

Media Disinformation: Russia invades Ukraine. Again. And again. And yet again ... using Saddam's WMD

By [William Blum](#)

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[William Blum](#)

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

"Russia reinforced what Western and Ukrainian officials described as a stealth invasion on Wednesday [August 27], sending armored troops across the border as it expanded the conflict to a new section of Ukrainian territory. The latest incursion, which Ukraine's military said included five armored personnel carriers, was at least the third movement of troops and weapons from Russia across the southeast part of the border this week." (NYT)

None of the photos accompanying this *New York Times* story online showed any of these Russian troops or armored vehicles.

"The Obama administration," the story continued, "has asserted over the past week that the Russians had moved artillery, air-defense systems and armor to help the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk. 'These incursions indicate a Russian-directed counteroffensive is likely underway', Jen Psaki, the State Department spokeswoman, said. At the department's daily briefing in Washington, Ms. Psaki also criticized what she called the Russian government's 'unwillingness to tell the truth' that its military had sent soldiers as deep as 30 miles inside Ukraine territory."

Thirty miles inside Ukraine territory and not a single satellite photo, not a camera anywhere around, not even a one-minute video to show for it. "Ms. Psaki apparently [sic] was referring to videos of captured Russian soldiers, distributed by the Ukrainian government." The *Times* apparently forgot to inform its readers where they could see these videos.

"The Russian aim, one Western official said, may possibly be to seize an outlet to the sea in the event that Russia tries to establish a separatist enclave in eastern Ukraine."

This of course hasn't taken place. So what happened to all these Russian soldiers 30 miles inside Ukraine? What happened to all the armored vehicles, weapons, and equipment?

"The United States has photographs that show the Russian artillery moved into Ukraine, American officials say. One photo dated last Thursday, shown to a *New York Times* reporter, shows Russian military units moving self-propelled artillery into Ukraine. Another photo, dated Saturday, shows the artillery in firing positions in Ukraine."

Where are these photographs? And how will we know that these are Russian soldiers? And how will we know that the photos were taken in Ukraine? But most importantly, where are the fucking photographs?

Why am I so cynical? Because the Ukrainian and US governments have been feeding us these scare stories for eight months now, without clear visual or other evidence, often without even common sense. Here are a few of the many other examples, before and after the one above:

- The *Wall Street Journal* (March 28) reported: “Russian troops massing near Ukraine are actively concealing their positions and establishing supply lines that could be used in a prolonged deployment, ratcheting up concerns that Moscow is preparing for another [sic] major incursion and not conducting exercises as it claims, US officials said.”
- “The Ukrainian government charged that the Russian military was not only approaching but had actually crossed the border into rebel-held regions.” (*Washington Post*, November 7)
- “U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip M. Breedlove told reporters in Bulgaria that NATO had observed Russian tanks, Russian artillery, Russian air defense systems and Russian combat troops enter Ukraine across a completely wide-open border with Russia in the previous two days.” (*Washington Post*, November 13)
- “Ukraine accuses Russia of sending more soldiers and weapons to help rebels prepare for a new offensive. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied aiding the separatists.” (*Reuters*, November 16)

Since the February US-backed coup in Ukraine, the State Department has made one accusation after another about Russian military actions in Eastern Ukraine without presenting any kind of satellite imagery or other visual or documentary evidence; or they present something that’s very unclear and wholly inconclusive, such as unmarked vehicles, or unsourced reports, or citing “social media”; what we’re left with is often no more than just an accusation. The Ukrainian government has matched them.

On top of all this we should keep in mind that if Moscow decided to invade Ukraine they’d certainly provide air cover for their ground forces. There has been no mention of air cover.

