



Seymour Hersh & US History of Secret Operations | Prof. Kuznick

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you guys for tuning in today and welcome to another episode of The Source. I'm your host Zain Raza and today I'll be talking to Peter Kuznick about Seymour Hersh, his recent article on how the US bombed the Nord Stream pipeline, we'll be providing historical context on US covert operations, as well as a detailed account on how this operation took place. Peter Kuznick is professor of history and director of the Nuclear Studies Institute at American University. He's also the author of the book called 'The Untold History of the United States', which he wrote together with film director and producer Oliver Stone. Peter Kuznick, thank you so much for your time today.

Peter Kuznick (PK): Always glad to be with you.

ZR: Let us begin with Seymour Hersh, who recently wrote an article that detailed how the United States bombed the Nord Stream pipeline. AcTVism Munich interviewed him exclusively on our channel and for those that missed this interview, be sure to check the description of this video where we will post a link to this interview. Could you, for our younger viewers, as well as people who are not familiar with Seymour Hersh, talk about his past work?

PK: [00:01:05] Yes, certainly. Seymour Hersh is one of the most renowned independent investigative journalists in the world. He's a Pulitzer Prize winner, he's worked for The New York Times and other leading publications, he's exposed and discovered some huge things over the years. He exposed the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, in which American troops lined up more than 500, almost entirely women and children, and massacred them without a single shot being fired at the US troops. He exposed Operation Chaos, a snooping CIA surveillance program in the United States- illegal. He exposed the torture by the Americans at Abu Ghraib prison. He's exposed a lot of things about American undercover operations. And the thing about him is that he is very well-connected, he is very well-connected to top people in the military and the intelligence community. And he never reveals his sources. So he is trusted by

people who would not speak to anyone else. And so he's been able to, for example, expose US plans to consider using nuclear weapons at times because he gets this information. And so I've known Sy Hersh for quite a few years now. He's a man of great integrity, he sticks his neck out, is willing to take risks, and his sources trust him. So when Sy tells me he knows this from sources he can't divulge, I know given his track record, his personal integrity and who he is, that he can be believed. So has been criticized quite a bit on this most recent exposé. The White House said it was utterly false and complete fiction. However, it doesn't sound like it's totally false and complete fiction. He's got names, places, dates, details. Some have said his report is so detailed that it's easy to poke holes in it. But there clearly has not been any refutation by any government agency of the gist of what he said.

ZR: Let us talk about Seymour Hersh's recent piece. Can you talk about the details of this article and whether you found any issues with it?

PK: In this article, first, Seymour Hersh establishes the fact that the US wanted to destroy the Nord Stream pipeline. And he does so, some of the quotes he's got are very, very telling. He says: "Biden on February 7th - so now we're talking 17 days before the Russian invasion - in a meeting with Olaf Scholz said: 'If Russia invades, that means tanks or troops crossing the border of Ukraine, then there will no longer be a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.'" That is Biden. Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland, notorious for her involvement in the 2014 Maidan coup, Victoria Nuland says: "I want to be very clear to you today. If Russia invades Ukraine one way or another, Nord Stream 2 will not move forward." Anthony Blinken, commenting on the bombing of the pipeline, says: "This offers tremendous strategic opportunity for the years to come." Victoria Nuland told a Senate hearing afterwards: "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." Former UK Prime Minister Liz Truss openly expressed her joy in social media about the terrorist attack. Poland Former Prime Minister Radoslaw Sikorski tweeted: Thank you USA; when the pipeline got blown up. So first of all, he's establishing the motive. The United States were always opposed this pipeline. The United States hated the fact that Europe was so dependent on oil and gas from Russia and that Germany in particular had this close relationship with Russia and was the most dependent on Russian oil and gas. And so we have established the motive. Then what Sy Hersh does in this article is, he establishes the means. Now, a lot of it seems to be based on one source who talks about these Navy operations and Navy divers who have the capability of doing this. And he says it went along with a NATO exercise called BALTOPS 22. And during that operation, they planted the explosives, which were later triggered. So it was close cooperation between the United States and Norway. He talks about the history of US cooperation with Norway, which has worked closely with US intelligence for a long time. He talks specifically about Jens Stoltenberg, the head of NATO, who's a former Norwegian prime minister, and his involvement in all of this. And so he lays out the details, the specifics of how it happened, when it happened, why it happened, who did it. And we know that initially when this happened, the US tried to blame it on Russia. It made no

