

In Nord Stream attack, US Officials Use Proxy Media to Blame Proxy Ukraine

One month after Seymour Hersh reported that the US blew up the Nord Stream pipelines, US officials find a scapegoat in Ukraine and stenographers in the New York Times.

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*Nearly six months after the Nord Stream pipelines exploded and one month after **Seymour Hersh** [reported that the Biden administration was responsible](#), US officials have unveiled their defense. [According to the New York Times](#), anonymous government sources claim that "newly collected intelligence" now "suggests" that the Nord Stream bomber was in fact a "pro-Ukrainian group."*

The only confirmed "intelligence" about this supposed "group" is that US officials have none to offer about them.

"U.S. officials said there was much they did not know about the perpetrators and their affiliations," The Times reports. The supposed "newly collected" information "does not specify the members of the group, or who directed or paid for the operation." Despite knowing nothing about them, the Times' sources nonetheless speculate that "the saboteurs were most likely Ukrainian or Russian nationals, or some combination of the two." They also leave open "the *possibility* that the operation *might* have been conducted off the books by a proxy force with connections to the Ukrainian government or its security services." (emphasis added)

When no evidence is produced, anything is of course "possible." But the Times' sources are oddly certain on one critical matter: "U.S. officials said no American or British nationals were involved." Also, there is "no evidence **President Volodymyr Zelensky** of Ukraine or his top lieutenants were involved in the operation, or that the perpetrators were acting at the direction of any Ukrainian government officials."

Despite failing to obtain any concrete information about the perpetrators, the Times nonetheless declares that the US cover story planted in their pages “amounts to the first significant known lead about who was responsible for the attack on the Nord Stream pipelines.”

It is unclear why the Times has deemed their evidence-free “lead” to be “significant”, and not, by contrast, the Hersh story that came four weeks earlier. Not only does Hersh’s reporting predate the Times’, but his story contained extensive detail about how the US planned and executed the Nord Stream explosions.

Tellingly, the Times distorts the basis for Hersh’s reporting. “In making his case,” the Times claims, Hersh merely “cited” President Biden’s “preinvasion threat to ‘bring an end’ to Nord Stream 2, and similar statements by other senior U.S. officials.” In falsely suggesting that he relied solely on public statements, the Times completely omits that Hersh in fact cited a well-placed source.

By contrast, the Times has no information about its newfound perpetrators or about any other aspect of its “significant” lead.

“U.S. officials declined to disclose the nature of the intelligence, how it was obtained or any details of the strength of the evidence it contains,” The Times states. Accordingly, US officials admit that “that there are no firm conclusions” to be drawn, and that there are “enormous gaps in what U.S. spy agencies and their European partners knew about what transpired.” For that apparent reason, “U.S. officials who have been briefed on the intelligence are divided about how much weight to put on the new information.” The Times, by contrast, apparently feels no such evidentiary burden.

In sum, US officials have “much they did not know about the perpetrators” – i.e. everything; “enormous gaps” in their awareness of how the (unknown) “pro-Ukraine group” purportedly carried out a deep-sea bombing; uncertainty over “how much weight to put on” their “intelligence”; and even “no firm conclusions” to offer. Moreover, all of this supposed US “intelligence” happens to have been “newly collected” — after one of the most accomplished journalists in history published a detailed report on how US intelligence plotted and conducted the bombing.

Given the absence of evidence and curious timing, a reasonable conclusion is not that a Ukrainian “proxy force” was the culprit, but that the US is now using its Ukrainian proxy as a scapegoat.

As the standard bearer of establishment US media, the Times’ “reporting” is perfectly in character. Days after the September 2022 bombing of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, the [Times noted](#) that “much of the speculation about responsibility has focused on Russia” – just as US officials would certainly hope. The narrative was echoed by former CIA **Director John Brennan**, [who opined](#) that “Russia certainly is the most likely suspect,” in the Nord Stream attack. Citing anonymous “Western intelligence officials”, [CNN claimed](#) that “European security officials observed Russian Navy ships in vicinity of Nord Stream pipeline leaks,” thus casting “further suspicion on Russia,” which is seen by “European and US officials as the only actor in the region believed to have both the capability and motivation to deliberately damage the pipelines.”

With the story that Russia blew up its own pipelines [no longer tenable](#), the Times’ new

narrative asks us to believe that some unnamed “pro-Ukraine group”, which “did not appear to be working for military or intelligence services” somehow managed to obtain the unique capability to plant multiple explosives on a heavily sealed pipeline at the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

That narrative is already being laundered through the German media. Hours after the Times story broke, the German outlet Die Zeit [came out with a story](#), sourced to German officials, that claims the bombing operation was carried out by a group of six people, including just “two divers.” These supposed perpetrators, we are told, arrived at the crime scene via a yacht “apparently owned by two Ukrainians” that departed Germany. How a yacht managed to carry the equipment and explosives needed for the operation is left unexplained.

The saboteurs somehow possessed the capability to carry out a deep-sea bombing, but not the awareness to properly clean up their floating crime scene. According to Die Zeit, the boat was “returned to the owner in an uncleaned condition,” which allowed “investigators” to discover “traces of explosives on the table in the cabin.” Should this lean “pro-Ukraine” crack team of naval commandos conduct another act of deep-sea sabotage, they will only need to hire a cleaning professional to get away with it.

