Scandal", "Tapegate" or "Kuchmagate". The video recorder was planted in the President Kuchma's sofa by his head of security service, Mykola Melnychenko. The recordings were publicized by the opposition and largely

discussed among ordinary people, thus contributing to the suspicion of corruption in the presidential administration.

In addition to that, the opposition newspaper affiliated to Yulia Tymoshenko "Evening News" started to provide an alternative presentation of the news along with many internet sources, such as "Ukrayinska Pravda" proved to be extremely effective in raising people's awareness of corruption that was rooted in the Ukrainian society (Salnykova, 2004: 39). External organisations facilitated the dissemination of information, providing either technical or financial support to the list of critical sources reporting on the Kutchma scandal. For instance, USAID funded and organised the major portion of the Znayu campaign – dedicated to educating voters about their voting responsibility, whereas Freedom House provided direct assistance to Znayu and indirect assistance to Yellow Pora (youth movement) and the Freedom of Choice Coalition in organising summer camps for Yellow Pora Activists (Mcfaul, 2006). With Diplomatic missions with the U.S. embassies projects and programs were also perceived to have played a critical role in the deployment of revolutionary technologies that have facilitated regime change (Hard, 2005: 15-16).

Leonid Kuchma never challenged Russia's policy in the near abroad, neither did he question the relations with Kremlin. During the Cassette scandal, Russia played its part in side-tracking the allegations against President Kuchma by importing anti-American conspiracies and claiming that the U.S was behind the scandal with the aim to topple President Kuchma and replace him with Viktor Yushchenko (Kuzio, 2005: 492). President Kuchma's complicity in the murder of the journalist Georgiy Gongadze only bolstered the opposition and civil society organizations to stand up against the President's administration. The Cassette scandal laid the foundation of and contributed to a substantial extent in the success of the Orange revolution as it mobilized masses and gave an additional incentive for people to protest once the electoral fraud took place. The tapes provided evidence of many illegal acts, such as the persecution of independent journalists, high-level corruption, abuse of office and misuse of public funds, undeclared sales of weapons abroad and violence against politicians and journalists (Kuzio, 2007: 42). This was a crucial point for the evolution of the protests in 2004, as the Kuchma crisis undermined the legitimacy of the institutions, leading many dissatisfied and hard-core activists from that period to take part in the Orange revolution.

4. The Unfolding Revolution

Since the 1991 proclamation of independence, these were the third consecutive presidential elections held in independent Ukraine. The elections scheduled for 31st October 2004, carried significant political weight for as in December the year-earlier Ukraine's constitutional Court decided to permit the incumbent president Leonid Kuchma to run for the third consecutive five-year term in the office. It meant that in case he did run and won, he would have been ruling the country for 15 years in a row. By 2004, people were already tired of President's Kuchma's scandals and political crisis in the administration throughout his second term. President Kuchma, however, chose not to run and rather support Viktor Yanukovych. Already by doing so, these elections were widely regarded as being a crucial moment in Ukraine's history and indicated a peaceful transition of presidential powers (Franklin, 2005).

Not surprisingly, the two candidates, Viktor Yanukovych and Viktor Yushchenko passed to the second round of presidential elections, winning 39,26% and 39,9% respectively (Kireev, 2007). Given that neither of the candidates passed the threshold of 50% both candidates went to the run-off election, scheduled for November 21. In the second round, Viktor Yanukovych won 49,46%, while Viktor Yushchenko garnered 46,61% of the Ukrainian citizens' support. Due to many irregularities observed during both the first and the second process, mainly related to the way Viktor Yanukovych led his campaign, i.e. the pressure was put on people to attend Viktor Yanukovych's events and vote in his favour, sign his candidate petition and cease their political activity for opposition candidates, as well as his campaign, did not make a clear separation between resources owned or managed by incumbent political forces and State resources (Presidential Election, Ukraine, 2004).