rational sense to say that Russia would blow up its own pipelines. If the Russians wanted to cut off oil and gas, they could just cut off the oil and gas. Why would they ever blow up this pipeline? They've spent billions and billions of dollars to build, along with Germans and other Europeans. It made no sense and has had in some ways the desired effect. Because gas prices in Germany have gone up 40%. So Germany is affected. The latest IMF report about projections for 2023 says that the Russian economy is projected to grow 0.3% this year. The German economy is projected to grow 0.1%. So a third of the rate of growth of Russia's economy, despite all the sanctions and the British economy is projected to shrink this year. And the projections about the effect of the sanctions last year, they are projecting that it was going to cause a 15% hit on Russia's GDP. Now, they're saying that the actual hit was 2.1%. So the sanctions have not worked. But what this has done is, it's punished Germany for its past reliance on Russian oil and gas and succeeded in driving Germany in breaking the ties between Germany and Russia. My friend Jeff Sachs testified before the United Nations last week and said that this is US terrorism. And what's happened in response is that it's been almost treated as if the report never even came out in the West or as you and I have discussed inside Germany it's been widely dismissed or ignored. And Sy Hersh has been attacked and his credibility has been attacked. And they say that he's a Russian propagandist. And I mean, I've seen various things that they've challenged him on. That he is a conspiracy monger. He's a credible, respected, internationally renowned journalist. And even if there are some questions that have been raised, they raised questions about the minesweeper, which minesweeper supposedly did this, and they raised questions about where it was located. And they raise questions, he talked about Jens Stoltenberg being a US intelligence asset since Vietnam. And then they point out that Stoltenberg was only 16 when the Vietnam War ended. So there are some things that might have been a little bit sloppy or wrong, but this needs to be investigated. And that's the crucial point. And so the Russians have brought this up before the United Nations demanding a thorough investigation. And clearly it is the last thing the United States wants. Even though The Washington Post and others have said there is absolutely no evidence based on European sources, first of all the other thing we should mention is that the Swedish government has said that this was deliberate sabotage and it had to be done by a state actor. So who is the state actor? Russia blowing up its own pipelines? No. The European reports and several of these countries, Germany, Sweden, Norway have done their own reports and none of them have been released to the public, even though Russia keeps saying, Release your findings. But we do know they have no evidence whatsoever that Russia was involved, but they won't release it. Why won't they release it? I think people can draw their own conclusions on that.

ZR: So talk about US history of secret operations and sabotage where the US governments are, for example, let's take the example of the NSA spying, it was widely dismissed, yet most notably by James Clapper, only to be revealed by Edward Snowden that it was a lie that the NSA was actually spying on its own citizens and even its allies like Germany. So can you talk about the history of US secret operations that the US government denied and was later uncovered to be true?

