



Nord Stream cover story is pure comedy

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Max Blumenthal (MB): What was the date in The New York Times story, Aaron?

Aaron Mate (AM): It was March 7th.

MB: Okay. So on March 7th, The New York Times introduced the first piece of reporting based on controlled leaks emanating from somewhere in Washington. We assume US intelligence, the White House or both attempting to present a cover story for the bombing of the Nord Stream pipelines. And this piece, which actually required three journalists to acknowledge that they did not have any solid intelligence or concrete evidence, blamed a pro-Ukrainian group. Let's show The New York Times tweet, 'Breaking News: A pro-Ukrainian group may have carried out the attack on the Nord Stream pipelines last year, intelligence reviewed by US officials suggested'. Aaron, what was your reaction to that report and how do you view it today, several days later?

AM: Well, there's two key words there. And this is a theme of all the Russiagate propaganda that we've called out from the start is that whenever there's some sort of assertion being made that they want us to believe there's almost always a qualifier that underscores that they actually have no concrete evidence of anything. So right here in that tweet, there's two qualifiers: A pro-Ukrainian group may have carried out the attack on the Nord Stream pipelines, Intelligence reviewed by US officials suggested. So that is a clear sign right there that they have zero concrete evidence. And when you go to the story that's clear because they have nothing. They don't even know who this supposed pro-Ukrainian group is. The only thing they're certain about is one thing, that their (New York) Times declares that no US and British officials were involved. That's the only thing they're certain about. And that says to me, as many people have speculated, that not only was the US involved, but British officials were involved, too, because why else would The New York Times still need to go out of its way to say yeah, no, we know it wasn't the US and the Brits, because if they don't know anything about this pro-Ukrainian group, how can they rule out anybody else? They can't because they're lying to us. And that's clear from the Times story, where there's so many times when they acknowledge they have no evidence that US officials declined to offer any

information about what this intelligence says about this supposed pro-Ukrainian group. There's also a line where they acknowledge there's even a debate inside the US intelligence community over how much weight to put on this intelligence. And then they say also they've drawn no firm conclusions from it. So on every key point, they're admitting they have zero evidence. And that's because this is a cover story to cover up for the actual role of the US in bombing Nord Stream.

MB: And I speculated that the pro-Ukraine group might actually be the one in Langley, which trains partisan terrorists within the Ukrainian military. (A) secret CIA training program in Ukraine helped key prepare for Russian invasion, we learned that last year. This is the LA Times on the CIA training Ukrainian insurgents. The CIA's been training Ukraine's SBU and various that you can call partisan or insurgent groups since 2014. They even trained a Ukrainian spy who was arrested in Russia. And the list goes on and on. And we also have Kit Klarenberg's report which of course was ignored. Relying on classified documents that were leaked to us, we didn't even have and did not need an anonymous source. We just had the primary material for everyone to see. The emails showing that the British Ministry of Defence and Military Intelligence was working with the Odessa SBU to establish, what in their words (was), a partisan army of saboteurs to carry out attacks on Crimea, including using diving in to attack the Kerch Bridge, which eventually happened. So okay, we have all those possibilities there, let's not totally dismiss it, but then more controlled leaks appeared. And in one of them well, first it was Die Zeit, the German publication, reported that six people crossed the Polish border with hundreds of pounds of explosives using fake passports and then rented a yacht from the German city of Rostock, to carry out their mission to bomb the Nord Stream pipeline. So six people. And by the way, just one point I want to come back to is that The New York Times reported that there could have also been Russians involved in this pro-Ukrainian group, in other words, anti-Putin or anti-government Russians. Okay, so we have that story. And then Der Spiegel, the German publication, follows up. Der Spiegel claimed to have pinpointed the yacht which was responsible. Here's a screenshot of Der Spiegel's report. And this really just takes the story to a sublime level of hilarity. Investigators reconstruct the course of the sailing yacht Andromeda. The explosive devices for the Nord Stream explosions are said to have been transported on a yacht that was rented out through a charter company on Rügen. According to Spiegel information, BKA officials questioned witnesses on the island. So in other words, authorities were questioning people around the island because they were looking for this suspicious ship. So this is the Andromeda, just take a look at this yacht. This is not Gilligan's Island. This is not a Christopher Cross song about sailing in the 70's. This is not a yacht rock anthem. This is not Fidel Castro's Grandma, which launched the Cuban Revolution. This is the Andromeda, which supposedly transported something like 2,200lbs of plastic explosives. Six people, advanced equipment, including massive diving tanks, to one of the most surveilled bodies of water on the planet. They somehow knew exactly where the pipelines were. And then two divers dove 240 feet to one of the deepest points of the Nord Stream pipeline. They drilled through concrete reinforced pipes, covered in rebar somehow, and then they planted the explosives in four separate places

and blew up three pipelines remotely at a later date on this pleasure ship. That's the story we're being told now. That's the cover story.

