



Nord Stream Bombing: Debunking the Mainstream Media Narrative with Journalist Fabian Scheidler

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for tuning in today and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host Zain Raza and today I'll be talking to Fabian Scheidler about the latest developments surrounding the bombing of the Nord Stream pipeline. Fabian Scheidler is an independent journalist and an author. As an author he has written several books the latest being *The End of the Megamachine: A Brief History of Failing Civilisation*. Fabian, welcome back to the show.

Fabian Scheidler (FS): Welcome Zain. Thank you for having me.

ZR: In February, you interviewed world renowned Pulitzer Prize investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, who had released an article based on an anonymous source that details how the US bombed the Nord Stream pipeline. For those that missed this interview on our channel, be sure to click on the link in the description below. A few weeks later, The New York Times released an article based on anonymous US intelligence sources that claim a rogue group used a yacht from Rostock to bomb the Nord Stream pipeline. They found traces of explosive material, as well as fake ID's on the yacht that rule out any involvement of any British or American citizens. Following The New York Times article, the German media led by the side Der Spiegel, conducted their own investigations and more or less came to the same conclusion that the perpetrators may be a rogue pro-Ukrainian group that is not affiliated with the Ukrainian government or is some Russian anti-Putin group. In March you released an article in the Berliner Zeitung in which you analyse the story of the mainstream media. Can you share your findings and what you were able to uncover?

FS: Yes. You know, the funny thing is that when The New York Times and Die Zeit came up with their sailboat story in The New York Times especially, Julian Barnes, one of the authors of The New York Times article, claimed in a podcast of The New York Times that, "well, we

finally have sort of resolved the case". And at the end of that very podcast, he said: "I have to say that we know very little and it remains a mystery. It remains even a mystery to the sources to which we talk". And the sources were so-called US officials who had surveyed some sort of intelligence and so on and so forth. And when you look at the details of this story, it's very improbable that it could have happened that way. I mean, a sailboat with six persons on it, the government investigators of Sweden, Denmark and Germany, they haven't said much, yet, which is astonishing given the scope of the attacks. But what they said is that it must have been a state actor. It's a complex military operation. That some six people on a sailboat do such a thing is hard to believe. And if you look in the details, it's almost impossible. You need a decompression chamber because you have to go 80 metres deep. And to do such an operation you have to decompress for a long time, otherwise you need the decompression chamber. It cannot be put on such a sailboat. You cannot even anchor such a sailboat in 80 metres depth. And you need a lot of other equipment which was apparently not on the boat and so on and so forth. Another detail which is interesting is that the German prosecutors claim, according to Die Zeit, that there was a trace of explosives on the kitchen table of the yacht. Now, they investigated the boat in January. The attacks, remember, happened in September that was four months later. So two questions about that: if they were professionals and they must have been professionals to do such an operation, why were they not able to clean the kitchen table? I mean, it's ridiculous. That's the first question. And the author of this article in Die Zeit answered it by himself by saying, Well, probably they didn't have enough time to clean the table. Well, he must have known that you need at least two days from the location of the attacks to Rostock, where the yacht was located. Not enough time to clean up the table. I mean, it's ridiculous. And the second point is that when you use professional, probably C-4, underwater explosives, usually they do not leave any traces because they have to be packed. They're wrapped in plastic. So this whole story is really remarkable. And what is most remarkable is that our investigative reporters do not investigate these questions. I mean, Holger Stark is the chief of the investigative department of Die Zeit, which is the biggest German newspaper. And he doesn't ask the crucial questions. So this story is hard to believe. And what is even more interesting is the date when it came up. I mean, four weeks earlier, Seymour Hersh released his very detailed article claiming that the US did the attacks with the help of Norwegian forces. And I think that Seymour Hersh's report is much more credible. I mean, we don't know the truth yet, but it's much more credible than the other source for many reasons. One reason is that the US said that they would do it. Remember, President Biden himself said on February 7th, 2022, that was before the invasion, in a press conference in the White House, standing next to the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, he said: "We will end this pipeline if Russia invades Ukraine". And then a German reporter asked him, very stunned: "Well, how are you going to do this? I mean, this is German infrastructure." He smiled and said: "You will see we are able to do it". And according to Hersh, the whole planning of the operation by the CIA and other US institutions started in December 2021. It was all before the invasion. In January 2022, they knew how to do it. And then Biden talked about it, which was not planned. And according to Hersh, the CIA officials were outraged that he talked about the plan. But it had one

