Hayward: Democrats Embrace the 'Four Stages of Ideological Subversion'

John Hayward 6 Jun 2020

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"Progressive" ideology always rests on a conviction that the current "regressive" system is comprehensively unjust and must be destroyed by exploiting its weaknesses.

The most famous proponent of such tactics in recent years has been the late Saul Alinksy, the intellectual godfather of the modern Democrat Party, but former Soviet journalist and KGB informant Yuri Bezmenov laid out an even more concise strategy for subversion in a 1984 interview.

Alinksy's seminal book specified 13 *Rules for Radicals*, but Bezmenov had only four "stages of ideological subversion," and they will sound very familiar to anyone following the current wave of left-wing riots, or the politicized final stages of the coronavirus panic before it: Demoralization, Destabilization, Crisis, and Normalization.

Bezmenov defined ideological subversion, or "active measures" as the KGB preferred to call it, as a "slow

brainwashing process" to "change the perception of reality of every American to such an extent that despite their abundance of information, no one is able to come to sensible conclusions in the interests of defending themselves, their families, their community, and their country."

Stage 1: Demoralization

Bezmenov said the first stage, Demoralization, could take 15 to 20 years to complete because "this is the minimum number of years it takes to educate one generation of students."

"Marxist-Leninist ideology is being pumped into the soft heads of at least three generations without being challenged or counterbalanced by the basic values of Americanism, American patriotism," he warned in 1984, judging that the demoralization process had been "basically completed" by that point.

"Actually, it's *over*-fulfilled, because demoralization now reaches such areas where previously, not even Comrade Andropov and all of his experts would even dream of such tremendous success," he added, referring to former KGB head and Soviet leader Yuri Andropov. "Most of it is done by Americans *to* Americans, thanks to a lack of moral standards."

Bezmenov explained that demoralization is important because it robs the targeted population of its ability to process valid information. Even when demoralization targets are "showered with authentic proof" of contrary positions, they simply "refuse to believe it."

Demoralization is quite obvious among today's young people, whose faith in their country has been systematically destroyed throughout their lives by the education and media establishment. To take a recent high-profile example, the *New York Times'* fraudulent "1619 Project" argued that "American history" actually began with the arrival of black slaves in North America and the Revolutionary War was fought by the colonists to preserve slavery. Although comprehensively debunked by actual historians, and even the original author has admitted her core thesis was not true, the 1619 Project is now part of some school curricula.

Another word for demoralization is *guilt*. Americans are routinely compelled to feel guilty about their society and national history. Guilt is the most powerful force in left-wing politics and academia. People will not accept the radical expansion of punitive government power unless they feel guilty and deserving of punishment.

Stage 2: Destabilization

The second stage, Destabilization, is much faster, requiring

only two to five years under KGB doctrine. In this stage, the fundamentals of the targeted population's economy, political system, and culture would be attacked, while the demoralized population could not mount much of a defense.

Bezmenov in 1984 found it "absolutely fantastic" how much influence Marxist-Leninist ideas had developed in the American economy and military. In essence, a demoralized population becomes willing to believe the worst criticisms of its own society, while learning to see defenders of that society as their enemies, while avowed enemies become natural allies. The defenders are held to strict standards, while anything goes for the most strident critics.

Whatever Bezmenov saw in the destabilized American society of the early 1980s with respect to the Soviet Union, it's easy to see how the American Left has destabilized entire segments of modern society after demoralizing them. They see enemies everywhere, while no pro-American authority can be trusted. It's hard to imagine a better illustration of demoralization followed by destabilization than hordes of anti-capitalist activists texting each other on their iPhones.

Not coincidentally, hostile foreign powers like Communist China and Iran are reaching out to destabilized American communities and offering themselves as guides and allies.

Their sales pitches aren't exactly smooth, but they definitely are making an effort.

A destabilized population becomes obsessed with hypocrisy as the ultimate political sin. They believe the best ideas – individual liberty, sovereign rights, capitalism, even the rule of law – are presented insincerely by sinister powers who seek to exploit and manipulate them. The precious resource of goodwill disappears from society as everyone comes to believe their neighbors hate them and cannot be trusted. Demoralized people lose faith in their nation, history, and ideals; destabilized people lose faith in each other.

Stage 3: Crisis

Once a society has been destabilized, Bezmenov said the time would be ripe to create a Crisis, which he estimated would take six to eight weeks in the Eighties. With turbo Internet speed, the modern era can punch out a crisis much faster than that.

