

Russia Has Never Tried to Dictate Any Narrative to Me, Unlike the West. Scott Ritter

By [Scott Ritter](#)

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[Scott Ritter Extra](#)

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As the US government works overtime to stigmatize any journalism possessing connectivity with Russia, the world slides dangerously down a path defined by a Russophobic US-driven agenda that leads toward the inevitability of conflict, and the probability of nuclear war.

When the FBI executed a search warrant on my residence on August 7, they were singularly focused on my professional relationship (I am a self-employed journalist) with the Russian government, and in particular, *RT*, the widely recognized brand name of Russia Today, a media company founded by the autonomous non-profit organization TV-Novosti in April 2005.

According to the FBI, the US government was concerned that my activities fell under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA).

The FBI has also searched the Virginia home of Dmitry Simes, a veteran Russian-American journalist who currently resides in Moscow where he helps moderate a popular political program, *The Big Game*, on *Channel 1*.

While the FBI has not publicly commented on the raid on Simes' home, it is most likely due to similar concerns over FARA compliance.

I have been an external contributor (i.e., contactor) to *RT* since April 2020. Since the initial contract was signed, I have written numerous articles and produced hundreds of videos for which I have been compensated financially in accordance with the terms set forth in the agreements between myself and *RT*. As stipulated in the signed agreements, I am solely responsible for the content of the work provided.

At no time have I entered into any agreement, written or oral, or have reached any understanding, formal or informal, that I am responsive to the direction or control of either *RT/TV-Novosti* or the Russian government.

Indeed, the agreement between myself and *RT* stipulates that I am responsible for determining the topics that will be covered in the content I produce, although as is the case in any editorial/producer relationship with "talent," I have been asked to provide content that is responsive to breaking news.

I am a freelance journalist. This is the life of a freelance journalist.

Nothing more, nothing less.

This relationship is like that which I have as an outside contributor to other journalistic outlets, including *TruthDig*, *The American Conservative*, *Consortium News*, *The Washington Spectator*, and *Energy Intelligence*, all of which have published my work on a regular basis during the same period in which I produced content for *RT*.

In all cases, I am solely responsible for the content I produce. There is, of course, a collaborative relationship with the editors of all these publishing outlets, some more intense/heavy than others. This is the normal reality faced by every journalist in the world.

I can say without fear of contradiction that the editorial 'touch' of *RT* is the lightest of any publisher I have dealt with – there is the standard follow-up questioning on sourcing of information, and some massaging of language for clarity. On a few occasions (I can count them on one hand), *RT* has turned down articles I have submitted for publication. In every instance, the topics dealt with US domestic issues, and the editors were concerned about being seen as buying into unfounded conspiracies.

How utterly irresponsible of them!

The specific compensation received for work published is confidential in accordance with the terms of the agreement I signed with *RT* (the FBI seized physical and electronic copies of this agreement, and I have in the past provided copies of the agreement to the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) or their proxies operating within the US banking system). But I can say this – it is within the industry norm, slightly more than some publishers, and slightly less than others. And in no case can it be considered exorbitant – *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, all of whom have published my opinion pieces in the past, all pay significantly more than does *RT*.

This reality must be disappointing to the FBI and the Department of Justice, which, through their questioning, seemed caught up in a working theory that I was a controlled asset of *RT* and, by extension, the Russian government. Their conspiracy theories extended into the person of my wife, Marina, who was questioned by a pair of FBI agents at her place of work at the same time the FBI conducted its search of our residence. The agents showed Marina a copy of an email she had sent to me back in late 2020/early 2021, where she listed the articles that I had published for *RT* for each month.

I was paid on a monthly billing cycle, with the amount calculated based upon the number of articles published in a given month. On occasion, there would be discrepancies, where my count of articles published did not align with the money paid in compensation. To assist me in working out these discrepancies, Marina would generate a list of articles published by publication date, so that I could more coherently communicate with *RT*.

"Do you direct the work of your husband?" the FBI asked my wife. *"Do you organize his work?"*

The answer was self-evident, as my wife informed the FBI.

I am my own boss.

The FBI was also interested in the payment vehicle used by *RT* to compensate me. The method agreed to contractually was a wire transfer to be made monthly based upon the work published. For this, I provided my banking information, including SWIFT code.

Following the commencement of the Special Military Operation by Russia in Ukraine in February 2022, this method became difficult because of the sanctioning of Russian banks by the US, denying these banks access to the SWIFT system that controls money transfers globally and, most importantly in my case, into the US.

RT developed workarounds which used unsanctioned third parties to execute the wire transfers. Over time, *RT* made use of two such intermediaries. I have always been totally transparent about this payment method. Indeed, when my bank began blocking payment on instructions from their internal OFAC enforcement units, I reached out to the bank to resolve the issue. Part of the resolution measures agreed to was that I provided the OFAC enforcement unit with copies of my contractual relationships showing that the money received was related to contracted work. This method worked but was very time-consuming and inconvenient - wire transfers were often returned to the sender in whole or in part because of the delay in processing the submitted paperwork, which took place every time a payment was received.