Similar reactions came from the international community. Senator Richard G. Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at that time, cited "a concerted and forceful program of election-day fraud and abuse", while international monitor repeatedly warned that the election process did not meet international standards (USUBC, 2004). U.S. State Secretary, Colin L. Powell, went a step further and noted that the U.S. "cannot accept the result as legitimate it does not meet international standards and because there has not been an investigation of the numerous and credible reports of fraud and abuse" (Powell, 2001). European Parliament openly rejected the Central Electoral Commission's decision to declare Mr Yanukovych as the winner of the presidential elections and strongly condemned the conditions under which the second round of the presidential elections in Ukraine has taken place (European Parliament resolution on Ukraine, 2004).

The international attention caused by the fraudulent elections aided Ukrainian citizens in their intention to take the streets and massively protest against the unfair elections. The protests were organised by the Viktor Yushchenko's campaign, knowing that not more than up to 70,000 people might show up, considering winter temperature, working Monday and media campaign which was rolling in favour of Viktor Yanukovych. Nonetheless, on 27 November around one million people gathered in the Maidan to support the opposition and pressure Supreme Court to rethink the decision of invalidating the election results (Lane and White, 2010: 156). For 17 days, ordinary citizens were engaged in a political protest to defend their vote and fight against the corruptive practice that was ongoing for some time. The whole protest was turned into one of the most spectacular displays Europe has seen: a seventeen-day round-the-clock protest/rock concert bedecked with orange banners, balloons, and scarves that shut down government operations and eventually forced the authorities to schedule a new vote (Beissinger, 2011: 26).

Being put under international pressure and scrutiny during the first and the second rounds of elections, the Supreme Court of Ukraine invalidated the results of the run-off elections and required a new ballot to take place. For

thousands of people who came to support this idea, the decision was everything they waited for. Viktor Yushchenko noted that Ukraine has "proved to be a nation that can defend our [people's] choice and that justice and freedom is coming back to Ukraine", thanks to all the people gathered throughout that period (Walsh, 2004). Viktor Yushchenko was inaugurated in January 2005. Given his pro-Western orientation, his presidency was welcomed by the Western partners, especially the U.S. and the EU.

5. Under the International Spotlight

The Orange Revolution mass protests caught international attention, with media and Western countries closely following the events. Ever since the Soviet Union fell apart in the 1990s, there has not been such a peaceful struggle for democracy in any of the post-Soviet states. It was the first time for several years that the whole of Europe, the United States, as well a plethora of international organizations, shared the same position as to what had happened and what needed to be done in terms of challenging the election (Sushko, 2004: 1). The EU, the U.S. and Canada did not hesitate to reject the results of the second round of elections and condemn the whole electoral process. Former Canadian Prime Minister John Turner stated that the friendship between Canada and Ukraine was "enhanced in a remarkable way" through the interest shown by Canadians in "sponsoring democracy" in a country he hopes has now begun "a new era." Canada became an enthusiastic supporter of *orange* Ukraine, dedicating many events in the following years, from academic panels discussing its effects to awards to journalists who had covered the revolution (The Ukranian Weekly, 2006).

The EU sent their foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, to the inauguration ceremony. While being careful on speaking about Ukrainian membership to the EU, Mr Solana noted that "Ukraine is making a tremendous effort and is a good friend of the European Union", while EU Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner stated that "Mr Yuschenko's elections have opened the way for a new beginning in the EU-Ukraine relationship" (Kulikov, 2005). The friendly commitment was continued by the Council on February 2005, when the EU-Ukraine Joint Action Plan was adopted, laying out strategic objectives of cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. The political document aimed at making one step further in existing relations between the two by opening new partnership, economic integration and economic perspectives, as well as intensified political cooperation (EU-Ukraine Action Plan). Despite these efforts invested on behalf of the EU, Ukraine positive feeling about the partnership soon started to fade away as the EU continued to refrain from presenting any reference to EU membership prospect. At that time, the EU was also preoccupied with the largest enlargement of 10 countries in 2004, as well as with the constitutional crisis, following France and the Netherlands rejection of the European constitution in national referenda. Thusly, the EU offered more or less the same treatment: a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement for closer trade and political ties, and financial aid and expert advice under the Tacis assistance programme (Wolczuk, 2005). Although membership offer was never on the table, Ukraine still hoped for at least any hint to that possibility. This different level of expectation on both sides will prove to be decisive in strengthening the cooperation between Ukraine and the EU in the years to come.

