

The False Flag Poisoning of Alexei Navalny, aka ‘Russia’s Trump’

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On August 20th, Russian opposition figure and self-styled “anti-corruption” activist Alexei Navalny fell seriously ill while in mid-flight from Tomsk, Siberia to the Russian capital. The Moscow-bound plane was abruptly re-routed to make an emergency landing in the Siberian city of Omsk where the anti-Kremlin politician was subsequently hospitalized for suspected poisoning and placed in a medically-induced coma. Two days later, Navalny was airlifted to Germany in an evacuation arranged by a Berlin-based “human rights” NGO at the request of Pussy Riot spokesman Pyotr Verzilov. His transport on a medically-equipped plane with German specialists was permitted by the Russian authorities who now stand accused of culpability in the alleged attack, all in the midst of the ongoing pandemic.

While the Russian doctors in Omsk (who saved Navalny’s life) maintain they did not find any evidence of chemical weapons substances in his system, upon examination the German government quickly announced that its military lab had discovered “unequivocal evidence” Navalny was poisoned by a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent and demanded an explanation from the Kremlin — without providing any of said evidence to Moscow or the public, of course. Despite being the supposed victim of an extremely deadly military-grade nerve agent, three weeks later Navalny came out his comatose state and off ventilation, defiantly vowing a return to Russia. Was he ever tested for COVID-19? At this point it seems more likely than this propaganda stunt we are expected to believe.

It is unconvincing precisely because it follows a pattern of improbable events questionably attributed to the Kremlin. As many have noted, the incident strikingly resembles the alleged March 2018 poisoning in Salisbury, England of disgraced former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, visiting from Moscow which caused a similar diplomatic row. Skripal, who had been a double agent for MI6 and served ten years imprisonment for high treason, was exiled to the UK after his sentence in a spy-swap between Russia and Britain in 2010. While residing in southern England, Skripal was [reportedly in close contact](#) with a security consultant who worked for the author of the salacious but fabricated dossier on U.S. President Donald Trump’s alleged ties to Russia, former British intelligence agent Christopher Steele — and may have even been the source of its unverified contents.

Skripal and his daughter were discovered unconscious on a park bench, but were said to have been initially contaminated hours earlier by the extremely fast-acting substance applied to the door handle of his residence. Similarly, Alexei Navalny is said to have been contaminated by a water bottle in his hotel room, not in the tea he drank at the Tomsk Bogashevo airport cafe before boarding his flight as originally believed. How is the elapsed time in both of these cases possible? The toxin in Navalny’s case was also not discovered until examination in Germany, meaning a bottle laced with a chemical warfare agent was

transported all the way to Berlin? None of those who came to Navalny's aid or treated him suffered any noxious effects, unlike the Skripals where multiple police officers at least showed minor symptoms. Still, both Navalny and the Skripals fully recovered from their supposed exposure to an extremely lethal toxin considered even more deadly than sarin or VX gas. After their release from the hospital, the Skripals immediately went into hiding which has left the enormous questions surrounding the incident still unresolved two years later. However, the damage was already done as the UK government immediately blamed Moscow and more than 100 Russian diplomats were expelled by Britain and its Western allies.

Months later in June 2018, two British nationals were the victims of an accidental poisoning (one fatally) after they discovered a discarded but unopened perfume bottle containing the same poisonous agent. Then that September, Scotland Yard released CCTV footage of two Russian men alleged to be GRU military intelligence agents in Salisbury at the time of the attack. However, no verifiable evidence was ever provided by the British government showing that the two were responsible, though it was conveniently claimed that the would-be culprits clumsily left vestiges of the fatal chemical agent in their hotel room. So, not only is Russian intelligence incapable of carrying out successful assassinations, but carelessly unable to cover their tracks? The premise was already absurd enough but made even more fanciful by Britain's refusal to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention in providing Moscow with requested samples of the toxin which purportedly poisoned the treasonous ex-spook and his daughter. Thus far in the Navalny case, Germany is following the same script.

