

Biden's Willing

*Victoria Nuland
Geoffrey Pyatt*

In late 2013, Ms Nuland and Mr Pyatt walked arm in arm through central Kiev's Independence Square, distributing bread to protestors and riot police. What was cooking? This was a US show in which the EU and Chancellor Merkel wouldn't be allowed to interfere. In the early days of February 2014, the world shared an intercepted telephone conversation between the two in which they plot a 'jelly-side-up' landing for their schemes in Ukraine. Robert Serry, UN General Secretary Ban's special envoy, was cast in an invidious role by the two plotters. Later, he was besieged in a café in Crimea. Notably, Arseniy Yatsenuk walks the world stage as Ukraine's leader, as Ms Nuland hoped.

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Voice thought to be Nuland's: *What do you think?*

Voice thought to be Pyatt's: I think we're in play. The Klitschko [Vitaly Klitschko, one of three main opposition leaders] piece is obviously the complicated electron here. Especially the announcement of him as deputy prime minister and you've seen some of my notes on the troubles in the marriage right now so we're trying to get a read really fast on where he is on this stuff. But I think your argument to him, which you'll need to make, I think that's the next phone call you want to set up, is exactly the one you made to Yats [Arseniy Yatseniuk]. And I'm glad you sort of put him on the spot on where he fits in this scenario. And I'm very glad that he said what he said in response.

Ms Nuland is Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State. Mr Pyatt is US ambassador to Ukraine.

Nuland: *Good. I don't think Klitsch should*

go into the government. I don't think it's necessary, I don't think it's a good idea.

Pyatt: Yeah. I guess ... in terms of him not going into the government, just let him stay out and do his political homework and stuff. I'm just thinking in terms of sort of the process, moving ahead we want to keep the moderate democrats together. The problem is going to be Tyahnybok [Oleh Tyahnybok, a third opposition leader] and his guys, and I'm sure that's part of what [President Viktor] Yanukovich is calculating on all this.

Nuland: *[Breaks in] I think Yats is the guy who's got the economic experience, the governing experience. He's the ... what he needs is Klitsch and Tyahnybok on the outside. He needs to be talking to them four times a week, you know. I just think Klitsch going in ... he's going to be at that level working for Yatseniuk, it's just not going to work.*

Pyatt: Yeah, no, I think that's right. OK. Good. Do you want us to set up a call with him as the next step?

Nuland: *My understanding from that call – but you tell me – was that the big three were going into their own meeting and that Yats was going to offer in that context a ... three-plus-one conversation or three-plus-two with you. Is that not how you understood it?*

Pyatt: No. I think ... I mean that's what he proposed, but I think, just knowing the dynamic that's been with them where Klitschko has been the top dog, he's going to take a while to show up for whatever meeting they've got, and he's probably talking to his guys at this point, so I think you reaching out directly to him helps with the personality management among the three, and it gives you also a chance to move fast on all this stuff and put us behind it before they all sit down and he explains why he doesn't like it.

Nuland: *OK, good. I'm happy. Why don't you reach out to him and see if he wants to talk before or after.*

Pyatt: OK, will do. Thanks.

Nuland: *OK ... one more wrinkle for you Geoff. [A click can be heard] I can't remember if I told you this, or if I only told Washington this, that*

when I talked to Jeff Feltman [United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs] this morning, he had a new name for the UN guy, Robert Serry, did I write you that this morning?

Pyatt: Yeah, I saw that.

Nuland: *OK. He's now gotten both Serry and [UN Secretary General] Ban Ki-moon to agree that Serry could come in Monday or Tuesday. So that would be great, I think, to help glue this thing and to have the UN help glue it and, you know, fuck the EU.*

Pyatt: No, exactly. And I think we've got to do something to make it stick together because you can be pretty sure that if it does start to gain altitude, that the Russians will be working behind the scenes to try to torpedo it. And again the fact that this is out there right now, I'm still trying to figure out in my mind why Yanukovych (garbled) that. In the meantime there's a Party of Regions faction meeting going on right now and I'm sure there's a lively argument going on in that group at this point. But anyway we could land jelly-side-up on this one if we move fast. So let me work on Klitschko and if you can just keep ... we want to try to get somebody with an international personality to come out here and help to midwife this thing. The other issue is some kind of outreach to Yanukovych, but we probably regroup on that tomorrow as we see how things start to fall into place.

Nuland: *So on that piece Geoff, when I wrote the note [US vice-president's national security adviser Jake] Sullivan's come back to me VFR [direct to me], saying you need [US Vice-President Joe] Biden and I said probably tomorrow for an atta-boy and to get the deets [details] to stick. So Biden's willing.*

Pyatt: OK. Great. Thanks.