

Sy Hersh and the Way We Live Now. “The Propaganda Apparatus that Manipulates and Controls our Society”

Coverage of the sabotage of the Nordstream pipelines helped Murray realize something important about how the Big Lie works.

By [Craig Murray](#)

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It is a clear indicator of the disappearance of freedom from our so-called Western democracies that Sy Hersh, arguably the greatest living journalist, cannot get [this monumental revelation](#) on the front of The Washington Post or The New York Times, but has to self-publish on the net.

Hersh tells the story of the U.S. destruction of the Nordstream pipelines in forensic detail, giving dates, times, method and military units involved. He also outlines the importance of the Norwegian armed forces working alongside the U.S. Navy in the operation.

One point Sy does not much stress, but it is worth saying more about, is that Norway and the U.S. are of course the two countries that have [benefitted financially](#), to an [enormous degree](#), from blowing up the pipeline.

Not only have both gained **huge export surpluses from the jump in gas prices, Norway has directly replaced Russian gas to the tune of some \$40 billion per year.** From 2023 the United States will appear in that list in second place behind Norway, following the opening in the last two months of [two new](#) liquefied natural gas terminals in Germany, built to replace Russian gas with U.S. and Qatari supplies.

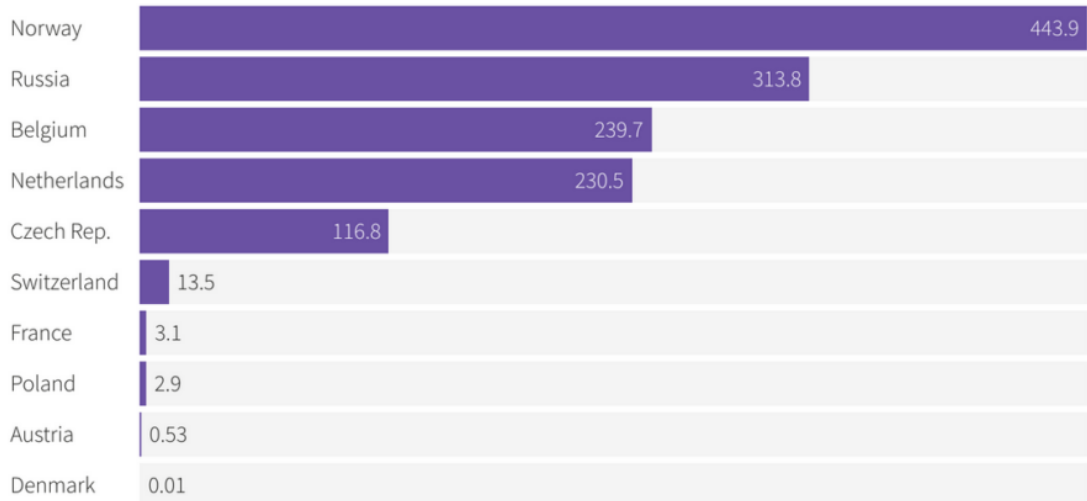


Norway overtakes Russia

Norway became the top supplier of natural gas to Germany in 2022, displacing Russia as imports from there dried up in the wake of the war in Ukraine.



● Volume in TWh



So Russia lost out massively financially from the destruction of Nordstream and who benefited? The U.S. and Norway, the two countries who blew up the pipeline.

But of course, this war is nothing to do with money or hydrocarbons and is all about freedom and democracy....

To return to Hersh's account, particularly interesting are the series of decisions taken to avoid classification of the operation in various ways which would require it to be reported to Congress. In terms of United States history, this ought to be a big deal.

For the executive branch to commit what is an act of war without the approval of the legislature is fundamentally unconstitutional. But that is one of those quaint remnants of democracy that the neoliberal elite consensus can quietly sidestep nowadays.

Hersh sets out the well-known background in compelling detail, including that, from U.S. President Joe Biden down, the Americans effectively announced what they were going to do, openly.

At a Senate hearing, top US diplomat Victoria Nuland celebrated the Nord Stream 2 pipeline bombing:

"Senator Cruz, like you, I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea." pic.twitter.com/KS5OM4N165

— Aaron Maté (@aaronjmate) [January 27, 2023](#)

Pres. Biden: "If Russia invades...then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it."

Reporter: "But how will you do that, exactly, since...the project is in Germany's control?"

