

# How US Intelligence Leaks to Media Backfired in Ukraine War?

By [Nauman Sadiq](#)

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*In a [bombshell NBC scoop](#) published Wednesday, the authors of the report alleged that US spy agencies used deliberate and selective intelligence leaks to mainstream news outlets to mount an information warfare campaign against Russia during the latter’s month-long military offensive in Ukraine, despite being aware the intelligence wasn’t credible.*

The US intelligence assessment that Russia was preparing to use chemical weapons in the Ukraine War, that was widely reported in the corporate media and confirmed by President Biden himself, was an unsubstantiated claim leaked to the press as a tit-for-tat response to the damning Russian allegation that Ukraine was pursuing an active biological weapons program, in collaboration with Washington, in scores of bio-labs discovered by Russian forces in Ukraine in early days of the military campaign.

The crux of the NBC report, however, isn’t what’s being disclosed but rather what’s still being withheld by the US intelligence community that the mainstream news outlets are not at liberty to report on.

Despite being aware of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s major unilateral concession to Kyiv, halting Russian offensive north of the capital and focusing on liberating Russian-majority Donbas in east Ukraine, practically spelling an end to Russia’s month-long offensive in Ukraine, US security officials are still deceptively asserting that Russia’s pullout from areas around Kyiv “wasn’t a retreat but a strategic redeployment” that signals a “significant assault on eastern and southern Ukraine,” one that US officials believe could be a “protracted and bloody fight.”

# In a break with the past, U.S. is using intel to fight an info war with Russia, even when the intel isn't rock solid

"It doesn't have to be solid intelligence," one U.S. official said. "It's more important to get out ahead of them [the Russians], Putin specifically, before they do something."

Screenshot from [NBC News](#)

Regarding the malicious disinformation campaign mounted by Western media on behalf of NATO powers, the report notes:

"The idea is to pre-empt and disrupt the Kremlin's tactics, complicate its military campaign, undermine Moscow's propaganda and prevent Russia from defining how the war is perceived in the world, said a Western government official familiar with the strategy."

It has become clear now the "40-mile-long Trojan Horse" of battle tanks, armored vehicles and heavy artillery that descended from Belarus in the north and reached the outskirts of Kyiv in the early days of the war without encountering much resistance en route the capital was simply a power projection gambit astutely designed as a diversionary tactic by Russia's military strategists in order to deter Ukraine from sending reinforcements to Donbas in east Ukraine where real battles for territory were actually fought and scramble to defend the embattled country's capital instead.

But US security agencies insidiously kept feeding false information of impending fall of the Ukrainian capital to the mainstream media throughout Russia's month-long military campaign in Ukraine.

Only two conclusions could be drawn from this scaremongering tactic: either it was a massive intelligence failure and Western security agencies weren't aware the "40-mile-long Trojan Horse" approaching the capital was a ruse; or the NATO's spy agencies had credible intelligence since the beginning of Russia's military campaign that real battles for territory would be fought in Donbas in east Ukraine and the feigned assault on the capital was simply a diversionary tactic but they exaggerated the threat in order to vilify Russia's calculated military offensive in Ukraine, and win the war of narratives that "how the war is perceived across the world."

Except in the early days of the military campaign when Russian airstrikes and long-range artillery shelling targeted military infrastructure in the outskirts of Kyiv to degrade the combat potential of Ukraine's armed forces, the capital did not witness much action during the month-long offensive. Otherwise, with the tremendous firepower at its disposal, the world's second most powerful military force had the demonstrable capability to reduce the whole city down to the ashes.

By mid-March, after the "40-mile-long" column of armored vehicles that created panic in the rank and file of Ukraine's security forces and their international backers and that didn't move an inch further after reaching the outskirts of Kyiv in the early days of the war, it

became obvious even to the lay observers of the Ukraine War that it was evidently a diversionary tactic.

But Western security agencies and the corporate media kept propagating the myth that the purported assault on the Ukrainian capital was stalled by alleged “fierce Ukrainian resistance,” and if it were up to Russian forces, they would “ransack the capital Kyiv” and “overrun the whole territory” of the embattled country.

Even a week after the unilateral [Russian peace initiative](#) on March 25, scaling back its blitz north of the capital and focusing instead on liberating Russian-majority Donbas region in east Ukraine, a task that has already been accomplished in large measure, Western intelligence community and the mainstream media kept warning the gullible audience Russia’s pullout from areas around Kyiv “wasn’t a retreat but a strategic redeployment” and that Russian forces had withdrawn back into Belarus and Russia simply to “[regroup, refit and resupply.](#)”

Last week, US officials told reporters they had intelligence suggesting “Putin was being misled” by his own advisers, who were “afraid to tell him the truth.” “The degree to which Putin is isolated or relying on flawed information can’t be verified,” Paul Pillar, a retired career US intelligence officer, confided to NBC. “There’s no way you can prove or disprove that stuff,” he said.

Two US officials said the intelligence about whether “Putin’s inner circle was lying to him wasn’t conclusive” — based more on “analysis than hard evidence.” Multiple US officials acknowledged that the US had used “information as a weapon” even when “confidence in the accuracy of the information wasn’t high.” Sometimes it had used low-confidence intelligence for deterrent effect, as with chemical agents, and other times, as an official put it, the US was just “trying to get inside Putin’s head.”

