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# How Orange Networks Work

By Andrei ARESHEV

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On 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek'.

Њ?ĐµĐ³Đ,: color revolutions, Orange Networks, Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, USA

We have seen well-organized mobs - allegedly acting in the name of the 'protesting people' - occupy parliament buildings in Belgrade and Tbilisi, paralyze Minsk and Budapest, launch noisy campaigns in the streets of Kyiv, and riot in the downtown Bishkek and Yerevan. The events have taken place sufficiently long ago to realize that the color revolutions have not led Serbia, Ukraine, and Georgia to prosperity. They did transform the political landscape in the post-Soviet space though, and the consequences they have for the neighboring countries, especially for Russia, such as the drift in Ukraine's foreign politics which followed the developments of 2004, can prove long-lasting and dire.

The phenomenon of 'color revolutions' has been examined by the Russian political science in a number of point studies, particularly those which dealt with the 2004 events in Ukraine. However, until recently, there was no broad study of the of the 'non-violent' coup d'État technology. 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek', a collection of essays prepared by the Historical Perspective Foundation and published in Saint Petersburg by Alateya Press in 2008, is intended to fill the gap.

Altogether, the essays comprise a detailed investigation of the technologies employed in the 'color revolutions' first in Serbia in 2000 and later in several FSU Republics. The political dynamics in the post-Soviet space (the essays were written by an international team of authors) leaves no doubt as to the timeliness of the studies. The collection was in press in March, 2008 when the crisis erupted in Armenia - in many respects the tragic events in the country can be regarded as a failed 'color' coup - and entailed fatalities. Efforts to similarly destabilize other countries, particularly Belarus, are being made continuously, and developments like the Andijan unrest in Uzbekistan and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan cannot be ruled out. The forces which organized the upheaval in Bishkek in 2005 failed to take into account the specific features of the local situation, and their initial objectives largely remained unaccomplished. Most importantly, they failed to push Kyrgyzstan out of the orbit of the political and military cooperation with Moscow (as discussed in the essay by A.Sh. Niyazi). Another theme touched upon in 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek' is the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and a number of other crises of the same origin. Student protests in Iran in 2003 could also be considered in the context, but the authors mainly focused on the former Soviet Republics of Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and on Russia.

The range of political and social circumstances responsible for the radicalization of public protests is well-known. The most significant destabilizing factor in the post-Soviet Republics is the course of radically liberal economic reforms, which was adopted in the early 1990ies largely under the influence of Western advisers. The ideological vacuum, the dominance of petit bourgeois philosophy in public life, a catastrophic social stratification, mass poverty plaguing entire social strata, the disorganization of key administrative institutions (a phenomenon oftentimes erroneously regarded as limited to corruption), the de facto loss of a significant part of sovereignty by Republics all tend to ignite public

discontent and a longing for change and justice, and to fuel the desire to see immediate transformations and to shape history 'right here and right now'. The younger generation which is also the most politically active part of the population in any country is particularly affected by the atmosphere. Definitely, the situation is well-understood by Western consultants seeking to manipulate the population's protests so as to achieve their own objectives.

Color revolution strategies and scenarios are generated by various Western think tanks. Their genesis and operations are analyzed by President of the Historical Perspective Foundation N.A. Narochnitskaya. The ideological doctrines formulated in think tanks are imposed on sovereign Republics regardless of their actual national interests. Organizations such as the Carnegie Foundation, the Heritage Foundation, the Brookings Institution and others teach local elites to view local politics through the prism of 'global thinking', but the efforts of the US think tanks are aimed exclusively at promoting the interests of the US. In addition to making inroads into local elites, the main task performed by the US think tanks internationally is to export ideological concepts and myths which the organizers of color revolutions plant in the minds of the populations of the targeted countries.

In his essay, J. Laughland, a British political scientist and writer, examines the key theoretical provisions and the field practice of overthrowing the legitimate authority in various countries. He marshals an impressive array of factual data to prove that the color revolutions are a new coup d'État technique developed by the US think tanks in cooperation with the CIA. Though revolutions of the kind - the ones in Serbia, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Georgia, and the failed one in Uzbekistan - are routinely portrayed as the results of public protests, Laughland argues that in reality the developments were carefully planned operations in many cases including disinformation via mass media, and that the operations were funded and carried out by transnational networks serving as instruments of the Western influence. The range of pertinent activities spans covert operations, threats to resort to military intervention or even a direct use of military force, smear campaigns, secret political leverage, bribing journalists, public disinformation, and the use of other methods not excluding political assassinations. For example, reconnaissance and target identification were a part of the actual mission carried out by agents of the CIA and other Western intelligence agencies in the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission in 1998...

Irina Lebedeva, a US-based journalist and translator, focuses on the role played by 'angered youths' in protest movements at least for the last 40 years. Already in 1967, prominent social scientist Fred Emery of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations argued that by the late 1990ies specific models of behavior typical for younger people would possibly be used to destabilize sovereign countries. From this standpoint, the progress in communications technology opens extensive opportunities. Global media, cell phones, mass SMS messaging, blogs, and web sites are convenient tools for real-time guiding of the youth mob and for ascribing great political significance to any event, no matter real or imaginary. The potential of propaganda under the current conditions was exemplified by the developments around the Racak village in Kosovo...