advantage, according to Hersh, and that was that usually if you do a covert operation and the US have done since World War Two, I mean, thousands and thousands of covert operations blowing up all kinds of things. I mean, they have a track record of doing so and they know how to do things. And according to Hersh, the CIA and others said, Well, normally we have to report covert operations to the US Congress by law. But if Biden had announced it, if the president himself had announced it, we can bypass this and we can do it completely secretly because it's almost a public thing now. And the interesting thing now is that our press hardly ever refers to President Biden having announced what they did later. And even after the deed, Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State, said that, Well we are delighted that Nord Stream now is a hunk of metal at the bottom of the ocean. I mean that's amazing, isn't it? That's the most severe act of international sabotage or you could call it international terrorism, if you will, in a long time. And the US, which is an ally of Germany, is delighted that a German crucial energy infrastructure has been blown up. I mean, it's so open. It's open. And Secretary Blinken and others have made similar statements of being delighted and which is really appalling, I think is the way many of our mainstream media are reporting on this. Die Zeit didn't do a very good job, I think. I wanted to ask Holgar Stark, who did the story for Die Zeit, a number of questions. He refused to give an interview. He even declined to answer a single question by email. So it's all very open. And I also wonder what The New York Times is doing here. I mean, it's getting some information by US officials, relying on some intelligence. I mean, they have deceived the public about the Iraq war, about the weapons of mass destruction in 2003. And later they apologised for that and they said we should have done more aggressive research on this. In this case, there's no aggressive research again at all. They're just giving things or passing things on, given to them by the intelligence service. And what seems obvious to me and also to Jeremy Scahill of The Intercept is that this was a kind of cover story to distract the attention from the obvious suspect here, which is the US government and to keep us busy looking into details of a story that isn't plausible at all. And that has worked, unfortunately. I mean, we have been talking about this sailboat now for months. And there has been a new article by The Washington Post in early April, and they didn't even mention Seymour Hersh and the obvious suspect in the room, the elephant in the room. It is just giving details on these distraction stories.

ZR: Let me pick up on The Washington Post story that you just mentioned, which was released in April. And let me quote the title here: "Investigators sceptical of yacht's role in Nord Stream bombing". In this article stated that German officials, investigators are sceptical that the yacht, the Andromeda, was not the only vessel used to bomb the Nord Stream pipeline. And it also voiced scepticism that a crew of six people on one sailboat were able to place hundreds of pounds of explosives. Poland and Ukraine were mentioned as possible perpetrators given their motives, however no suspicion was wise towards the United States. Why do you think the press is so hesitant to mention the United States as a perpetrator, especially given that it has the motives, means and even circumstantial evidence to make it a suspect?

FS: I mean, the last question you have to ask to those journalists in The Washington Post and The New York Times. I mean, Seymour Hersh was a star reporter for The New York Times for decades. I mean, he broke the most important stories on My Lai, the massacres in the Vietnam East Village of My Lai. He broke the story of the CIA spy programs on US citizens. He broke the Abu Ghraib story and the bin Laden story and so on, so forth. And they have even failed to mention his piece, which was published on Substack. And so the reporting has been very poor. And why don't they report on this? I have no answer. I have no answer because I think they are so afraid, because if it turns out that the US really did it., I mean, it's so damaging for the US and it's extremely damaging for NATO. If the Germans would say, and the German investigators who have access to the evidence and the Swedish investigators in the Danish – and Sweden will be part of NATO soon as well – if they said, Well, look, the US did it, that could be the end of NATO. I mean, how can you keep on running a military alliance if the biggest part of that alliance has bombed one of its allies? I mean, it's impossible. And I think, unfortunately, when it comes to foreign policy, many of the top journalists with German media like Die Zeit and Der Spiegel and also The New York Times and The Washington Post feel close to the administration. I mean, they have good reporters in these outlets, but when it comes to very serious and dangerous foreign policy information, they are much too close to power. And they are afraid of admitting the truth and The Washington Post article is really a hoax, if you will. But there's one interesting quote at the end, and I wonder if the journalists put it to give us a hint what he really thinks or she – I don't know whether it was a he or she – and he or she said that I quote, "It's like a corpse at a family gathering". The author of that article is quoting an unnamed European diplomat who is talking about why nobody is talking about Nord Stream in the European Union. And this diplomat said: "Well, it's like a corpse at the family gathering. Everyone can see there's a body lying there but pretends things are normal. It's better not to know". That's how the article ends. But the author doesn't say, Why isn't it better not to know? Because the obvious suspect is the US.