This is all reminiscent of the numerous stories in the past three years of “Syrian planes bombing defenseless citizens”. Have you ever seen a photo or video of a Syrian government plane dropping bombs? Or of the bombs exploding? When the source of the story is mentioned, it’s almost invariably the rebels who are fighting against the Syrian government. Then there’s the “chemical weapon” attacks by the same evil Assad government. When a photo or video has accompanied the story I’ve never once seen grieving loved ones or media present; not one person can be seen wearing a gas mask. Is it only children killed or suffering? No rebels?

And then there’s the July 17 shutdown of Malaysia Flight MH17, over eastern Ukraine, taking 298 lives, which Washington would love to pin on Russia or the pro-Russian rebels. The US government – and therefore the US media, the EU, and NATO – want us all to believe it was the rebels and/or Russia behind it. The world is still waiting for any evidence. Or even a motivation. Anything at all. President Obama is not waiting. In a talk on November 15 in Australia, he spoke of “opposing Russia’s aggression against Ukraine – which is a threat to the world, as we saw in the appalling shoot-down of MH17”. Based on my reading, I’d guess

that it was the Ukrainian government behind the shutdown, mistaking it for Putin's plane that reportedly was in the area.

Can it be said with certainty that all the above accusations were lies? No, but the burden of proof is on the accusers, and the world is still waiting. The accusers would like to create the impression that there are two sides to each question without actually having to supply one of them.

The United States punishing Cuba

For years American political leaders and media were fond of labeling Cuba an "international pariah". We haven't heard that for a very long time. Perhaps one reason is the annual vote in the United Nations General Assembly on the resolution which reads: "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". This is how the vote has gone (not including abstentions):

Year	Votes (Yes-No)	No Votes
1992	59-2	US, Israel
1993	88-4	US, Israel, Albania, Paraguay
1994	101-2	US, Israel
1995	117-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1996	138-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1997	143-3	US, Israel, Uzbekistan
1998	157-2	US, Israel
1999	155-2	US, Israel
2000	167-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2001	167-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2002	173-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2003	179-3	US, Israel, Marshall Islands
2004	179-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2005	182-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2006	183-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2007	184-4	US, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2008	185-3	US, Israel, Palau
2009	187-3	US, Israel, Palau
2010	187-2	US, Israel
2011	186-2	US, Israel
2012	188-3	US, Israel, Palau
2013	188-2	US, Israel
2014	188-2	US, Israel

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This year Washington's policy may be subject to even more criticism than usual due to the widespread recognition of Cuba's response to the Ebola outbreak in Africa.

Each fall the UN vote is a welcome reminder that the world has not *completely* lost its senses and that the American empire does not *completely* control the opinion of other governments.

Speaking before the General Assembly before last year's vote, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez declared: "The economic damages accumulated after half a century as a result of the implementation of the blockade amount to \$1.126 trillion." He added that the blockade "has been further tightened under President Obama's administration", some 30 US and foreign entities being hit with \$2.446 billion in fines due to their interaction with Cuba.

However, the American envoy, Ronald Godard, in an appeal to other countries to oppose the resolution, said:

The international community ... cannot in good conscience ignore the ease and frequency with which the Cuban regime silences critics, disrupts peaceful assembly, impedes independent journalism and, despite positive reforms, continues to prevent some Cubans from leaving or returning to the island. The Cuban government continues its tactics of politically motivated detentions, harassment and police violence against Cuban citizens.

So there you have it. That is why Cuba must be punished. One can only guess what Mr. Godard would respond if told that more than 7,000 people were arrested in the United States during the Occupy Movement's first 8 months of protest in 2011-12 ; that many of them were physically abused by the police; and that their encampments were violently destroyed.

Does Mr. Godard have access to any news media? Hardly a day passes in America without a police officer shooting to death an unarmed person.

As to "independent journalism" - What would happen if Cuba announced that from now on anyone in the country could own any kind of media? How long would it be before CIA money - secret and unlimited CIA money financing all kinds of fronts in Cuba - would own or control most of the media worth owning or controlling?

The real reason for Washington's eternal hostility toward Cuba has not changed since the revolution in 1959 - The fear of a good example of an alternative to the capitalist model; a fear that has been validated repeatedly over the years as many Third World countries have expressed their adulation of Cuba.