In 2000, Serbia became the starting point of a wave of color revolutions. The authors of the essays in 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek' see the NATO attack on Yugoslavia and the October, 2000 unrest in Serbia as links in the chain of events organized not only to overthrow the political regime in Belgrade but also to induce an irreversible partition of the country. In his essay, Belgrade-based political scientist and historian

Petr Ilchenkov supplies unique information concerning the preparations for the protests which led to the ouster of S. Milosevic. Serbia was the proving ground for many of the techniques which were subsequently refined and employed in later color revolutions. The techniques include the creation of mass opposition movements and golem parties, the extensive application of communication technologies to mobilize mass public support, the pouring of large funds into spreading protest movement logotypes, acts of individual terror against authority figures, the formation of armed support groups backing the protests presented as 'non-violent' by mass media, etc. Notably, the revolution in Serbia did not translate into the country's prosperity, and most of its activists dropped out of politics after having played their roles.

Lawyer S.B. Mirzoev describes in detail the activities of Western NGO's during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The facts he presents show that the US and Canada, as well as international organizations, both public and governmental, were directly involved in the crisis of the Ukrainian sovereignty. A key role in the power seizure in the country was played by the mechanisms of the 'international legitimization' of the candidate supported by the West. The activity of a large number of West-funded Ukrainian organizations was synchronized with that of their Western peers. For example, an institute led by V. Yuschenko's political ally and future Ukrainian Defense Minister A. Gritsenko gave Yuschenko an 11% lead on the basis of its exit polls in the immediate wake of the second-round run-off. The figure has never been confirmed, and the same is true of Yuschenko's alleged 15% lead in the illegitimate third round. Nevertheless, the 11% became a street campaign slogan already on November 21, that is, before the ballots were actually counted...

Dr. A.B. Krylov, a historian from the Institute for World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Science, convincingly disproves the official version of the Rose Revolution in Georgia. According to this version, the Revolution resulted from mass protests provoked by the official election results which were perceived as grossly rigged in favor of the political regime. Following the Rose Revolution, Tbilisi's politics lost the last signs of independence and ability to maintain balance between various centers of power. The dynamics of the developments around Abkhazia and North Ossetia shows that the radically pro-US course adopted by Georgia can have extremely negative consequences. Saakashvili's popularity is dwindling, and, like his Ukrainian colleague, he has to turn to his foreign patrons for legitimization and stirs a nationalist hysteria by groundlessly portraying Russia as an enemy of Georgia.

In an essay entitled 'Orange Technologies in Armenia...' A. Areshev from the Strategic Culture Foundation addresses the developments in the country in 2004-2007. Though the essay does not cover the events in Armenia in February and March, 2008, many of the negative tendencies in the Republic which stemmed from the implementation of an extremely liberal economic model were already evident at that time. The discontent due to these tendencies made it possible for the opposition to openly proclaim breaking the country's statehood machine as its goal. The atmosphere in Armenia - aggressive rallies which continued for days, the instigation of political divisions in the army and law enforcement agencies, the incitement of hostility towards the people from a particular region - combined the most repulsive aspects of the scenarios which had materialized in Serbia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. An attempt to stage an armed coup disguised as nonviolent civic disobedience left the shaky Armenian statehood on the verge of a serious crisis and made the country vulnerable to a plenitude of challenges.

A. Yunusov, Head of the Conflictology and Migration Department of the institute for Peace and Democracy, traces the strengthening of the positions of the US and other Western countries in Azerbaijan in the 1990ies-2000ies. In his opinion, the West outplayed Russia in the country by the early XXI century without any serious political or financial efforts and met with no considerable resistance from Moscow in the process. Several hundred experts in the US Administration, the Congress, the CIA, and US research centers monitored the situation in the Caspian region and in Azerbaijan in particular and formulated the US Caspian strategy. However, the growing Western influence in the Republic led to the emergence of a political system of a colonial type in the Republic with a parasitic elite exploiting its oil riches. The data provided by the author shows that the population in Azerbaijan is deeply disappointed in Western values and is turning increasingly anti-American. Actually, the same trend can be found in most of the countries which survived color revolutions and have elites politically dependent on Washington, for example, in Georgia. This sentiment cannot be attributed entirely to ongoing political crises and persisting economic problems - largely the situation is due to the falsehood of the very values aggressively marketed by the forces behind the color revolutions.