After decades of being under Russian influence, the Orange Revolution was an attempt to aim to change the country's geopolitical position and integrate with the West instead. It was welcomed by the Western countries, particularly because at that period Russia had a firm grip over Ukraine. Despite President Kuchma's pro-Western orientation, his first term did not match his actions in the second term in the run-up to the Orange revolution as he failed to undertake reforms which would alleviate Ukraine dependence on Russia. As problems emerged at the beginning of the 2000s and culminated with the Orange Revolution, Kuchma found his foreign policy drawn back towards Russia, thus benefiting to Russo-Ukrainian rapprochement (Hatton, 2010: 13). That was all the more reason for the Western appreciation and support for the democratic processes that were beginning to unfold in Ukrainian society since the fall of the Soviet Union. The strongest support during that period came from the U.S. under President George W. Bush.

6. The U.S. Foreign Policy During Orange Revolution

In 2001, soon after assuming the office, George W. Bush sent a letter to Ukrainian President Kuchma to assure him of the importance place Ukraine holds in the American foreign policy and to reiterate the importance of the commitment to the rule of law, democracy and human rights (The Ukrainian Weekly, 2001). Even before George W. Bush assumed office, the American-Ukrainian relations were strained due to, including but not limited to President's Kuchma's alleged involvement in the murder of Georgiy Gongadze. Hence, the letter was President Bush's way of expressing readiness on behalf of the U.S. to continue involving Ukraine in a number of policy fields but the actions and decisions within Kuchma's administration had to be taken in accordance with the wellbeing of Ukrainian citizens. President Kuchma did, however, introduce wide embracing programs on integration with the EU in June 1998 and July 2000 decrees but these were never reflected in his domestic policies (Kuzio, 2012: 398). After the terrorist attack on September 11, in its foreign policy priorities, Washington downgraded everything that was not directly related to the war on terror, thus leaving the entire post-Soviet space on their own with a few exceptions of countries that proved useful in waging the war (Dubovyk, 2006). The U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine was mostly shaped by the framework of Iraq war. Yushchenko and his close proponents used to express their dissatisfaction with the Iraq's invasion. The main concern of Yushchenko's close circle foresaw that Kuchma's support to U.S.' operation would end up with Washington's silence toward Ukraine's violations of civil rights and freedoms, at least in public. In this case, Washington would transmit its messages on democracy behind the close doors that would not encourage and strengthen the wave against Ukraine's chronical problems. However Yushchenko and his circle was eager to establish warm relations with Bush administration. Following the reelection of Bush, Yushchenco publicly announced that Washington is the primary promoter of democracy and superiority of law in Ukraine. Besides that Yushchenko's side announced its gratefulness for the efforts of U.S. Agency for International Development for encouraging free press, superiority of law, civil movements

and monitoring the elections (Karatnycky, 2005: 51) Although President Kuchma was an authoritarian leader causing a corrupt political and economic system, he kept his relations with the Western world as he sent Ukrainian armed forces to Iraq and established bonds with NATO and the European Union contrary to Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic. Kuchma's aspiration to be part of the West led U.S. and the EU's officials to be engaged with Ukrainian politics in a constructive way rather than total isolation. As a consequence, despite of Kuchma's authoritarian tendencies neither U.S. nor the EU never applied sanctions. Following Gongadze's assassination Bush government canceled Kuchma's trip to White House and at Prague summit, the official langue was converted to French in order to prevent Bush and Kuchma sit next to each other since in English both countries' name start with the same letter. However the relations were never broken down, and sustained to a certain limit even during the Orange Revolution. The foreign policy of U.S. suggested to trigger the interest of Ukrainian leaders in West (McFaul, 2007: 66-67). It is also important to note that following the leak of the tapes that prove Kuchma's role in Gongadze's murder, producers of the tapes Yuri Melnichencko, Gongadze's widow and his two children were given asylum and started to live in U.S.