PK: Well, you know, we, the US, were tapping Angela Merkel's phone. [Ironic:] Very, very dangerous European operative, probably closely tied to ISIS and Islamic terrorism. The United States has, as Obama said, we have the greatest capability in the world to conduct surveillance, sabotage, dirty tricks, secret operations, covert operations. Jimmy Carter, who's now in hospice care, said back in 2019 that the US is the most warmongering nation in the history of the planet. It is that in 242 years of American history, the United States has not been at war for only 16 of those years. I just came across a statement by Wang Wenbin, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, who said last week in response to the State Department accusations about China planning to arm Russia, he says: "The US is the number one warmonger in the world. The US accounts for about 80% of all post-World War 2 armed conflicts. The US is also the number one violator of sovereignty and interferer in the internal affairs of other countries. Since the end of World War 2, the US has sought to subvert more than 50 governments, grossly interfered in elections and at least 30 countries, and attempted the assassination of over 50 foreign leaders. The US is also the number one source of antagonism and block confrontation." And that's true. It is probably true that the United States has been involved in more dirty tricks, more interfering in elections, more overthrowing- which is in no way justifying Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I mean, it's important to make that point. We could have two things at the same time. One is that Russia was wrong to invade Ukraine. But it was not unprovoked. And one of the questions that my friend Dan Ellsberg and I like to ponder is why was Biden so sure that Russia was going to invade Ukraine when most people around the world, most experts said, that there was no evidence that Russia was going to. You know, they thought it was a bluff, those Russian troops. First of all, they didn't have enough troops to carry out a successful invasion. And secondly, they didn't seem to be actually preparing for it. But the US knew and kept saying it, and Zelensky even doubted that Russia was going to invade. So we've seen other cases where US provocations have gone on. The question was, is this like Afghanistan in 1979 when, you know, when Brzezinski finally got Carter's approval to start arming the Mujahideen. And Brzezinski writes in a July 4th, 1979, memo - remember, the invasion by Russia doesn't begin to Christmas Day; so we're talking about five months earlier, six months earlier - and Brzezinski writes in a memo, effectively that giving aid to the Mujahideen is going to force Russia to invade Ukraine [means Afghanistan]. And then publicly, when it happened they cried these crocodile tears about how horrible it was, this Russian Soviet aggression. But behind the scenes, they were popping the champagne. Brzezinski says, We want to give Russia its own Vietnam. And they did. And there's good reason to suspect that many of the provocations were deliberate this time, too, although we don't know that. These things don't come out for years and years. But from the time the CIA was started in 1947, they had this capability to carry out dirty tricks, covert operations. The intelligence side of the CIA is one thing, but the operatives are very different, and sometimes people blur them into one CIA. That's not the case. I know a lot of CIA intelligence people, many of whom are quite liberal and progressive, but the dirty tricks, people who carry out these operations, the first one they carry out was the next year. In 1948 in guaranteeing that the Christian Democrats won the election in Italy. That was the first

major CIA operation. But they were involved in a lot of things. And Kennan back then in the beginning, fought for this kind of guerilla warfare capability. He later regretted that crazy period he was going through. But the CIA has been involved in all kinds of operations throughout its history. Overthrowing governments is one of its favorite things. You know, the first successful overthrow was the government of Mosaddeq in Iran in 1953, and they were so excited about that. It was done by Kermit Roosevelt, a cousin of president, Teddy Roosevelt, who was a main CIA operative in the Middle East. So, massive, dirty trick operation. Even though the State Department was reporting back to Washington that Mosaddeq had the support of 95 to 98% of the Iranian people. He was Time Magazine Man of the Year, the year before on the cover of Time Magazine. The first Iranian to get a doctor of laws degree from a European university, a hero not only in Iran, but throughout the Arab world. But what was his crime? His crime was that he supported the nationalization of the British oil companies because almost none of that proceeds that profit was going to the Iranians. It was all ending up in Britain. And so the British wanted to overthrow him, but Truman was supporting it. But then Truman got cold feet. And then when Eisenhower came in with Dulles, the Dulles brothers, they decided to go ahead with the overthrow. And it was very successful. And who did they put in there?! The Shah and SAVAK and the repression and the intelligence operations. And that lasted until 1979. You wonder why the Iranians hate the United States. How would the US feel if Iran had overthrown John Kennedy and replaced him with some bad puppet of the Iranians? But they were so successful and then they went and they overthrew the Árbenz government in Guatemala the following year in 1954. You know, we have all the records and now all the documents, these things have come out. Now, the Church Committee hearings in the mid 1970s exposed a lot about CIA assassination, CIA sabotage, and we know a lot of the history, but that hasn't slowed down. That continues. Those capabilities have been enhanced. They've been perfected. And there are lots and lots of books written. Our friend John Prados, who passed away this year, was a great scholar on these things. Tim Weiner's book, 'Legacy of Ashes', as was Eisenhower said: "I'm going to leave a legacy of ashes to my successor." And those were the overt programs, not just the covert programs. So that's what the CIA has been doing over the years. One operation after another, We can go through some of the details, like Operation Timbers Sycamore in Syria. I mean, I went in detail and studied the US reports about the Arab Spring and the fact that there was no uprising in Syria. And then you look at US News and World Report and Time and Newsweek, all these articles about Syria saying that Syria's not like the other countries in the Arab Spring, that the Syrians are happy with the Assad government and that the students are saying they get all kinds of benefits. But then the United States didn't like that. So we began Operation Timber Sycamore in order to fan the flames of an uprising in Syria. And finally, combined with the drought, there'd been a six year drought, the farmers were going bankrupt, they were flooding into the cities, then you've got this combustible population mix which the US was able to spark into an uprising. And then we see the nightmare that Syria has become over the years. That didn't have to happen. And so we see this kind of thing time and again. I mean, do other countries have these capabilities? Perhaps, but not to the same extent, not to depth. Because, you know, when the US draws red lines, the US red lines are around Russia