As for motivation, we are somehow also asked to forget that Biden administration officials not only expressed the motivation, but the post-facto satisfaction. “If Russia invades Ukraine, one way or another Nord Stream 2 will not move forward,” senior US official Victoria Nuland vowed in January 2022. President Biden added the following month that “if Russia invades... there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.” After the Nord Stream pipelines were bombed, **Secretary of State Antony Blinken** [greeted the news](#) as a “tremendous strategic opportunity.” Just days before Hersh’s story was published, [Nuland informed Congress](#) that both she and the White House are “very gratified” that Nord Stream is “a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea.”

Not only are global audiences asked to ignore the public statements of Biden administration principals, but their blanket refusal to answer any questions. This was put on display in Washington this past weekend, when German **Chancellor Olaf Scholz** paid Biden a White House visit. Unlike Scholz’s last DC trip, there was no joint news conference. This was understandable: the last time they appeared together, Biden blurted out that he would “bring an end” to Nord Stream, leaving Scholz to stand next to him in awkward silence. This time around, the two briefly sat before a group of reporters who were quickly shooed out of the room, much to Biden’s apparent glee.

Scholz's visit underscored that US media is state media. No joint presser, for obvious reasons: they can't risk a question from a German reporter about Sy Hersh's Nord Stream scoop.

Everyone here got the memo: no US outlet covering Scholz's visit even mentioned Hersh's story. pic.twitter.com/9xeBJMtc38

— Aaron Maté (@aaronjmate) [March 6, 2023](#)

US media outlets got the memo: in a sit-down interview with Scholz, CNN’s Fareed Zakaria did not find the time to mention Hersh’s reporting. In covering the German Chancellor’s visit, US media outlets like the Times and the Washington Post adopted a similar vow of

silence.

Not one question from Fareed Zakaria about Nord Stream as German Cuckmeister Olaf Scholz rambles on about his country's supposed energy independence

Fareed intervenes only to push Scholz to commit more money to Ukraine's military - and therefore less to German social welfare
pic.twitter.com/GQjxK27pis

— Max Blumenthal (@MaxBlumenthal) [March 6, 2023](#)

Inadvertently, the Times' account exposes new holes in the failed attempts to refute Hersh's story.

Members of the NATO state-funded website Bellingcat, [falsely presented](#) to NATO state audiences as an independent investigative outlet, have attempted to cast doubt on Hersh's claims by arguing that open-source tracking at the time of the bombing fails to detect the vessels he reported on. But as the Times story notes, investigators are seeking information about ships "whose location transponders were not on or were not working when they passed through the area, possibly to cloak their movements." Hersh has made this same point in interviews, noting that when Biden flew into Poland before his visit to Kiev last month, his "plane switched off its transponder" to avoid detection, as [the Associated Press reported](#). Unfortunately for self-styled digital sherlocks, major international crimes - particularly those involving intelligence agencies - cannot be solved from their laptops.

Hersh was also pilloried for citing a single anonymous source. The Times' story, by contrast, relies on multiple anonymous sources, who, unlike Hersh, have no tangible information to offer. After [ignoring Hersh's story](#) for a full month, the Times' news section was forced to acknowledge it for the first time. And the best that its anonymous sources could come up with is not only an evidence-free, caveat-filled narrative, but a story that does not challenge a single aspect of Hersh's detailed account.

In another contrast, Hersh is one of the most accomplished and impactful journalists in the history of the profession. Two of the journalists on the Times story, Julian E. Barnes and Adam Goldman, have bylined multiple stories that spread demonstrable falsehoods sourced to anonymous US officials.

In the summer of 2020, [Barnes](#) and [Goldman](#) were among the Times journalists who laundered CIA disinformation that Russia was paying bounties for dead US troops in Afghanistan. When the Biden administration was [forced to acknowledge](#) that the allegation was baseless, the Times tried to [water down](#) its initial claims in an attempt to save face.

In January, Barnes [co-wrote a Times story](#) which claimed, citing unnamed "U.S. officials" [more than a dozen times](#), that "Russian military intelligence officers" were behind "a recent letter bomb campaign in Spain whose most prominent targets were the prime minister, the defense minister and foreign diplomats." But days later, as the [Washington Post reported](#), Spanish authorities arrested "a 74-year-old Spaniard who opposed his country's support for Ukraine but appears to have acted alone." ([Moon of Alabama](#) is one the few voices to have called out the Times' fraudulent reporting).

That same month, Goldman shared a byline, alongside fellow “Russian bounties” stenographer Charlie Savage, [on a Times story](#) which argued that Special Counsel John Durham has “failed to find wrongdoing in the origins of the Russia inquiry,” even though Durham’s findings have yet to be released. As I [reported](#) for Real Clear Investigations, the Times made its case by omitting countervailing information and distorting the available facts – as is the norm for [establishment media coverage of Russiagate](#).

The US officials behind the Times’ latest Nord Stream tale presumably believe that they have offered the best counter to Hersh that they could. That it is devoid of concrete information, and written by Times staffers with a track record of parroting US intelligence-furnished propaganda, ultimately has the opposite effect.

The Times’ narrative can only be seen as further confirmation that Hersh found the Nord Stream bomber in Washington. That explains why anonymous US officials are now using proxies in establishment media to scapegoat their proxy in Ukraine.

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