What a coincidence that the attack comes just as Nord Stream 2, the second line of the massive natural gas pipeline under construction from Russia to Germany opposed by the U.S. and several NATO allies, is near completion. Suddenly, the diplomatic fall-out has put the controversial project in limbo, with Chancellor Angela Merkel and the German government under pressure from Washington to withdraw from the project which would increase Russian influence on Europe's energy infrastructure and rival the U.S.'s costlier exports. As pointed out by Die Linke's Dietmar Bartsch, where were the calls to halt the purchase of Saudi oil imports after the grisly murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi? It is clear that the Anglo-Americans are simply desperate to halt the resurgence of Moscow on the international stage, threatening their German counterparts with sanctions as the final sections of the pipeline conveying Russian gas across the Baltic Sea is being constructed. The attack on Navalny could not occur at a more auspicious time for the Atlanticists and a worse time for Moscow.

The notion that Russian President Vladimir Putin would try to assassinate an opposition figure who holds a minuscule 2% support amongst the population, far behind other opponents nonexistent to Western media but the one who just so happens to be favored by Washington, is contrary to any reason or common sense. Not to mention, at the exact moment it would jeopardize a project essential to Russia's economic growth and frugality, as the pipeline would link Moscow with Western Europe bypassing neighboring transit countries such as the Ukraine (also opposed to Nord Stream 2) which have costly transit fees. Is it really the Russian government who stands to massively benefit from this fiasco? The answer to "cui bono?" could not be more clear: U.S., Saudi and Emirati oil and gas interests, not the Kremlin. Russia was also recently the first nation to develop a COVID-19 vaccine candidate with its Sputnik V registered in August, an international competition that has been heavily politicized by Washington which is eager to cast aspersions on Moscow's accomplishment. Meanwhile, Germany is also the one Western European country where

Washington's anti-Russian propaganda is falling flat, as recent polls consistently show that [the vast majority of Germans don't see Russia as a threat](#), likely a result of their high rate of media literacy.

Despite Navalny's recovery, there are already calls to legislate a 'Navalny Act' as a follow-up to the Magnitsky Act, a bipartisan bill previously passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012 under the Obama Administration which sanctioned Russian officials accused of being responsible for the 2009 death of Sergei Magnitsky, an unscrupulous Russian tax lawyer who helped dodgy international financiers like the US-born British tycoon William Browder commit massive tax evasion in Russia. Magnitsky died under mysterious circumstances while in custody awaiting trial for facilitating Browder's skullduggery and suffering from poor health, with the Russian prison officials first accused of depriving him of medical treatment and then allegedly beating and torturing him to death. The fascinating 2016 documentary [The Magnitsky Act: Behind the Scenes](#) explores the case from the perspective of Westernized Putin critic and filmmaker Andrei Nekrasov, who through the course of his investigation unexpectedly discovers that the mainstream media narrative of Magnitsky's death was a fiction concocted by Browder. Suddenly, Nekrasov's entire perspective on Russia comes into question and the film takes on a metanarrative of the nature of propaganda itself.

What we are being told about Navalny is likely another fairy tale like the implausible story forged by Mr. Browder about the death of the auditor he hired to enrich himself exploiting Russia's tax loopholes. Incredibly, the American-born investor is the grandson of Earl Browder, the leader of the Communist Party USA during its heyday until his expulsion at the end of World War II. When the wartime US-Soviet alliance fell apart and the Cold War began, the elder Browder proved more loyal to American imperialism than the communist movement and presided over the liquidation of the CPUSA until it was reestablished with his dismissal as General Secretary. Having grown up in a Russian-speaking family, decades later his grandson decided to cash in on the collapse of the former Soviet Union through various investment ventures as manager of the hedge fund Hermitage Capital Management. When Putin succeeded Boris Yeltsin and numerous oligarchs went into exile or landed themselves in prison, Bill Browder was forced to flee the country after defrauding the Russian government of millions with the help of the late Mr. Magnitsky.

