

Whose snipers in Kiev?

Catherine Ashton
Urmaz Paet

This is a partial transcript of an intercepted phone call between Estonian foreign minister, Urmaz Paet, and European Union high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Catherine Ashton, which seems to have taken place in late February 2014. Paet had visited Kiev briefly, and Ashton asked for his impressions. Paet remarked how low public trust is in the new Ukrainian government. These people have ‘dirty pasts’, he said. Then he talked about ‘Olga’ [Bogomolyets], who is a medical doctor. Ashton had also met her. Olga told Paet how it seems the same snipers killed both civilians and policemen in Kiev. Paet says ‘... behind the snipers it was not Yanukovych but it was somebody from the new coalition.’ This transcript, which the Russell Foundation has compiled, is taken from the last three minutes or so of the conversation.

* * *

Ashton: ... I’ve said to the opposition leaders, shortly to become government, you need to reach out to Maidan*, you need to be, you know, engaging with them, you also need to get ordinary police officers back on the streets under a new sense of their role, so the people feel safe. I said to the Party of the Regions’ people you have to go and lay flowers where the people died, you have to show that you understand what has happened here.

Paet: Absolutely.

Ashton: Because what you’re experiencing is anger of people who’ve seen the way that

* ‘Maidan is of Persian origin, meaning ‘square’ or ‘open place’.

Yanukovych lived, and the corruption, and they assume you're all the same. And also the people who've lost people and who feel that, you know, he ordered that to happen. There's quite a lot of shock, I think, in the city, a lot of sadness and shock, and that's going to come out in some very strange ways if they're not careful. I think all of this we just have to work out, so we've done a big meeting here today – to try and get this in place – but yeah, very interesting, your observation.

Paet: It is and, well, actually the only politician the people from civil society have mentioned positively was Poroshenko. So that he has some sort of so-to-say trust among all these Maidan people and civil society in fact, and what was quite disturbing, the same Olga told that, well, all the evidence shows the people who were killed by snipers from both sides, among policemen and people from the streets, that they were the same snipers, killing people from both sides.

Ashton: *Well that's... Yeah, that's...*

Paet: And then she also showed me some photos, she said that as a medical doctor she can, you know, say that it is the same handwriting, same type of bullets, and it's really disturbing that now the new coalition don't want to investigate what exactly happened, so there is now stronger and stronger understanding that behind the snipers it was not Yanukovych but it was somebody from the new coalition.

Ashton: *... I think they do want to investigate, I mean I didn't pick that up. That's interesting. Gosh.*

Paet: Yeah. So this is disturbing that if it starts now to live its own life very powerfully that it already [discredits] from the very beginning also this new coalition.

Ashton: *I mean, this is what they've got to be careful of as well – that they need to demand great change but they've got to let the Rada function. If the Rada doesn't function then there could be chaos – complete chaos. So that, it's all, you know, being an activist and a doctor is very, very important but it means you're not a politician, and somehow they've got to come to a kind of accommodation for the next few weeks, with how the country's actually going to run – and then we get the elections and things can change, and that's, I think, going to be quite important ...*