

# Seymour Hersh Accuses US of ‘Cover Up’ Over Nord Stream Sabotage

The veteran investigative journalist alleged that Biden administration officials have been "feeding" the press false stories to "protect a president who made an unwise decision and is now lying about it."

By [Jake Johnson](#)

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*In a follow-up to his explosive [story](#) accusing U.S. President Joe Biden of ordering the sabotage of the [Nord Stream](#) pipelines, veteran U.S. journalist [Seymour Hersh](#) charged Wednesday that the White House—in collaboration with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz—is attempting a “cover-up of its operation” by “feeding” false alternative narratives to the press, most prominently *The New York Times*.*

Hersh's initial reporting, which was based on anonymous sourcing, was quickly [dismissed](#) by the Biden administration, with State Department Spokesperson Ned Price calling the detailed February account “false” and suggesting that those who believe its version of events are “naive” and “gullible.”

Hersh, who famously exposed U.S. forces' massacre of Vietnamese civilians in My Lai and the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, forcefully hit back at the Biden administration on Wednesday and criticized the American press for failing to push the White House on the September attack, which has [major geopolitical implications](#).

“Press aides for the White House and Central Intelligence Agency have consistently denied that America was responsible for exploding the pipelines, and those pro forma denials were more than enough for the White House press corps,” Hersh [wrote](#) on his Substack.

“There is no evidence that any reporter assigned there has yet to ask the White House press secretary whether Biden had done what any serious leader would do: formally ‘task’ the American intelligence community to conduct a deep investigation, with all of its assets, and find out just who had done the deed in the Baltic Sea,” the journalist continued. “According to a source within the intelligence community, the president has

not done so, nor will he. Why not? Because he knows the answer.”

Officials from Norway, Germany, and Sweden [told](#) the United Nations last month that they are still investigating the explosions that severely damaged the Nord Stream pipelines, setting off an [environmental nightmare](#) and immediate speculation as to who was responsible. Such speculation is ongoing, with both official and [unofficial](#) probes attempting to determine the perpetrator.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline—which Biden [vocally opposed](#)—never became operational, as the German government put it on hold just ahead of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

During a press briefing late last month, Price [said](#) the U.S. “is not a party to this investigation because there are countries on whose sovereign territory this attack occurred, and we’re deferring it to them to conduct this investigation.”

On March 7, nearly a month after Hersh published his report, *The New York Times* [ran a story](#)—also based on anonymous sourcing—alleging that “new intelligence reviewed by U.S. officials” indicates “a pro-Ukrainian group carried out the attack on the Nord Stream pipelines last year.”

The Ukrainian government has [denied](#) any involvement in the attack.

“U.S. officials said there was much they did not know about the perpetrators and their affiliations,” notes the *Times* report, which makes brief mention of Hersh’s story and quotes unnamed U.S. officials denying any Biden administration involvement.

The same day as the *Times* published its story, the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* ran a [report](#) alleging that German investigators “succeeded in identifying the boat that was allegedly used for the secret operation” to sabotage the Nord Stream pipelines.

“It is said to be a yacht rented from a company based in Poland, apparently owned by two Ukrainians,” *Die Zeit* reported. “According to the investigation, the secret operation at sea was carried out by a team of six people. It is said to have been five men and one woman.”

In his Wednesday piece, Hersh contended that the message of the *Times* and *Die Zeit* stories—both of which emphasized that much of the sabotage operation remains shrouded in mystery—“was that the press and the public should stop asking questions and let the investigators unravel the truth.”

“Holger Stark, the author of the report in *Die Zeit*, went a step further and noted that there were some ‘in international security services’ who had not excluded the possibility that the yacht story ‘was a false flag operation.’ Indeed, it was,” Hersh alleged, citing an anonymous source inside the U.S. intelligence community.

That source told Hersh that the yacht narrative reported by *Die Zeit* “was a total fabrication by American intelligence that was passed along to the Germans, and aimed at discrediting your story.”

Hersh went on to add that

“the disinformation professionals inside the CIA understand that a propaganda gambit can only work if those on receiving are desperate for a story that can diminish or displace an unwanted truth.”

“And the truth in question is that President Joe Biden authorized the destruction of the pipelines and will have a difficult time explaining away his action as Germany and its Western European neighbors suffer as businesses are shuttered amid high day-to-day energy costs,” wrote Hersh, citing an energy expert who argued that the damage to the Nord Stream pipelines “led to a further surge of natural gas prices.”

According to Hersh, the “most telling evidence” of the “weakness” of the *Times* reporting can be found in a podcast interview featuring Julian Barnes, one of three reporters whose bylines appeared on the March 7 story.

Barnes told podcast host Michael Barbaro that “we know really very little” about the pro-Ukrainian group that the *Times* reporting alleges may have been behind the Nord Stream attack.

“This group remains mysterious,” Barnes said. “And it remains mysterious not just to us, but also to the U.S. government officials that we have spoken to. They know that the people involved were either Ukrainian, or Russian, or a mix. They know that they are not affiliated with the Ukrainian government. But they know they’re also anti-Putin and pro-Ukraine.”

In response, Hersh wrote that “the *Times* reporters in Washington were at the mercy of White House officials ‘who had access to intelligence.’”

“But the information they received,” he added, “originated with a group of CIA experts in deception and propaganda whose mission was to feed the newspaper a cover story—and to protect a president who made an unwise decision and is now lying about it.”

Hersh also alleged that while it remains an “open question” whether Scholz was aware of the planned pipeline sabotage in advance, the German leader has “clearly been complicit since last fall in support of the Biden Administration’s cover-up of its operation in the Baltic Sea.”

Hersh wrote:

In early March, President Biden hosted German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Washington. The trip included only two public events—a brief pro forma exchange of compliments between Biden and Scholz before the White House press corps, with no questions allowed; and a *CNN* interview with Scholz by Fareed Zakaria, who did not touch on the pipeline allegations. The chancellor had flown to Washington with no members of the German press on board, no formal dinner scheduled, and the two world leaders were not slated to conduct a press conference, as routinely happens at such high-profile meetings. Instead, it was later reported that Biden and Scholz had an 80-minute meeting, with no aides present for much of the time.

Citing an anonymous official with “access to diplomatic intelligence,” Hersh wrote that “certain elements in the Central Intelligence Agency were asked to prepare a cover story in collaboration with German intelligence that would provide the American and German press with an alternative version for the destruction of Nord Stream 2.”

“In the words of the intelligence community,” Hersh continued, “the agency was ‘to pulse the system’ in an effort to discount the claim that Biden had ordered the pipelines’ destruction.”

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