ZR: I want to pick up on another story that appeared on the Nord Stream pipeline that was also briefly mentioned in the Tagesschau, Germany's leading primetime news channel on the 28th of April. The news story mentioned that three Russian Navy ships were observed in the Baltic Sea in the area of the Nord Stream pipeline just prior to the sabotage. This investigation was led by four Nordic broadcasters and also confirmed by Denmark. The Nordic broadcasters included Denmark's DR, Norway's NRK, Sweden's SVT and Finland's Yle. According to the broadcasters, Russian Navy ships were traced using satellite images and intercepted radio communication from the Russian fleet. Separately, Danish armed forces also confirmed that one of its patrol vessels had taken photos of a Russian submarine rescue vessel near the Nord Stream just days before the explosion happened. Do you think this story has enough evidence to implicate Russia? And what possible motives could Russia have to blow up its own pipeline?

FS: Yeah, well, first of all, there are so many ships in the Baltic Sea. I mean, it's densely

populated, like almost no other sea in the world by ships from all nations. And to say there were three ships around, you will certainly find US ships around as well. And there's a lot of open source intelligence about these ships. And apparently, I mean, the article by Reuters claims that they switched off their navigation tools, so they could not be that easily located. But having seen these ships in the area doesn't imply anything. And The Washington Post a couple of months ago ran an article and they claimed that they had talked to dozens of intelligence people and diplomats and so on from ten or twelve countries. And they can't come up with this story that there was no hint at all that Russia could be involved in, according to these intelligence people and according to The Washington Post, which is so close to the US government. So if there was any hint that the Russians were involved, it's certain that The Washington Post would have reported it and certain that the US government would have made a big story out of it. And these kinds of stories pop up again and again and again to blame Russia and to distract attention from the main suspect. There was another story by an open source intelligence analyst called Oliver Alexander, this person who has been cited very often to claim that Seymour Hersh was wrong with his story originally. And there were some details in it. Seymour Hersh said there was a P8 Norwegian aeroplane involved in dropping a sonar to explode the bombs. Oliver Alexander wrote in that article, which was usually cited even more than the article by Seymour Hersh himself, and all that Alexander stated was, that it is not possible because we couldn't see the P8 aeroplane in our open source intelligence. Well, Seymour Hersh himself said, and every intelligent expert will tell you that if you run a covert operation, you will switch up everything that could make you be detected by open source intelligence. That's routine, that's routine in these operations. And I wondered why Oliver Alexander didn't know about that. I mean, he himself said that you can switch off a P8 aeroplane, that you can switch off the tools, that can make you be detected. And then later that's why I tell this story, Oliver Alexander came up with the story that there was a Russian ship being located near the area and so on. So these stories come up and come up again and again and again. If you look at the case from a criminalistics point, I mean, like in a whodunit, I mean, we have whodunits all the time on television. Why don't we look at this case in the way a police inspector would look at it? So you ask who has a track record of having done such things? I mean, the US has blown up things all the time. Who has said that they will do it? The US has said it would do it. Who cheered after the deed? The US did. Who has the means to do it? The US, certainly no other country. The Russians would have the means as well but the US also has the means. And who has the motives? And now we come to the motives. The US has a huge number of motives. They have stated publicly over and over again that they are against this pipeline, the old one, the Nord Stream 1, and the Nord Stream 2 pipelines. Why are they against it? They're against it because they have a long running tradition that they want to keep Russia and Western Europe, especially Germany, separate. Because if Russian energy and Russian resources merge with German and Western European knowledge and technology, well, and with China even which is an ally of Russia, while you have the largest landmass in the world, you have resources, technology and everything, and America would become the periphery of the world system; economically in terms of power structures, geographically and so on and so forth. So they would be off. So for

decades, you can argue even for a century they have tried to split Russia from Western Europe. And Ukraine, of course, is pivotal. That's why they are pumping so much money and weapons into Ukraine. And that's why they wanted to end Nord Stream. They said it, they did it. And they have other motives, which might be coincidental, but which might have played a role. For a long time, they wanted to sell their LNG gas, which is the most dirty energy source on the planet, even more dirty than coal if you take all the emissions together. And now they have what they want. I mean, they sell their very expensive LNG gas to Germany instead of the Russians selling that much cheaper gas to Germany. There's another motive that Seymour Hersh mentions, and that is the Germans had the possibility before the pipelines were bombed to switch on the pipelines again. That was in, remember it was September 2022, the attacks. And if it would have been a cold winter and Germany would have run out of energy for heating for their industry and so on, that would have been a huge discussion of switching on the pipeline again, because if people get cold and if the industry goes bust, I mean, better to switch on the pipeline. I mean, at least in the perspective of some politicians, at least. And according to Hersh, the Biden administration wanted to end this possibility to switch on the pipeline to have full support of Germany for the Ukraine war on the side of the US allies. Because if they had switched on the pipeline, of course they would have had to have some conversation with Russia. They couldn't have gone so hard on Russia. So a number of motives. If you look at Russia with the motive to bomb your own infrastructure, if you want to stop the gas running through the pipeline, you just turn it off. You don't have to bomb your pipeline. Then there are some people who say, well, it might be an insurance problem. So if you turn it off, they had to pay a lot in, I don't know, legal cases, but who cares for legal cases in this war? The West didn't care for legality when they blocked billions and billions of Russian assets in the banks in the West, which, by the way, is one of the most important events in recent history, because it changes the world's financial system. That's another issue that we could talk about. But I mean, who cares about legality in this case? Russia would certainly not pay any fine for not providing gas to it. So there's no motive on the Russian side at all.