and around China. You know, we talk about China and Russia or Russia interfering in Ukraine. How many miles is Ukraine away from the United States? When Russia and China draw red lines they draw it around themselves, you know, but not the US. The US view has been that anything that happens anywhere in the world is a threat to US national security. Because the US is the world's hegemon and the world is the US oyster. And anything that happens anywhere is seen as a threat to US national security. We can trace this back to 1950 and the US National Security action memos back in 1950. When we define the world really in terms of American hegemonic vision. And the US has been involved everywhere. We talk about the plans to assassinate Lumumba in the Congo in 1959 and 1960. Well, it turns out the Belgians actually got him before the US did. Or the backdrop; we just had the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Missile crisis. What was the US doing there? But we know the Bay of Pigs operation that wasn't very covert, but the US was also running Operation Mongoose. And Operation Mongoose was a massive CIA operation to overthrow the Castro government. It was terrorism. It was economic sabotage. It was blowing things up. It was killing people with the goal of assassinating Castro. You know, and then we have these training missions. Why is North Korea so adamant about the US, South Korean joint operations? Because they include decapitation drills, which is what was happening in Cuba. One of the big operations right before the missile crisis was called Operation Ortsac, a big military operation in the Caribbean, including the overthrow of the government in Cuba. What is it, Ortsac? That's Castro spelled backwards. We weren't very subtle about it. So we can look at the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Gulf of Tonkin operation. Again, we look at almost every war, almost every war the US has lied people into, the US government. Whether it was World War 1 or in many ways, World War 2. I mean it was right for the US to do that, but we weren't open with the American people. Roosevelt told the British in Newfoundland, he says, We're going to wage war, we just won't declare it. And good that the United States got in that war. But it wasn't done in an honest way. Korea, we had written Korea off the US national security perimeter and our official policy and our statements. And we talked about the US involvement in Vietnam in 54. The deal that was made in Geneva was based on the promise that there would be elections within two years to unify the country. And as Eisenhower said, I never spoke to any expert who didn't believe that the communist would win 80% of the vote. That Ho Chi Minh would become president of a unified Vietnam. And what do we do? We install Diệm and we sabotage that. This is the US modus operandi. And the US was able to get away with it. But now, with this case, with Nord Stream, if this became known and widely recognized, it could blow up NATO, maybe. I mean Scholz has been such a, you know, a water carrier for the US in recent months. And Baerbock is one of the biggest hawks on the planet. So these situations are much more complicated. And the buildup to what happens in Ukraine, there's so much blame to go around. You know, I don't think anybody comes out of this looking good, especially not Russia, but not Germany. Not the United States, certainly. Not NATO. I mean, this is a very dangerous situation.

ZR: Let us talk about China's peace proposal. It was recently proposed by China on how to end the war in Ukraine. However, the German media has completely dismissed it as

propagating Russian points, talking points. The media and political establishment also has said that basically there's no Russian security concerns to be taken into account. How do you assess China's peace proposal? Is it legitimate and authentic? And do you think it could lead to peace?