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The probability of a color revolution in Russia continues to draw the attention of politicians, experts, and media. Currently, Russia appears politically stable. Nevertheless, in our turbulent epoch both the domestic and the international challenges grow increasingly diverse and also increasingly coordinated. The essay by I. Dobaev, Head of the Geopolitics and Information Analysis Sector of the Southern Research Center of the Russian Academy of Science, surveys the network organizations active in Russia's Caucasus. Over a hundred pro-Western NGO's, foundations, and monitoring networks function in Russia's Southern Federal District alone. Many of them are openly oppositional and attempt to maximally mobilize the support of the younger people and other politically active social strata. E. Popov, a writer who has authored a number of books on Russian politics, examines the activity of Ukrainian NGOs in Russia. Their main objective is to consolidate the Ukrainian community in Russia, which numbers approximately 5 mln people, and to boost their ethnic self-awareness. Notably, at the same time we witness intense attacks on the positions of the Russian language and culture in Ukraine.

Probably, we should expect new attempts to destabilize the situation in Russia. Such attempts necessarily have to be preceded by a unification of various opposition groups and a centralization of their funding from abroad, as it has happened in Serbia. Efforts in this direction, albeit unsuccessful, have been observed. Adequately to the situation, amendments to the federal legislation regulating the activity of NGOs in Russia were made in 2006. In his April 26 Address to the parliament, Russian President V. Putin explained why the step quite natural for a sovereign country had to be taken. He said that the steady progress made by Russia is bad news for certain forces and that there are those who would be happy to bring back the recent past under the guise of democratic rhetoric, some - to loot Russia's national wealth as they used to do in the past, others - to undermine Russia's economic and political independence. President Putin also said that increasing amounts of money are poured from abroad to intervene in Russia's domestic affairs. He noted that even in the colonial epoch major powers played a civilizing role, but these days their only objective is to gain unilateral advantages and to secure their own profits.

The forces interested in color revolutions see high mobility and network structure as prerequisites for their success. They will make efforts to

carefully organize their work with target population groups (young people, women, intellectuals, taxi drivers, salespersons at newspaper stands). Political network marketing attempts have been noted in the run-up to the 2007 parliamentary elections, but they were fairly unsuccessful. The same is true of the attempts to discredit the results of the vote. Still, skilled media manipulation and efforts aimed at creating an impression of high attendance of protest rallies (especially in the country's capital, as it was done in Armenia) can yield certain undesirable results. Practically any events - not necessarily important elections or key political developments - can be used as pretexts for mass opposition rallies. Less significant occasions like 'unorganized' strikes or unexpected price hikes for prime necessities would do as well. The first developments of the kind have already taken place in Saint Petersburg. Interested parties can try to capitalize on certain social strata's traditional mistrust of the authority (especially of its lower and intermediate segments), or on the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Russia. Such factors were present in all the countries which fell victims of color revolutions, and in many cases in greater proportions than in Russia. Difficulties experienced by the global economy (the growth of food prices worldwide combined with Russia's risky dependency on agricultural import being just one of a number of potential vulnerabilities) and the conflicts provoked both within Russia and along its borders will hardly leave our country unaffected in the future. Western intelligence agencies have started to show interest in extremist groups currently active in Russia. Minor street skirmishes between allegedly warring Russian youth groups have long been overstated by global and some of the domestic media. They have also become a recurrent theme in information wars in Internet. Russian security agencies say that attempts are underway to organize the funding of fascist groups in Russia via various foundations, as it has been done previously in the case of Muslim fundamentalists in Russia's North Caucasus<sup>1</sup>. Hence the importance of the issues discussed in the essays by E. Popov and I. Dobaev.

Aggressive style of propaganda is another factor of great importance. The cases of the countries neighboring Russia showed that even when the authorities retained control over most of the media, they traditionally relied on the administrative leverage and were completely unable to arrange their own informational defense. Moreover, instead of acting adequately in order to overcome domestic political problems, the authorities in some countries worried excessively about the way they were perceived internationally, as they were used to believing that the source of their legitimacy (from the political support to financial interests and the possibility of winning grants like the Millennium Challenge) lay in the West rather than in their own countries. If Republic leaders remained defiant, the West resorted to direct threats to use military force. For example, the NATO forces backed the opposition in Serbia during its conflict with law enforcement agencies - NATO threatened to intervene in the case of open hostilities in the country. At that time British Foreign Minister R. Cook openly warned the Serb authority against forgetting about NATO's permanent presence all along Serbia's borders. Thus, the domestic pressure on the regime is typically synchronized with outside threats. Russia should pay special attention to this circumstance now that NATO is moving closer to its borders (the NATO 'responsibility zone' has already spread over the Baltic countries and can span Ukraine and Georgia in the foreseeable future).

The authors of the 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek' are by no means a team of conspiracy theorists. Nor do they call for total control over mass media and for political or cultural isolationism (rather, it is fair to say that this approach is practiced in the countries where color revolutions have taken place). They simply suggest viewing things realistically and without illusions. Authority institutions must be

adequate to the emerging challenges and threats faced by sovereign countries in the early XXI century. They must be ahead of the events, not lag behind them. They must be strong and united. Such is the necessary condition for putting to practice the ambitious economic and political modernization plans in Russia. This is the main conclusion one comes to upon reading 'Orange Networks From Belgrade to Bishkek'.

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1 A. Medvedev. Playing Against All Sides.  
[Http://vesti7.ru/news?id=12177](http://vesti7.ru/news?id=12177)

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