AM: And the report also goes on to say that the reason why German officials were able to catch them is that these this crew of commandos, six people, just two divers, although they were able to pull off this massive act of industrial sabotage on that small little yacht, they forgot to properly clean up after themselves because Germans, according to that report, found traces of explosives on the boat. So all this crack team of commandos needed to do to get away with it after blowing up this pipeline and getting away...they just forgot to clean it up. So if only they had a good cleaning lady or cleaning man, cleaning person, they would have gotten away with it, if not for the fact they couldn't clean the explosives.

MB: And for some reason they decided to transport the explosives across the Polish border instead of sailing from Poland to Rostock, for example. How did they get all those explosives across the German border? They must have the most lax border controls ever. And by the way, this is from a yachting publication, this is the *Andromeda*. We can just, like, cruise a little bit. This is what the ship looks like that supposedly carried out the largest act of industrial sabotage of our lifetimes.

AM: Two divers, two divers carrying out that act is just such a joke. This is a really heavily protected pipeline. So you have to plant some really huge explosives and just two people carrying that out in multiple spots it's just hilarious. Also I want to know from the point of view of the people who came up with this cover story, why did they pick that yacht? Because they obviously knew that anybody looking at this from outside would laugh at the size of that yacht. So was it a question of like, they needed to find a yacht that was small enough to evade detection, or they needed to find a yacht that they could claim based on looking at transponder data, could be placed in those waters? Because if you look now at the OSINT people who are like on Twitter trying to validate this cover story they're saying "look, we found it, that yacht was in the water", Right? So what I'd love to know one day from whoever came up with this cover up story, why they picked that yacht, because they must have known that anybody looking at the picture would laugh at it. So I wonder what their thinking was, why they couldn't find a bigger yacht, at least to be able to say, well, this could conceivably carry hundreds of pounds of explosives and this team of six people who are all highly capable, except when it comes to cleaning.

MB: Look at the size. I mean, you can see those parked in the Anacostia and Potomac in DC. But look at that. That carried out the worst act of industrial sabotage ever? I suppose one reason it was selected was because it was in the Baltic Sea at a certain point. But *Die Zeit*, the publication that initially claimed to identify this yacht and six pro-Ukrainians as the culprits, they (*Die Zeit*) actually got the harbour wrong in which the yacht was docked. The slips in the harbour are actually too shallow to dock a boat of even this size. And so they had to correct their story. It was kind of a massive correction. So, I mean, even the controlled leaks are really screwing up. And some of the OSINT specialists who have been claiming Seymour

Hersh is wrong, have been even pouring cold water on this story just because of the amount of errors that are already there and the just the sheer ridiculousness of the idea that this yacht could have been somehow responsible.

AM: Well, and that's a good point about Seymour Hersh's story, because going back to the Times story, that's the first time the Times has acknowledged Hersh's reporting. And they do it in such a dishonest way. So the first time the Times acknowledges Hersh's story, they bury it in like the 25th paragraph of the Times story. So they say that Hersh reported that the US was responsible, but then they say that to make his case Hersh cited public statements from US officials like Joe Biden and Victoria Nuland promising to stop the Nord Stream pipeline. So according to the Times' framing, the basis for Hersh's story is public statements from Biden and Nuland and other people like that. No. The basis for Hersh's story, which the Times completely omits, is a source who gave him a detailed account, both of the planning of this operation and how it was executed, not what Biden said in public. Yes, I mean, he first mentions that, but that gets like a line or two in his story. His story, which is thousands of words, is about how this operation was planned and executed by the US and he's basing that on a source who gave him a detailed account. By contrast, the Times has no details at all from its multiple sources, (and) permits multiple anonymous sources, which raises another interesting contrast. Hersh was attacked for relying on an anonymous source, at least the one we know about, one anonymous source we know about. Whereas the Times relies on multiple anonymous sources who give them nothing. They have no details at all to offer on anything, whereas Hersh does have details, and the Times being so dishonest can't even acknowledge that Hersh actually has a source who provided, unlike them, a detailed account. And then they have the gall to say, and this is my favourite part of their story, they say that their story quote "amounts to the first significant known lead about who is responsible for the attack on the Nord Stream pipelines". So they want to tell us that a story from them that has zero information, zero details, and acknowledges that their sources are unsure of everything that their story amounts to the first significantly known lead, not the story that came first a month earlier from Seymour Hersh, which has ample details unlike them.

MB: And I tried to count the paragraph that the mention of the Hersh story arrived in, and it was like the 25th paragraph or the 23rd paragraph. But they waited till the 23rd or 25th paragraph to mention Seymour Hersh, his story. That was the first mention, so it had to come buried inside the cover story. But let's look at the big picture here. Seymour Hersh created a massive problem for the CIA, the Biden administration and NATO in general. Seymour Hersh has struck again and he showed that you don't even need the prestige and legacy of The New Yorker or London Review of Books to do it he did it on Substack. This story would not go away. I can tell you, at the Rage Against the War Machine rally in DC, the main chants were about the Nord Stream pipeline being blown up. It was front and centre in the German demonstration in which as many as 50,000 people showed up at Brandenburg Gate. And so this story was becoming a problem, and they just had to cook up something really quick. And I thought that they would come up with something better.