I contacted OFAC directly to complain, citing harassment and First Amendment issues, and was informed that they had nothing to do with it. The problem, it seemed, was overzealous employees at the bank itself (the OFAC enforcement unit was an in-house entity, with no formal relationship with the US government or OFAC.)

The solution was simple - I switched banks. In making the application to my new bank, I was transparent about international wire transfers that they would expect, what country these transfers would originate from, roughly in what amounts the transfers would be, and for what purpose (writing.)

The bank in question was USAA, with which I had a relationship dating back to 1984 when I was commissioned as an officer in the US Marines. Last year, USAA ended its relationship with me without warning, closing my bank account and terminating homeowner and auto insurance policies that I had with them dating back four decades.

I opened a new account with my current bank. Once again, I was fully transparent in the application process as to the source and reason for incoming wire transfers.

The FBI, in questioning me, provided the names of the two intermediaries used by *RT* to make the wire transfers of my compensation. I provided accurate answers to all their questions concerning these entities and my relationship with them.

I have no doubt that the US government will continue to make it difficult, and perhaps impossible, for *RT* to compensate external contributors based in the United States, including myself, for their work.

This is harassment under color of law.

But under no circumstances does it make the work, or any compensation paid to me for this work, a violation of the law.

And under no circumstances does being paid for my outside contributions to *RT* violate the Foreign Agent Registration Act.

I have been lambasted for publishing my work in *RT*.

Several US-based publishers, including *TruthDig* and the *The American Conservative*, have terminated their relationship with me because I also contributed to *RT* - this after my writing won an award for *TruthDig* and one of my articles was the most-viewed for the year for *The American Conservative*. I had just started what was supposed to be a stint as a regular contributor for *Responsible Statecraft (RS)* when some of their funders balked at having someone who also wrote for *RT* writing for them (I had just published my first article, only to have it removed from the *RS* website without warning. *RS* was willing to pay me for the article in question, but I let them know under no circumstances would I accept money from their organization.)

One of the reasons I enjoy contributing to *RT* is the global diversity of their audience. But I also appreciate the relative purity of their message - in a world where the US and its compliant minions in the controlled Western press work overtime to manipulate audiences into accepting at face value and without question the American-driven narrative, *RT* and other non-Western news outlets provide alternatives which are fact-driven.

In March 2011, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton complained about the US "losing the information war" to nations like Russia amongst English-speaking audiences around the world.

The truth, when seen from the perspective of an American secretary of state, hurts.

I have had extensive intimate experience with the US mainstream media dating back to my time as a weapons inspector in Iraq. I bore personal witness to US government officials leaving important Security Council meetings early so they could brief reporters from *The New York Times*, who would then publish a front-page story about the meeting which bore no resemblance whatsoever to the reality of the meeting and reflected every talking point of the United States.

How did I know this?

Because the Security Council meeting dealt with issues surrounding the inspections I was responsible for leading in Iraq, and with briefings that I helped write and provide to the members present. I was there when the US official walked out, and I knew who he was going to meet.

I was also present when the CIA worked with *CNN* to make a documentary about the work of the UN weapons inspectors in Iraq. I was one of several inspectors whose stories served as the centerpiece of the documentary. Moreover, I was the point of contact between the CIA and *CNN* when it came to the release of U-2 imagery and other intelligence-related information to *CNN* to be used in the documentary.

I worked for *NBC News* in the months after I resigned from my position with the United Nations. I was an on-air analyst who often appeared with Tom Brokaw and Brian Williams. I would work with *NBC News* to turn raw news feeds into finished products ready for on-air broadcast. I saw firsthand how *NBC* manipulated the news to fit pre-conceived notions instead of reporting it as is. I was eventually released from my contract when National Security Adviser Sandy Berger objected to questions being asked of him by *NBC* White House correspondent Claire Shipman, indicating that he knew I was behind those questions.

NBC had the choice: Defend journalistic integrity, or cave in to White House pressure.

They caved.

After 9/11, I was contracted by *Fox News* as an on-air analyst for six months, only to have the network balk at my assessments which ran counter to the narrative being promulgated by the Bush White House. *Fox News* decided it was better to pay me and keep me off the airwaves (I was exclusive to *Fox* at the time) than release me and let me speak out.

The contract was not renewed when it expired.

I was briefly courted by *CNN* in the fall of 2002, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq. After being questioned in an in-house forum that brought together the major reporters, hosts, and producers of *CNN*, I was 'cleared' by the senior *CNN* executives, who proceeded to give me a "behind-the-scenes" tour of their newsroom.