PK: I wrote an article early in this war saying that it must be China. China has to be the mediator. China is not only the biggest trading partner with Russia, China is also the biggest trading partner with Ukraine. China respects sovereignty. This peace proposal is very timely, but it's really nothing that new that China has not been saying. It's just China is willing to stick its neck out a little bit more. Let's first look at what's happening broadly. We're now back to World War 1 we're back to World War 1 trench warfare. I'm glad they haven't introduced chemical warfare again in this war. But the trench warfare reminds us of World War 1. And so initially, after Russia made all those gains, Ukraine was able to win back, claw back some of that territory. But in recent months, that has not been happening. Russia has been making small gains as its offensive is mounting momentum. But there have been calls for peaceful negotiations. The pope has said that the Vatican should be a venue for no preconditions, peace negotiations. Gutiérrez has called for that. Lula recently said that, there in 2008, when the world economy was in trouble, we had an economic G-20 summit. What we need now is a G-20 summit. We need India, China, and other countries to get together and bring Russia and Ukraine to the negotiating table. At least refuse to give any aid to anybody in this struggle. We had statements recently by the presidents of Bulgaria and Croatia. The Bulgarian president saying explicitly that what the US is doing is pouring gasoline on the fire. He doesn't want to be giving any more arms, that this is cynical that nobody is going to win this on the battlefield. Even General Milley says it's not going to be won on the battlefield. So China's statement was positive. The first point it made was that everybody's sovereignty should be respected, which is a veiled criticism of Russia for invading Ukraine. And China has been very strong on this question of sovereignty. The second point says that military blocs that encroach upon other countries' national security must be stopped. They said no country's security should be attained at the risk of other countries' national security. And that's a critique of NATO. They said no threats of nuclear weapons use should be tolerated. Yes. Right. It's wrong for Putin to be threatening the use of nuclear weapons. He doesn't say so explicitly. But if we look at his language it is very clear what he's threatening. And that basically saying, Let's sit down and talk. The progressives in the United States made that point before they withdrew their statement, in which they said, Let's support Ukraine defensively, but let's open up a diplomatic track at the same time. And Biden has refused to do that. The position that the United States has been saying, number one, is that it's up to Ukraine, it's up to Zelensky, whether he wants to negotiate on what terms and if he wants a compromise, that's bullshit. The United States is fueling this with its arms. The United States has a say. And Zelensky is in a position where he has to listen to the United States and to the Germans and the Europeans, that Ukraine cannot act on its own. And even with the help from the West, Ukraine does not have the capability to turn this around. If you look at the situation, at the peak, Ukraine was using 90,000 artillery shells a month. While the United States has

the capability of supplying 15,000 a month at maximum. The Europeans at maximum might be able to supply another 15,000. So that's a third as much as Ukraine was using at the peak. Ukraine is not going to win this on the battlefield. Russia might win it on the battlefield, but the consequences would be horrific in terms of destroying that country. We don't want to get it to that point. We need to negotiate now. The one person who responded positively, you know, you look at the responses, Biden, Blinken, Sullivan, Stoltenberg, Ursula von der Leyen, and what do they all say? Number one, China's not in a position to be an honest broker because China never condemned Russia's invasion. So we can dismiss and throw out what China's saying here. One person who said that is a positive was Macron. And Macron also announced that he was going to be visiting China. That's very, very positive. Zelensky's initial response was not entirely dismissive. Zelensky's talk about the horrors of war. It reminded me of the statement that Khrushchev made during the Cuban Missile Crisis. That when war starts, it rolls through cities and towns and destroys everything in its path. That's what Zelensky said. So this is horrors, a nightmare and effectively welcomed the Chinese statement. Then he later again doubled down on, Oh, we're never going to give up an inch of Ukrainian territory. Well, maybe that's right, that Ukraine should not have to give up its territory, but the country is going to be destroyed in the process. And I think we're going to have a negotiated settlement in which Ukraine is going to get security guarantees, but is going to have to be neutral. It's going to renounce NATO membership. I don't know if we can get back to Minsk II or February 23rd. I'd be happy to see that. I'd be happy to see those parts of Ukraine having autonomy within Ukraine, the Donbass. But I don't think Russia's going to agree to that. So, you know, it's in the interests of the world population and the Ukrainian people, in my view, to get to a compromise sooner rather than later. But their logic is that the Russians think they're going to win it on the battlefield, the Ukrainians think they're going to win it on the battlefield, the Americans are keeping that illusion alive. You've got top advisers to Zelensky like Podolyak, saying that we're already heavily involved in discussions with the US to get the Army tactical missiles that we want; the long range missiles, and to get the F-16 fighter jets. The Ukrainians believe that is coming and they think that that's going to keep them going and that they're going to be able to take back Crimea. Well, I think that's a pipe dream. And even Blinken says in more sane moments that taking back Crimea is crossing Russia's red line. Even though Biden says we don't respect Russia's red lines, well, they better respect Russia's red lines because the result is frighteningly going to be World War 3.

ZR: Professor Kuznick, author and professor of history, thank you so much for your time today.

PK: Great to see you Zain and talk to you soon.

ZR: And thank you guys for tuning in today. Don't forget to subscribe to our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. YouTube is not suggesting our videos to new viewers like it used to a few years ago. So if you want our information to reach you, be sure to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram and be sure to donate if you're getting value

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