How the embargo began: On April 6, 1960, Lester D. Mallory, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, wrote in an internal memorandum: "The majority of Cubans support Castro ... The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship. ... every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba." Mallory proposed "a line of action which ... makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Later that year, the Eisenhower administration instituted its suffocating embargo against its everlasting enemy.

The United States judging and punishing the rest of the world

In addition to Cuba, Washington currently is imposing economic and other sanctions against Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, China, North Korea, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey, Germany, Malaysia, South Africa, Mexico, South Sudan, Sudan, Russia, Syria, Venezuela, India, and Zimbabwe. These are sanctions mainly against governments, but also against some private enterprises; there are also many other sanctions against individuals not included here.

Imbued with a sense of America's moral superiority and "exceptionalism", each year the State Department judges the world, issuing reports evaluating the behavior of all other nations, often accompanied by sanctions of one kind or another. There are different reports rating how each lesser nation has performed in the previous year in areas such as religious freedom, human rights, the war on drugs, trafficking in persons, and sponsors of terrorism. The criteria used in these reports are often political. Cuba, for example, is always listed as a sponsor of terrorism whereas anti-Castro exile groups in Florida, which have committed literally hundreds of terrorist acts over the years, are not listed as terrorist groups or supporters of such.

Cuba, which has been on the sponsor-of-terrorism list longer (since 1982) than any other country, is one of the most glaring anomalies. The most recent State Department report on this matter, in 2012, states that there is "no indication that the Cuban government provided weapons or paramilitary training to terrorist groups." There are, however, some retirees of Spain's Basque terrorist group ETA (which appears on the verge of disbanding) in Cuba, but the report notes that the Cuban government evidently is trying to distance itself from them by denying them services such as travel documents. Some members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have been allowed into Cuba, but that was because Cuba was hosting peace talks between the FARC and the Colombian government, which the report notes.

The US sanctions mechanism is so effective and formidable that it strikes fear (of huge fines) into the hearts of banks and other private-sector organizations that might otherwise consider dealing with a listed state.

Some selected thoughts on American elections and democracy

In politics, as on the sickbed, people toss from one side to the other, thinking they will be more comfortable.

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

- 2012 presidential election:
 - 223,389,800 eligible to vote
 - 128,449,140 actually voted
 - Obama got 65,443,674 votes
 - Obama was thus supported by 29.3% of eligible voters
- There are 100 million adults in the United States who do not vote. This is a very large base from which an independent party can draw millions of new votes.
- If God had wanted more of us to vote in elections, he would give us better candidates.
- "The people can have anything they want. The trouble is, they do not want anything. At least they vote that way on election day." - *Eugene Debs, American*

socialist leader (1855-1926)