I was shocked when I was taken to the *CNN* "war room," where the producers were already working with the Pentagon to embed reporters with military units. My questions about this level of collusion led *CNN* to lose interest in me shortly thereafter.

The bottom line is this - I have seen the American mainstream media up-close and personal.

There is zero integrity when it comes to reporting fact-based truth.



RT hosts a panel discussion on US efforts to vilify Russia at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, June 7, 2024.

In every instance I experienced, the news organizations of these various media companies were literally subordinated to the US government, taking their talking points directly from either the White House, the State Department, or the Pentagon.

In short, these news organizations did not produce news, but rather American propaganda which was designed to deceive the broader American audience about critical issues of war and peace.

The news organizations I observed firsthand were more representative of a state-controlled media than a free press.

And, if called upon to compare and contrast, based upon my own personal experiences, the level of journalistic integrity between these US media outlets and *RT*, *RT* wins hands-down.

When it comes to reporting on politically sensitive content, such as the Special Military Operation, I likewise side with *RT*.

The Biden administration has openly admitted that it purposely declassifies intelligence information it knows to be wrong or misleading so that it can be released to the mainstream media for the purpose of controlling the narrative.

Not for telling the truth.

I have, over the years, had the opportunity to meet and work with several *RT* journalists and reporters who cover the Special Military Operation.

Every single one has demonstrated impeccable integrity when it comes to reporting the news.

I have also had the opportunity to interface with and interview many of the sources these *RT* journalists draw upon for their reporting and can say that the assessments I make as an independent analyst often reflect those of the *RT* journalists.

Not because, as is the case in the United States, we are working from the same government-dictated script – the Russian government has never tried to dictate any narrative to me, nor has *RT*.

But because both *RT* and I have an assiduous appreciation for fact-based truth.

Sadly, I can't say that for any of the mainstream American media organizations I've worked with in the past.

My reporting for *RT* is my own, reflecting my observations and analysis. My most recent reporting from Russia backs this up – a four-part series which *RT* knew nothing about until I pitched it to them after I completed my most recent trip to Russia.

In writing [*How the Chechen miracle kick-started the Russian 'Path of Redemption', Helping Crimea recover from decades of Ukrainian misrule is a tough but necessary challenge, We are witnessing the bittersweet birth of a new Russia*](#), and [*Why did it take Russia so long to realize Donbass was worth fighting for?*](#), I provided unique reporting that was unavailable anywhere else in the world – Western media outlets would never allow such reporting to be published on their pages or websites, and Russian news outlets had never seen such reporting from an independent Western perspective.

This is exactly what journalism is supposed to be – hard-hitting, probing analysis based upon first-hand observations derived from access to high-level sourcing.

I picked *RT* as the publisher of these articles because I wanted this reporting to be available not only to a global English-speaking audience, but also to a Russian audience.

This reporting was not the byproduct of close collusion between myself and the Russian government - in fact, when I tried to get official permission to travel to the new territories and Donbass from the Russian Ministry of Defense, I was turned down. It was only because of my persistence, and that of my host, Aleksandr Zyrianov, that I was able to travel to Chechnya, Crimea, the New Territories, and Donbass, and meet with the high-level officials and military officers who feature in my reporting.

Trying to convince a Western audience - be it government officials, journalists, or the consumers of news - that *RT* is a responsible news organization more committed to telling the truth than their ostensibly "free" Western media counterparts, is a literal mission impossible.

The level of Russophobia that has infected every level of society in the West is mind-boggling. I have been called a shill of Russian President Vladimir Putin more times than I can count, by both the online trolls of the North Atlantic Fella Organization (NAFO), whose mission is simply to harass any online voice that doesn't conform to the US/NATO narrative, and ostensibly "neutral" journalists who write for outlets that publish my work. My crime? Reporting accurately on the positions taken by the Russian government - "[speaking 'Putin,'](#)" in the vernacular of my critics.



The author at the Victory Day Parade rehearsal in Moscow, May 7, 2023

The consequences of this Russophobia-infected journalism are dire - not only has the ignorance enshrined within the journalism of the West [resulted in the destruction of Ukraine](#), but, if not reversed, is leading the Collective West down the path of inevitable conflict with Russia which would probably [end in a general nuclear war](#).

Trying to head off such a tragic outcome has been the fuel that feeds [my work as a journalist](#) these past few years.

And it will continue to fuel my work going forward.

I am grateful to *RT* for allowing my words to be published and disseminated in both written and video form.

I believe that, in doing so, *RT* is contributing to the cause of saving the world from the horror of nuclear war.

Even if the Russophobia-infected minds in the Collective West fail to recognize this.

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Featured image: The author talks to readers during the presentation of his book, [Disarmament in the Time of Perestroika](#), dedicated to nuclear security, at the Pobeda Culture and Leisure Centre in Novosibirsk, Russia.

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