

Navalny, Nord Stream 2, Belarus, and the American Elections

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The narrative is banal and so familiar: Russia is once again accused of having “poisoned” an individual trumpeted by the Western media as threatening the Russian government’s interests. The minor political activist Alexei Navalny made the headlines after a suspicious incident at the airport in Tomsk on August 20, 2020 sickened him and necessitated emergency medical assistance. Russian doctors at the hospital in Omsk fought for his life for two days and stabilized his condition.

Questions abound concerning the way in which the events surrounding this incident have progressed. Outside of the Western media, Navalny’s importance is negligible: his occasional demonstrations in Russia have drawn small crowds, and any arrests with short detentions have come from his not obeying Russian law and giving notice to the police of the location of a given demonstration—so that police could properly secure the location for the event. Thus his ensuing arrest garners international attention as an example of the “brutality” and “arbitrariness” of Russian law enforcement.

The average Russian citizen has little to no interest in Navalny’s political aspirations or activism. Moreover, his insignificance poses no threat to any of Russia’s six major political parties. Modern Russian society is well-functioning and law-abiding, and does not possess the kind of lawlessness that would tolerate an attempt on anyone’s life. Modern Russia maintains a record of acting in accordance with international laws and norms.

Cui bono? The Russian government would benefit least of all from this kind of negative publicity. Pres. Vladimir Putin has a consistent record of policy statements, interviews, and actions seeking better and more normalized relations with the West. Anyone actually reading his detailed speeches and viewing his multi-hour international question-and-answer sessions will come away with this conclusion; it is a major theme of the Russian government’s efforts across many years.

Let us connect the dots among Navalny’s sickness, Nord Stream 2, Belarus, and the coming American presidential elections on November 3, 2020. It is striking how quickly the major outlets of the Western media moved in lockstep to condemn what happened to Navalny, first as an attempt on his life by poisoning, and soon after by identifying the poison as ‘Novichok’—the same substance allegedly used in the attack against the Skripals. (Where are the Skripals, by the way? The British government has acted with arrogance and impunity in this strange case, which to date has not been resolved fully for the public.)

Why did Navalny’s family request that he be transferred to Germany? Why not Moscow,

which as one of the six most livable cities in the world would have medical facilities just as advanced as those in Germany. If this were indeed a criminal act against a Russian citizen, just because it occurred in one part of the country would not mean that the entire country would be unsafe and the person in question should be taken to a foreign country. This is patently ridiculous. If so, then why not Tokyo or Helsinki?

If the Russian government wanted to do away with Navalny, it would be easier to leave him in the Omsk hospital or at least in Moscow. But his family wanted him to be flown to Germany, as arranged by an organization with connections to the discredited, opportunistic punk rock band Pussy Riot (more on this below). Russia complied with the family's request.

Why would German Chancellor Angela Merkel involve herself in such an unimportant event, assigning a security detail to protect Navalny—from which threat? Why was Navalny treated as a VIP in Germany? He is not a significant world political figure, and his support in Russia is minuscule—estimated at approximately 2%. Up to this point, the entire sequence of events seems stage-managed. Russia's medical team in Omsk was perhaps too trusting that once Navalny reached Germany proper assessments of his condition would not be politicized.

The Russian doctors in Omsk acted more than honorably, sharing Navalny's medical history with their German counterparts. The Russian doctors stated that the initial test results of the German medical team were identical to their own, but the Germans' conclusions derived from the tests differed from the Russians' own. Surely this would ethically require that the German doctors and military facility (has this facility been identified?) share with Russia—the country being accused of a crime by the US and EU—the toxicology reports they completed. Let us hope they will do so.

Why did a military facility become involved? Did this take place in order for the diagnosis to fit a preconceived narrative? Which military hospital allegedly identified the poison? Is it not a curious coincidence that once again it was labeled as 'Novichok,' and that the US / EU community immediately condemned Russia before any definitive evidence was provided? Was Chancellor Merkel simply obeying her marching orders? To add to the confusion, Pres. Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus—currently confronting an attempted coup d'état—claimed that his country's intelligence intercepted a German-Polish communication revealing that the alleged poisoning of Navalny was a fake.[i] The German government rejected this alleged revelation.

Reasonable and perspicacious people worldwide are weary of the West's condescending and threatening attitude towards Russia. 'Novichok' is possessed by a multitude of countries, and hence there exist myriad opportunities for malignant forces to obtain and use it. A headline on RT reads, "Developers of 'Novichok' say Navalny's symptoms aren't consistent with poisoning by their deadly creation, reject German claims" (Sept. 2, 2020).[ii] In addition, if this were indeed a poisoning by 'Novichok,' the potency of the substance itself would have affected others in the airport environment.