By 2002, the American-Ukrainian relations deteriorated to a great extent due to Kiev's decision to sell an advanced anti-aircraft radar system to Iraq. By doing so, Ukraine clearly violated the UN Security Council Resolution 661 which called upon all States to prevent the sale or supply weapons or any other military equipment (UN Security Council Resolution 661). Although Ukraine denied approving such sales to the Iraqi government, the U.S. came in possession of a tape, smuggled by former Kuchma bodyguard, which proves that President Kuchma approved the sales of the early warning radar to Kuwait. Believing that the tape is authentic, Washington swiftly reacted, suspending $54 million in direct aid to the Kuchma government, and initiating an overall review of U.S. policy toward the country (Voa News, 2004). As the second term of Kuchma government was approaching its end in late 2004, the debate on the support for the war in Iraq fomented a division in Europe between the West who did not support the invasion and the Eastern Europe who stood by their Atlantic partners. In this discussion, Kiev had little to say and abstained from publicly confirming that the country stood by the U.S. Head of the presidential administration Viktor Medvedchuk stated that Ukraine was not on the list of Coalition countries, whereas Carlos Pascual, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, said that Ukraine had asked to be placed on the same list (Kuzio, 2003: 38). Ukraine's indecisive attitude with respect to their foreign policy only gave the U.S. an image of an unreliable partner. Ukraine's problem also lied in the fact that with the switch of administration, the country sought to improve and/or strengthen ties with Russia, which is why the tendency towards American-Ukrainian rapprochement has to be seen within the framework of Russo-Ukrainian relations as well. Russia's behaviour during the presidential elections in Ukraine and the Orange revolution proved to be important also for determining the nature of U.S.-Russia relations and of Moscow's relations with the whole of Europe.

Before the elections, U.S. made its stance quiet clear as Ambassador John Herbst conducted visits to established U.S. diplomats such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Holbrooke, Henry Kissinger, Madeleine Albright and Thomas Pickering. As a result Brzezinski gave two messages in public and private suggesting that free, fair and transparent elections are critical for Ukraine to become a part of the EU or NATO. Accordingly, Ukraine had to convince the West that Ukraine became a European country (Wallander, 2005: 7)

Prior to the presidential elections, the U.S. officials warned Ukraine about the situation with respect to the freedom of speech and press in the country. The majority of large broadcast media were under the tight control of the government or of businessmen with close ties to the government. Government-controlled broadcast and press outlets engaged in biased reporting in favour of Yanukovych, while Yushchenko was sharply criticized (Woehrel, 2005: 2). The U.S. support continued throughout the period, as Washington approved election-related financial assistance in the amount of $13,8 million, in addition with the $3 million for the repeat vote, $0,5 million for the OSCE observers and $2,5 million for NGO monitoring and other related activities (Woehrel, 2005: 11-12). Nonetheless, as the relations with Ukraine deteriorated by 2004, the financial support for the country decreased as well: $143.47 million, with just $34.11 million for democracy assistance in 2004 in comparison to the $227.48 million, with only $55.11 million for democratic reform programmes in the year 2003 (Wilson, 2006: 23). Some circles extolled the U.S.' $18 million election-related aids while others regarded this as an intervention to another sovereign country's inner politics however, they all agree that U.S. played a substantial role in Ukraine's politics (McFaul, 2007 :48).

Democracy promotion has been one of the main pillars of U.S. foreign policy since Ronald Reagan in 1983 publicly used the concept and established National Endowment for Democracy that sponsors pro-U.S. civil society movements worldwide. Democracy promotion was widely used in the late 1990s and beginning of the 21st century by the U.S. policy makers. Moreover, following 9/11, President Bush utilized democracy promotion to accomplish its foreign policy aspirations. It is important to note that U.S. spend more than $26 billion between 1992 and 2005 on the newly emerged states that broke up from Soviet Union to promote democratic transitions. Regarding Ukraine, the U.S. supported Ukranian actors via various institutions such as State Department, U.S. Embassy in Kiev, United States Agency for International Development, National Endowment for Democracy, International Republican Institute, Freedom House, Open Society Foundations. The amount that was spent by U.S. in Ukraine is forecasted between 3 to 5 $billion. Besides the mentioned $18 million spent for election-related aid, more than $65 million was spent for general democracy promotion in the eve of 2004 presidential election. Moreover, the success of Orange Revolution was not adequate for U.S. to cut the financial assistance since it kept spending to promote pro-U.S. values in Ukraine between 2013 -2017 in amount of between $20 to 36 million annually. Besides that, NED afforded approximately $17 million between 2007 – 2012 (Koranke, 2017: 187-190).

