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Ukraine crisis: Transcript of leaked Nuland-Pyatt call

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| Victoria Nuland and Geoffrey Pyatt together toured the opposition camp in Kiev in December

An apparently bugged phone conversation in which a senior US diplomat disparages the EU over the Ukraine crisis has been posted online. The alleged conversation between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland

alleged conversation between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the US Ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, appeared on YouTube on Thursday. It is not clearly when the alleged conversation took place.

Here is a transcript, with analysis by BBC diplomatic correspondent Jonathan Marcus:

Warning: This transcript contains swearing.

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

- **Jonathan Marcus:** At the outset it should be clear that this is a fragment of what may well be a larger phone conversation. But the US has not denied its veracity and has been quick to point a finger at the Russian authorities for being behind its interception and leak.

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, another opposition leader]. 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.

- **Jonathan Marcus:** The US says that it is working with all sides in the crisis to reach a peaceful solution, noting that "ultimately it is up to the Ukrainian people to decide their future". However this transcript suggests that the US has very clear ideas about what the outcome should be and is striving to achieve these goals. Russian spokesmen have insisted that the US is meddling in Ukraine's affairs - no more than Moscow, the cynic might say - but Washington clearly has its own game-plan. The clear purpose in leaking this conversation is to embarrass Washington and for audiences susceptible to Moscow's message to portray the US as interfering in Ukraine's domestic affairs.

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.





| Anti-government protesters have been camped out in Kiev since November

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, the other 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?

- **Jonathan Marcus:** An intriguing insight into the foreign policy process with work going on at a number of levels: Various officials attempting to marshal the Ukrainian opposition; efforts to get the UN to play an active role in bolstering a deal; and (as you can see below) the big guns waiting in the wings - US Vice-President Joe Biden clearly being lined up to give private words of encouragement at the appropriate moment.

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.

- **Jonathan Marcus:** Not for the first time in an international crisis, the US expresses frustration at the EU's efforts. Washington and Brussels have not been completely in step during the Ukraine crisis. The EU is divided and to some extent hesitant about picking a fight with Moscow. It certainly cannot win a short-term battle for Ukraine's affections with Moscow - it just does not have the cash inducements available. The EU has sought to play a longer game; banking on its attraction over time. But the US clearly is determined to take a much more activist role.

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.

- **Jonathan Marcus:** Overall this is a damaging episode between Washington and Moscow. Nobody really emerges with any credit. The US is clearly much more involved in trying to broker a deal in Ukraine than it publicly lets on. There is some embarrassment too for the Americans given the ease with which their communications were hacked. But is the interception and leaking of communications really the way Russia wants to conduct its

foreign policy ? Goodness - after Wikileaks, Edward Snowden and the like could the Russian government be joining the radical apostles of open government? I doubt it. Though given some of the comments from Vladimir Putin's adviser on Ukraine Sergei Glazyev - for example his interview with the Kommersant-Ukraine newspaper the other day - you don't need your own listening station to be clear about Russia's intentions. Russia he said "must interfere in Ukraine" and the authorities there should use force against the demonstrators.



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Ms Nuland and Mr Pyatt (centre) met Ukrainian opposition leaders Vitaly Klitschko (L) and Arseny Yatsenyuk (R) on Thursday



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