Navalny has diabetes and is at risk for diabetic shock due to low blood sugar. From an article in Moon of Alabama:

The hospital in Omsk [said](#) that Navalny had experienced severe hypoglycemia: The head physician of the Omsk emergency hospital, Alexander Murakhovsky,

said that Alexei Navalny's condition was caused by a sharp drop in blood sugar . . . Hypoglycemia is also known as [diabetic shock](#) . . . When a person experiences diabetic shock, or severe hypoglycemia, they may lose consciousness, have trouble speaking, and experience double vision. Early treatment is essential because blood sugar levels that stay low for too long can lead to seizures or diabetic coma.[iii]

Navalny was *en route* by plane for about one hour before the emergency landing, which would have exacerbated an already serious threat to his health. After stabilizing his condition, the Omsk doctors cleared him for international travel in a good faith gesture. Perhaps they should have kept him in Russia. More cynically minded professionals would have foreseen that as soon as Navalny landed in Germany, a country essentially controlled by the US and NATO, his illness would be politicized for the benefit of those who wish to stop the completion of Nordstream 2 and manipulate the outcome of the American presidential elections in November. Dmitri Babich draws similar conclusions about such incidents occurring just as the Russian and American governments encounter a positive breakthrough in their relations.[iv]

Who would want to pressure Chancellor Merkel's government into magnifying the Navalny incident by accusing Russia of an alleged crime, thus opening the door to increased pressure from anti-Russian actors to abandon permanently the Nordstream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany? For a start, the UK government, arguably one of the most Russophobic in the world—witness the belligerent pronouncements about Russia by former PM Theresa May, her childish former defence secretary Gavin Williamson (of “Russia should go away and shut up” fame), and most recently the entitled and incompetent PM Boris Johnson. One could go back at least as far as Winston Churchill during the World War II era, but the point has been made.

Poland, the Baltic states, and western Ukraine would also be likely participants in a plan to discredit Russia, but they would not act as the prime movers.

In addition, those political forces in the US of both the Democratic and Republican parties that enjoy the benefits of the military-industrial lobby would benefit from the continued manufacturing of the non-existent “Russia threat.” In their acts of political theatre both parties are using Russia for furthering hoped-for political ends. Indeed, both the UK and US have exhibited anti-Russian behavior, trying to penetrate and conquer Russia for over one hundred years.[v]

Navalny is a useful tool of Western Russophobic politicians, as in the past was the anarchist-anti-Semitic-homophobic group Pussy Riot, famously praised by failed 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in a photo-op: Clinton opined, “great to meet the strong and brave young women . . .”[vi] These “strong and brave young women” have a criminal history of hooliganism in Russia: they were punished for their disruptive behavior in public places according to Russian laws—which incidentally are similar to pertinent laws in other supposedly civilized countries, such as the United Kingdom. A video shows them staging in a Moscow grocery store a mock-execution by the hanging of three migrant workers and two homosexuals, one of whom was Jewish.[vii] Navalny's chartered flight to Germany was sponsored by the Berlin-based NGO Cinema for Peace Foundation, whose founder Jaka Bizlij was contacted for this purpose by some members of Pussy Riot.[viii]

These are the kinds of activists that the West, in its misguided thinking and lack of

knowledge about Russian culture and civics, would wish for readers of its corporate media to lionize. I would invite all readers to become more fully informed about these controversial figures.

All of us, and even his political opponents in Russia, wish Alexei Navalny a complete recovery from his illness, and hope that in the future he will make a positive contribution to Russian socio-political life.

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Notes

[i] <https://www.rt.com/russia/499771-lukashenko-navalny-falsification/>

[ii] <https://www.rt.com/russia/499732-novichok-developers-navalny-symptoms/>

[iii] <https://www.moonofalabama.org/2020/08/navalny-was-not-poisoned.html>

[iv] <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/499741-navalny-poisoning-western-blame-russia/>

[v] See Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture* (New York: Lexington Books, 2013); also Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York: Norton, 2001)

[vi] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/04/07/hillary-clinton-poses-with-pussy-riot/>

[vii] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NljeMo1cRCE&app=desktop>

[viii] <https://www.dw.com/en/the-german-ngo-behind-alexei-navalyns-rescue/a-54661016>

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