A crisis has the obvious benefit of panicking demoralized, destabilized people into abandoning their legal protections and constitutional ideals. During the coronavirus panic, people who brought up those ideals were treated like lunatics. The pendulum swung the other way with blinding speed during the riots. In the span of one week, the right to

peaceable assembly went from a crazed defiance of common-sense lockdown rules to an urgent matter that utterly transcended the deadly pandemic. Suddenly, angry political demonstration magically cured the coronavirus, or made the projected wave of sickness and death into a purely secondary concern. If you wanted to work at the store so you could feed your family in late March, you were selfishly trying to "kill my Grandma to pad your bank account." If you wanted to burn the store down in early June to protest white supremacy, nobody mentioned their imperiled grandmothers.

The more subtle benefit of a crisis is that it tends to de-legitimize aspects of the existing system that have already been softened up by the long process of demoralization and destabilization. Those who control the organs of public communication have the power to decide which aspects of the system are supposedly indicted by the crisis.

For example, the dominant media Left will go to great lengths to avoid painting the coronavirus as an indictment of the flabby, blinkered, bureaucratic Big Government that grew over the past few decades, and it will not discuss the failures of left-wing mayors and governors. On the contrary, the pandemic was used to attack the competence of Republican governors who turned out to be entirely correct in their actions, as in Florida and Georgia. During the riots,

the media is completely uninterested in discussing the incompetence of left-wing officials who allowed violence to rage out of control with deadly consequences. Somehow the lesson of wanton violence that killed people and destroyed countless livelihoods became "let's get rid of the police altogether."

The threat of a crisis is essential for terrorizing the middle class into accepting a political agenda that is actively hostile to its interests, which leads to the fourth stage of subversion: the offer to make the pain and fear go away by accepting political domination.

Stage 4: Normalization

"After a crisis, with a violent change of the power structure and economy, you have a so-called period of Normalization that may last indefinitely," Bezmenov said, arriving at the fourth stage of subversion.

"Normalization is a cynical expression borrowed from Soviet propaganda," he explained. Interestingly, it also happens to be the core theme of the 2020 Democrat presidential campaign.

"When the Soviet tanks moved into Czechoslovakia in 1968, Comrade Brezhnev said, 'Now the situation in brotherly Czechoslovakia is 'normalized.' This is what will happen in

the United States if you allow all the schmucks to bring the country to crisis, to promise people all kinds of goodies and a paradise on Earth, to destabilize your economy, to eliminate the principle of free-market competition, and to put a Big Brother government in Washington, D.C. with benevolent dictators like Walter Mondale, who will promise lots of things – never mind whether the promises are fulfillable or not," Bezmenov cautioned.

As things turned out, Walter Mondale never got his chance to be a benevolent dictator, and to some extent Bezmenov's four-step model of subversion could be applied to almost any political campaign. They almost all begin with telling voters things are awful, crises have erupted, and normality can be restored only by voting for the challenger (or preserved only by voting for the incumbent).

Bezmenov, however, was insistent that American left-wing professors and civil-rights leaders were deliberately running Andropov's strategy with a conscious effort to achieve destabilization, the step that truly distinguishes ideological subversion from the usual promises to put a chicken in every pot.

"They are instrumental in the process of subversion only to destabilize a nation," he said of the academics and activists. "When their job is completed, they are not needed anymore. They know too much. Some of them, when they get

disillusioned, when they see that Marxist-Leninists come to power, obviously they get offended. They think that they will come to power. That will never happen, of course. They will be lined up against the wall and shot."

The American version of this process probably would not end with the mass execution of inconvenient intellectuals, but there is a parallel in what would happen to the intellectual supporters of the current riots if the Democrats win in 2020. They would discover that the victorious Democrat Party is not at all interested in their systemic criticisms of public union employees, such as police officers. Many bones would be thrown to activist groups to purchase their loyalty – and, much more importantly, the loyalty of their leaders – but not the one concession they ostensibly care about the most: a system that makes it easier to discipline and fire government employees.

This metaphorical lining up and shooting of intellectuals is already happening with Lockdown Forever enthusiasts, who only a few days ago were hammering out passionate arguments that American businesses must remain shuttered for weeks or months to come, and anyone who dared to question their dire warnings was a selfish monster willing to kill other people's grandmothers to pad out their 401k accounts. In the blink of an eye, Lockdown Forever went from the vital engineers of a politically useful crisis to

inconvenient obstacles for the new crisis, nationwide riots.

Most of the lockdown gurus sensed this shift in the political winds and quickly trimmed their sails, hammering out new screeds that claimed protesters are probably immune to the coronavirus somehow, or even more incredibly, that another outbreak would be a small price to pay for righteous political activism:

These are the same medical activists who were shrieking in March that the coronavirus could kill millions of Americans if lockdowns were not imposed immediately, and just a few weeks ago, left-wingers were obsessed with calculations that showed COVID-19 is exceptionally deadly to the black community. But suddenly the risk of millions of deaths, 70 percent of them purportedly likely to be black Americans, means nothing compared to the vital urgency of protesting against "white supremacy."