One of those banished oligarchs, billionaire media tycoon Boris Berezovsky, also died under dubious circumstances in the UK when he was found hanging in his apartment bathroom in Berkshire, England in 2013. Like Magnitsky, Putin and the Russian government were suspected of involvement in Berezovsky's death by the media without a shred of evidence, even though his suspicious purported "suicide" actually came shortly after expressing a written willingness to return to Russia and reconcile with Putin—which almost certainly would have been a stroke of good luck for Russian counter-intelligence and a threat to the West, not the Kremlin. Berezovsky had been close with a former agent of the Federal Security Service (FSB, the KGB's successor), Alexander Litvinenko, a defector renowned for claiming he had been ordered by Putin to assassinate Berezovsky and subsequently lived in the UK as a consultant for British intelligence until his own polonium poisoning in 2006, the first of a series of episodes framing Moscow. Consistently, however, in every one of these cases it is never the Kremlin which stands to gain.

There is a reason Putin consistently polls over 70% in favorability with the Russian people and that is his directing the country away from Western domination under the ruinous neoliberal economic policies of his corrupt and inebriated predecessor Boris Yeltsin which

auctioned off the former state-owned assets to foreign investors such as Browder and oligarchs like Berezovsky. Meanwhile, Navalny has a level of support well under 5%, with recent polls placing him behind the Communist Party's Pavel Grudinin and the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. While Navalny's own rhetoric has shifted over the years, he has controversially maintained his own cozy relationship with ethnic nationalists who make up a significant amount of his right-wing populist base, even co-organizing annual marches dominated by racist skinheads.

Navalny infamously coined the slogan "Stop Feeding the Caucasus!" advocated by xenophobic nationalists calling for the defunding and secession of the Muslim-majority North Caucasus from Russia, while making frequent Islamophobic statements and stoking anti-immigrant sentiments against Central Asians. You would never know this reading Western media who have completely sanitized Navalny's politics (if they ever address them at all), while they remain obsessed with the perceived ingratiation between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin even though the former's politics have far more in common with Navalny than the Russian President. Given the U.S. support for far right nationalists in the 2014 anti-Russian coup d'état in Ukraine, Washington has no qualms about backing fascists to undermine Moscow.

In 1831, Russia's most famous and revered poet, Alexander Pushkin, composed "[To the Slanderers of Russia](#)", a patriotic ode in response to members of the French parliament who were advocating for a military intervention to assist the Polish uprising against the Russian Empire. Pushkin asserted that the Polish uprising was an inter-slavic "ancient, domestic dispute", while the Poles considered it an issue of national independence which their European allies were eager to exploit against Moscow. For the great Russian writer, the Polish alliance with the tyrant and invader Napoleon was unforgivable. He also reportedly communicated to General Alexander von Benckendorff, the chief of the Tsarist secret police assigned to censor and surveil him, that the Europeans were still bitter over the failed French invasion of Russia in 1812 and had not yet attacked with weapons but were doing so with "daily mad slander."

Fast forward nearly 200 years later and little has changed in Russia-West relations. The only thing that has arguably transformed is Russia's standing on the world stage following the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 and the Soviet Union almost 75 years later, the latter of which was masterminded by a Polish-born National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose Russophobic worldview was a product of the deep-seated "ancient, domestic dispute" Pushkin wrote of a century earlier. Contrary to the Western portrayal of the resurgence of Moscow in the new millennia under Vladimir Putin as neo-tsarist expansionism, post-Soviet Russia is actually a relatively weak capitalist state that has found itself a target of regime change by the West which seeks the colonization and balkanization of Eastern Europe.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 caused a spike in oil prices that generated huge profits for Chevron and ExxonMobil, but also had the unintended consequence of benefiting Russia's state-run oil industry just as Putin was re-nationalizing its energy assets and banishing financial criminals like Browder and Berezovsky. While its strength and influence has certainly been restored, its foreign investments remain low even in the Ukraine where Moscow has been accused of territorial expansion with the so-called "annexation" of Crimea, where the mostly Russian-speaking eastern Ukrainian population actually voted to join its neighbor in a referendum. Russia may no longer be an empire (or communist), but yet it remains in the crosshairs of Western imperialism, whose political leaders and subservient

corporate media are still conducting the “mad slander” that Pushkin opined.

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