AM: But that's my question: did they actually have to come up with something? Because I thought things were actually working out pretty well for them. Yes, Sy Hersh's story made an impact of course it did.

MB: The silence was deafening.

AM: Well the silence is deafening. The Beltway media was refusing to acknowledge the existence of the story, with one exception in the Washington Post. The Washington Post did a story after there was a UN Security Council session about this, where Ray McGovern testified instead of Jeffrey Sachs. That's when The Washington Post, for the first time acknowledged Hersh's story. But otherwise it was omerta. It was like a code of silence. And I think from the point of view of people trying to cover this up, if I were them, I would have just let that ride out, because what they did here was totally put the attention back on Hersh's story and forced everyone to compare the two. And you look at the story they came up with, it's a joke. The Times' story was unbelievably embarrassing. There's zero information and they acknowledge that they have no information. Then, at the same time that story comes out that you mentioned about the yacht, the German media like this idea that there's six people on this boat, only two divers. It's a small little boat. And they get caught because they forgot to clean up some explosives on the boat. It's amazing. And now everyone who bought into the attacks on Seymour Hersh has been caught with their pants down, because now they have to defend this humiliating cover story that's been concocted for them and they can't because it's so stupid.

MB: Yeah. Let's get Seymour Hersh's response, or what amounts to a response.

AM: Oh, this is great. So this is during an interview that he's doing. And this is him, this is a live reaction of him learning about the Times story. This is great.

Seymour Hersh (SH): What? That can't be true! They can't be that stupid. Are they that stupid? What do I care? I'm going to go look at The New York Times now. Oh, my God! Intelligence suggests Ukrainian invol-*[breaks into laughter]*. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Okay, no, I haven't seen it. No, I can't comment on this stuff. What do I know? I've written a couple of other things about it, I'm going to write something next week again about it, and that's the way I do it.

MB: So he's going to write something again. You know, last week it wasn't like I had some crystal ball and what I was saying was so profound, but I predicted the US would throw Ukraine under the bus for this. It was based on Fiona Hill's comments but you can go back to our stream last week. And I yeah, I definitely called this. Other people were calling it too. And Fiona Hill, if you don't know who she is, she's one of the top Kremlinologists in DC, very well connected. She was inserted into the Trump administration to harness Trump's instinct to make peace with Russia and pull back from that. And she actually reported in foreign policy last year or earlier, I think this was last year. She confirmed that the US blew

up negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. So in her more recent interview she said that she didn't think Russia was responsible for Nord Stream anymore and she thought maybe Ukraine might be responsible. Definitely the US couldn't have done such a horrible thing because we're a shining city on the hill. And so that kind of set the stage. I think that that narrative was already brewing in Washington is what I'm saying.

AM: Maybe she's the basis for this supposed intelligence that was leaked to The New York Times? Maybe she came up with the idea or maybe she was told of this and she was just putting it out there to get, I don't know. But by the way, Fiona Hill also said that if Trump was president, this war in Ukraine wouldn't have happened. And she was saying that as a criticism of Trump. That Trump wouldn't have been willing to stand up to Putin like Biden was, and so this war wouldn't have happened. And she served under Trump. So that's just a window into how these national security experts think.

MB: Yeah.

AM: It's like she thinks it would be a bad thing if this war, this horrible war, hadn't happened. But this Times story comes just a few days after Scholz visits Washington, right? And that's a great example of what we're talking about, how the media was totally going along with ignoring Hersh's story because first of all, what did the White House say right before Scholz came? That there's going to be no joint news conference. Well, that makes sense from the point of view of the White House, because what happened last time? Biden and Scholz, Chancellor Scholz of Germany, had a joint news conference. That's when Biden, with Scholz at his side, blurted out that if Russia played Ukraine, "we will stop Nord Stream 2". And then a reporter from Germany asked him, "well, how would you do that? It's not in your waters" and he said, "we'll stop it". And he kind of grinned slyly, you know? And he was talking about, obviously, the plans he had already put into action to blow up Nord Stream 2 because according to Sy Hersh's reporting, planning for that began not long before that joint news conference with Biden and Scholz. So from the point of view of the White House, why would you put Biden and Scholz together before the media again? They can very confidently assume that no US media outlet would dare ask Joe Biden about Hersh's reporting but, I think maybe they weren't confident that a German reporter or some other foreign reporter would. So that's why there was no joint news conference. And then all we got and we can show the clip, there is Biden and Scholz sitting down for a little, you know, meeting in the Oval Office or wherever they do that. And the media is allowed to come in and take pictures of them together. And then Biden and Scholz say a few things, like Scholz talks about how great Biden's leadership is, how he's such a wonderful leader - he's kept the transatlantic alliance going. And then the media gets shooed out like, you know, and you can hear Karine Jean-Pierre saying, "get out, get out, get out, get out". And Biden's there just grinning because, of course, he's thrilled he's not going to be questioned on his role in ordering the bombing of the Nord Stream 2.

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