Biden: "I promise you, we will be able to do that." <https://t.co/uruQ4F4zM9pic.twitter.com/4ksDaaU0YC>

— ABC News (@ABC) [February 7, 2022](#)

But what most worries me about the entire story is the unanimous complicity of the mainstream media in ignoring the completely obvious.

The media line, parroted here relentlessly by the BBC and corporate media, was that the Russians had probably [themselves blown up](#) the pipeline on which they had expended such great resources and three decades of intense diplomatic activity, and which was to be the key to Russia's single most valuable source of income for the next 40 years.

This was always quite literally incredible. You would have to be deranged to believe it.

How the Big Lie Works

It actually taught me not just that we truly are in the realm of totalitarianism and the Big Lie, but I learnt something very important about how the Big Lie works.

The secret is not that people genuinely believe an outrageous claim. The secret is that people do genuinely believe that they are in a battle of good against evil, and it is necessary to accept the narrative being promoted, in the interests of fighting evil.

Don't question, just follow. If you do question, you are promoting evil.

I am sure that is how it works.

State and corporate stenographer journalists are actually intelligent individuals. If they thought about it, they would realise that the narrative that Russia blew up its own pipeline is obvious nonsense.

But they are convinced it is morally wrong to think about it.



Seymour Hersh signing books at the *London Review of Books* bookshop, April 2016. (David Jones, Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

Which is why none of them challenged the equally mad claims that Russia was repeatedly shelling [its own forces](#) occupying the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station. It's also why none of them challenged the [utterly risible](#) official version of the Skripal story.

I previously told the anecdote from when I worked in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and asked a good friend if he really believed the misinformation on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) with which he was involved.

He replied by referring to the video game "Championship Manager" (now renamed "Football Manager"), which we used to play together. He said when he was in the game, it was immersive, he was manager of Liverpool and it fully absorbed him.

Similarly, when he walked through the FCO gates, the world of the intelligence reports was immersive and Iraq did have these WMDs inside that world. He worked in the "reality" of the FCO. Once he left in the evening, he lived in a different reality, the world of us in the pub.

I know of journalists bright enough to detach their professional output from what they really think, in a similar way. (I once had a conversation along these lines with Jeremy Bowen in Tashkent.)

Most however don't think like this. They simply think that all right-thinking people support the historic struggle against the evil Russians, so it must be right to read out the propaganda without thinking too much about it.

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Those of us critical of the aggressive promotion of war in Europe, are not only barred from all mainstream media and confined to corners of the internet. Even there we are heavily suppressed on social media (which is why Sy Hersh's article does not have the scores of millions of readers it merits).

We can't even obtain freedom of assembly.

Two established left-wing venues have cancelled the "No-2-NATO" meeting I am addressing in London on Feb. 25. Conway Hall's reasons for cancellation included threats to funding and fears for the safety of staff.

We are now reduced to a guerrilla meeting, the Central London venue for which will not be announced until the evening before.

Is this really a democracy, where it is not possible for dissidents to hold a public meeting without secrecy, subterfuge and hiding from supporters of the state?

I do urge you to come along on the day, whatever your views on the subject, to support the right to freedom of speech.

I have a different view from perhaps all of the other speakers, on the legitimacy of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which I oppose.

But I also oppose NATO expansion which is an underlying cause of the war, and indeed oppose the existence of NATO itself.

NATO is a war machine that sucks resources from working people to benefit the military industrial complex, and unleashes devastating destruction on the developing states that do not make their natural resources available to Western billionaire elites.

It is also a fundamental node of the propaganda apparatus that manipulates and controls our society, particularly as counter narrative. Dissident thought is now rigorously and systematically excluded.

There is no longer an Overton window of permitted debate. It has narrowed and should be

renamed the Overton letterbox.

One of those small difficult ones right down at the bottom of the door. With a very fierce spring, and snarling dogs guarding it.

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Craig Murray is an author, broadcaster and human rights activist. He was British ambassador to Uzbekistan from August 2002 to October 2004 and rector of the University of Dundee from 2007 to 2010. His coverage is entirely dependent on reader support. Subscriptions to keep this blog going are [gratefully received](#).

Featured image: LNG site in the Norwegian industrial island of Melkøya, end point of the undersea pipeline for natural gas from the Snøhvit fields in the Barents Sea. (Andreas Rümpel, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons)

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