- “If persons over 60 are the only American age group voting at rates that begin to approximate European voting, it’s because they’re the only Americans who live in a welfare state – Medicare, Social Security, and earlier, GI loans, FHA loans.” – *John Powers*
- “The American political system is essentially a contract between the Republican and Democratic parties, enforced by federal and state two-party laws, all designed to guarantee the survival of both no matter how many people despise or ignore them.” – *Richard Reeves (1936-)*
- The American electoral system, once the object of much national and international pride, has slid inexorably from “one person, one vote”, to “one dollar, one vote”.
- Noam Chomsky: “It is important to bear in mind that political campaigns are designed by the same people who sell toothpaste and cars. Their professional concern in their regular vocation is not to provide information. Their goal, rather, is deceit.”
- If the Electoral College is such a good system, why don’t we have it for local and state elections?
- “All the props of a democracy remain intact – elections, legislatures, media – but they predominantly function at the service of the oligarchy.” – *Richard Wolff*
- The RepDem Party holds elections as if they were auctions; indeed, an outright auction for the presidency would be more efficient. To make the auction more interesting we need a second party, which must at a minimum be granted two privileges: getting on the ballot in all 50 states and taking part in television debates.
- The US does in fact have two parties: the Ins and the Outs ... the evil of two lessers.
- Alexander Cockburn: “There was a time once when ‘lesser of two evils’ actually meant something momentous, like the choice between starving to death on a lifeboat, or eating the first mate.”
- Cornel West has suggested that it’s become difficult to even imagine what a free and democratic society, without great concentrations of corporate power, would look like, or how it would operate.
- The United States now resembles a police state punctuated by elections.
- How many voters does it take to change a light bulb? None. Because voters can’t change anything.
- H.L. Mencken (1880-1956): “As democracy is perfected, the office represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. We move toward a lofty ideal. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart’s desire at last, and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.”
- “All elections are distractions. Nothing conceals tyranny better than elections.” – *Joel Hirschhorn*
- In 1941, one of the country’s more acerbic editors, a priest named Edward Dowling, commented: “The two greatest obstacles to democracy in the United States are, first, the widespread delusion among the poor that we have a democracy, and second, the chronic terror among the rich, lest we get it.”
- “Elections are a necessary, but certainly not a sufficient, condition for democracy. Political participation is not just a casting of votes. It is a way of life.” – *UN Human Development Report, 1993*

- “If you don’t vote, you can’t complain!” I reply, “You have it backwards. If you DO vote, you can’t complain. You asked for it, and they’re going to give it to you, good and hard.”
- “How to get people to vote against their interests and to really think against their interests is very clever. It’s the cleverest ruling class that I have ever come across in history. It’s been 200 years at it. It’s superb.” – *Gore Vidal*
- We can’t use our democracy/our vote to change the way the economy functions. This is very anti-democratic.
- What does a majority vote mean other than that the sales campaign was successful?
- Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius: “The opinion of 10,000 men is of no value if none of them know anything about the subject.”
- We do have representative government. The question is: Who does our government represent?
- “On the day after the 2002 election I watched a crawl on the bottom of the CNN news screen. It said, ‘Proprietary software may make inspection of electronic voting systems impossible.’ It was the final and absolute coronation of corporate rights over democracy; of money over truth.” – *Mike Ruppert, RIP*
- “It’s not that voting is useless or stupid; rather, it’s the exaggeration of the power of voting that has drained the meaning from American politics.” – *Michael Ventura*
- After going through the recent national, state and local elections, I am now convinced that taxation without representation would have been a much better system.
- “Ever since the Constitution was illegally foisted on the American people we have lived in a blatant plutocracy. The Constitution was drafted in secret by a self-appointed elite committee, and it was designed to bring three kinds of power under control: Royalty, the Church, and the People. All were to be subjugated to the interests of a wealthy elite. That’s what republics were all about. And that’s how they have functioned ever since.” – *Richard K. Moore*
- “As demonstrated in Russia and numerous other countries, when faced with a choice between democracy without capitalism or capitalism without democracy, Western elites unhesitatingly embrace the latter.” – *Michael Parenti*
- “The fact that a supposedly sophisticated electorate had been stampeded by the cynical propaganda of the day threw serious doubt on the validity of the assumptions underlying parliamentary democracy as a whole.” – *British Superspy for the Soviets Kim Philby (1912-1988), explaining his reasons for becoming a Communist instead of turning to the Labour Party*
- US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis (1856-1941): “We may have democracy in this country, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both.”
- “We don’t need to run America like a business or like the military. We need to run America like a democracy.” – *Jill Stein, Green Party presidential candidate 2012*

Notes

1. *Democracy Now!*, October 30, 2013
2. *Huffington Post*, May 3, 2012

3. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume VI, Cuba*(1991), p.885 ([online here](#))
4. For the complete detailed list, see [U.S. Department of State, Nonproliferation Sanctions](#)
5. U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2012, [Chapter 3: State Sponsors of Terrorism](#)," May 20, 2013

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