While attempting to play mind games with Putin, the US intelligence community must’ve overlooked “an inconsequential detail” that before venturing into politics, Putin himself was part of the Cold War’s Russian intelligence agency, the KGB, for many years.

Based on declassified intelligence, [The New York Times reported](#) last week:

“The Russian military’s stumbles have eroded trust between Mr. Putin and his Ministry of Defense. While Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu had been considered one of the few advisers Mr. Putin confided in, the prosecution of the war in Ukraine has damaged the relationship. Mr. Putin has put two top intelligence officials under house arrest for providing poor intelligence ahead of the invasion, something that may have further contributed to the climate of fear.”

Other American officials, as reported in the mainstream media, had said that “Putin’s rigid isolation during the pandemic” and willingness to publicly “rebuke advisers who did not share his views” had created a degree of wariness, or even fear, in senior ranks of the Russian military. Officials believe that Putin had been getting “incomplete or overly optimistic reports” about the progress of Russian forces, “creating mistrust with his military advisers.”

All the media hype in order to misguide gullible audiences following the stellar Russian victory in the Ukraine War aside, the fact remains it’s old wine in new bottles. The

intelligence wasn't declassified last week, it was declassified a month ago, but nobody paid much attention to the asinine assertion of an alleged rift between Putin and the Russian military leadership.

[The Politico reported](#) as early as March 8, in an article titled "Putin is angry," that the US intelligence heads warned before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence during the panel's annual hearing on worldwide threats that Russia's military campaign in Ukraine was not going as planned and it could "double down" in Ukraine.

"Although it still remains unclear whether Russia will pursue a maximalist plan to capture all or most of Ukraine, Director National Intelligence Avril Haines said, such an effort would run up against what the U.S. intelligence community assesses is likely to be a persistent and significant insurgency by Ukrainian forces."

Clearly, DNI Avril Haines spilled the secret before the House Select Committee on Intelligence that the US intelligence was in dark whether the Russian forces would overrun the whole of Ukraine, or the Russian blitz north of the capital was only a diversionary tactic meant for tying up Ukrainian forces in the north, while Russia concentrated its efforts in liberating Donbas in the east.

Echoing the "recently declassified intelligence" disclosed by NYT the preposterous claim that Putin's rigid self-isolation during the COVID pandemic allegedly created a rift between him and Russia's military leadership, the Politico report from a month ago presciently endorsed the inane intelligence assessment:

"William Burns, the CIA director, portrayed for lawmakers an isolated and indignant Russian president who is determined to dominate and control Ukraine to shape its orientation. Putin has been 'stewing in a combustible combination of grievance and ambition for many years. That personal conviction matters more than ever,' Burns said.

"Burns also described how Putin had created a system within the Kremlin in which his own circle of advisers is narrower and narrower — and sparser still because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In that hierarchy, Burns said, 'it's proven not career-enhancing for people to question or challenge his judgment.'"

The most notable success of the US information warfare campaign based on misleading declassified intelligence to media outlets, as claimed by the NBC report, may have been delaying the invasion itself by weeks or months, which officials believe they did with accurate predictions that Russia intended to attack, based on definitive intelligence. By the time Russia moved its troops in, "the West presented a unified front."

"A former U.S. official said administration officials believe the strategy delayed Putin's invasion from the first week of January to after the Olympics and that the delay bought the U.S. valuable time to get allies on the same page in terms of the level of the Russian threat and how to respond."

Contradicting the NBC claim, however, [The Intercept reported](#) on March 11, citing "credible intelligence sources," that despite staging a massive military buildup along Russia's border with Ukraine for nearly a year, "Russian President Vladimir Putin did not make a final decision to invade until just before he launched the attack on February 24," senior current and former US intelligence officials told the Intercept. "It wasn't until February that the

agency and the rest of the US intelligence community became convinced that Putin would invade,” the senior official added.

Last April, US intelligence first detected that “the Russian military was beginning to move large numbers of troops and equipment to the Ukrainian border.” Most of the Russian soldiers deployed to the border at that time were later “moved back to their bases,” but US intelligence determined that “some of the troops and materiel remained near the border.”

In June 2021, against the backdrop of rising tensions over Ukraine, Biden and Putin met at a summit in Geneva. The summer troop withdrawal brought a brief period of calm, but “the crisis began to build again in October and November,” when US intelligence watched as Russia once again “moved large numbers of troops back to its border with Ukraine.”

Extending the hand of friendship, Russia significantly drawdown its forces along the western border before the summit last June. Instead of returning the favor, however, the conceited leadership of supposedly world’s sole surviving super power turned down the hand of friendship and haughtily refused to concede reasonable security guarantees demanded by Russia at the summit that would certainly have averted the likelihood of the war.

After perusing such contradictory reports, citing “credible intelligence estimates,” it appears the US intelligence community has developed a novel espionage technique of playing both ends against the middle. The world’s leading US spy agencies seem to have this uncanny ability of predicting with absolute certainty that an event is as likely to happen as it is likely that it may not happen. And since the media watchdog has been tamed to the point where it dares not question the authority, therefore security agencies would get the credit whether or not they performed their duties diligently.

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*Nauman Sadiq is an Islamabad-based geopolitical and national security analyst focused on geo-strategic affairs and hybrid warfare in the Af-Pak and Middle East regions. His domains of expertise include neocolonialism, military-industrial complex and petro-imperialism. He is a regular contributor of diligently researched investigative reports to Global Research.*

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