It is hard to prove that U.S. had a direct interference in organizing the protests or encouraging the military officials that played role in the rebellions. However, some analysts

argue that the military servicemen that took part in the protests in the protests participated NATO's Partnership for Peace programs.[1]

As the Orange revolution unfolded, the U.S. remained at disposition to support the democratic transition of Ukrainian society. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell called President Kuchma when he was prepared to intervene the protesters in the square. The U.S. was getting constant information from its sources within the Ukrainian security service. Besides that Kuchma's billionaire son-in-law Victor Pinchuk and Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski were used by the U.S. to communicate with Kuchma during the protests not to use coercive force against the protestors however the effect of these attempts are hard to measure (Mcfaul, 2007: 71). Regardless of strained U.S.-Ukraine relations at that time, Washington was more than supportive of the protests that called for a repeat vote on the presidential elections. From a U.S. foreign policy standpoint, using democratic means to change the regime was largely welcomed by the incumbent administration. During his second inaugural address in 2005, George W. Bush underlined that the policy of the United States seeks to support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny (Bush, 2005). In this respect, these policies of democratization are an important part of Western-led liberal order and completely in accordance with the American way of doing things abroad.

7. Conclusion

Following mass demonstrations that requested the overthrow of the incumbent regime in 2004, Viktor Yushchenko came to power in 2005. The Orange Revolution was interpreted by the West as a positive way to democratize and legitimize the regime and ensure a smooth transfer of power. The 2004 presidential elections were perceived by the West as a close race between the candidate of the ruling elite who has also supported by Kremlin and an opponent from the democratic opposition (Kempe and Solonenko, 2005: 111). For both Washington and Brussels, 2004 presidential elections were a test for the ability of the country to comply with the international standards and democratic processes and at the same time to provide security and stability. The Orange revolution was a tool via which the democratic opposition could facilitate the transition of power and achieve above-mentioned goals that were important for the Western institutions. It also changed the perception of a country which follows the Russian path to democracy and market economy to a country that is now perceived as an independent subject, as a European state with a European society similar to the societies of EU Member States (Gromadzki and Sushko, 2005).

In his presidential campaign, Viktor Yushchenko portrayed himself as a pro-Western candidate who openly advocates for Ukraine's future in both the European Union and NATO. While Ukraine's foreign policy trajectory was going into the direction of the integration with the West, Viktor Yushchenko did not neglect to see Russia as a strategic partner of Ukraine. With Putin's rise to the power in the 2000s, Russia started to review its foreign policy and revive the power status the Soviet Union once had. Regardless of the nature of Russian-Ukraine relations throughout the period, Ukraine remained the foreign policy priority for Kremlin within their "near abroad" framework. In the run-up to Orange revolution, the lack of the EU's interest on the one hand and President Kuchma's crash down on media contributed to the overall atmosphere which matched partially Kremlin's foreign policy aspirations. Despite harsh criticism from the U.S. and the EU, Russia continued with its strengthened involvement in the elections by publicly supporting pro-Russian candidate Yanukovych and providing technical and financial assistance during the presidential campaign.

The U.S. under President George W. Bush was supportive of the peaceful demonstrations and Ukrainian quest for the *democratization* of society. Soon after assuming the office, President Bush reassured Ukraine of its importance for the U.S. foreign policy and committed to helping the country tackle the necessary reforms, particularly in the rule of law sector. With the commitment came also the financial and technical support that extended also to civil society organisations and youth movements. This sort of engagement with Ukraine was seen by Russia as external interference characterized by using contradictions within the Ukrainian leadership, bribing or recruiting part of it and exploiting the population's discontent with the socio-economic situation in the country (Trenin, 2018). Ukraine's new European orientation that started to form shape in the Orange revolution troubled Kremlin as it meant less favourable climate for Russo-Ukrainian business. The Orange revolution consequently turned to another geopolitical clash between the West and Russia, bringing along wider implications for the whole post-Soviet region. This time, the U.S. with its European allies was determined to turn the situation into their favour and ensure stability in Eastern Europe by weakening authoritarian rule and managing strategic relations between Ukraine and the West.

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