ZR: Let's switch gears and move to some recent developments surrounding Ukraine. NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg, visited Ukraine in May. Speaking alongside Ukrainian President Zelensky in Kiev, he said, and let me quote him here: "Ukraine's rightful place is in the Euro-Atlantic family. Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO". In our last interview with you, you advocated for a cease fire following the model of the ceasefire that North and South Korea have agreed to, where although no official peace has been declared, nevertheless, the killing has halted. Now that NATO is openly voicing Ukraine's rightful place in NATO do you think a ceasefire, let alone peace, is even possible?

FS: Well, to answer this, we have to go back a little. I mean, we had serious negotiations for a ceasefire in March 2022, right after the invasion of Russia. And these involved Turkey and these involved in secret negotiations Naftali Bennett, the then prime minister of Israel. And Ukraine came up with the proposal of a ceasefire agreement, which mentioned neutrality, no

NATO membership, Russia to withdraw to the lines of February 23 and some negotiations on the status of Donbas and Crimea later on. So according to Bennett, he said there was a good chance that a ceasefire agreement could have been reached and that would have been much more than the ceasefire agreement in Korea because there had been no political proposals. It's just, stop the war. No political solutions. And these proposals by Ukraine really already had the ingredients for peace negotiations. And so we don't know exactly why this has stopped. According to some, it was because of Bucha the massacres in Bucha, allegedly by Russian troops. But Zelensky himself after visiting Bucha, said, Well, that makes it harder to negotiate, but we need peace. And we will go on both with the war effort and with the negotiations. So apparently he didn't drop the negotiations after Bucha. But Boris Johnson visited Kiev on April 9th, 2022, and after that, the negotiations collapsed. And there's a lot of other sources which indicate that that might have played a role that the West, especially Britain and the US, didn't want the war to stop at that point and said to Zelensky, Well, we don't support these negotiations, we don't support the ceasefire. And that means even if Boris Johnson wouldn't have told Zelensky: Stop it, stop the negotiations. Even if he said, We don't support it. I mean, Zelensky had hardly a choice because he is 100% dependent on Western money. I mean, without Western money, the economy collapses in a very short period. So that was the pre-history. Now we have a completely different situation. I mean, we have tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of deaths and wounded in the war. We have trauma on both sides. Russia has annexed not only the northern Donbas, but also the southern Donbas. And it makes it much, much harder to negotiate now. But I think we have no other choice for many reasons. The first one is that the risk of nuclear war becomes higher and higher as we go on with that war, and that's a risk that nobody can take. I mean, it's an absolute no go to take the risk of nuclear war. I mean, that means we will all die. Nuclear war you cannot restrict it to a certain area. If you had nuclear war, if you have this kind of escalation, then you will have a destruction of the northern hemisphere and that will lead to a nuclear winter, which will devastate the Global South as well. So it's the end game. We should never do that. The second reason for why we should go for negotiations is that it's a stalemate. That's what General Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest military in the US, said a couple of months ago. That's what the Pentagon leak recently showed. I mean, these were secret Pentagon documents which showed that the Pentagon itself says it's a stalemate. That means neither Ukraine nor Russia can win. Well, if you go on with the stalemate, you'll have at least Verdun. Verdun, you will remember, is the battle with hundreds and thousands of deaths between France and Germany in the First World War, which has been a symbol for senseless wars. So that's another reason. And the third reason is that we have other global issues which are so urgent that we need global cooperation. Climate change, biodiversity loss, they are existential. We are in the decade where we have to turn our economy to a sustainable path very quickly. Otherwise global ecosystems will collapse and that means human civilization will collapse. That's what the most eminent scholars in the world tell us about what's going to happen if we go on with it. You cannot stop climate change without global cooperation, including with Russia and China. So there are a number of reasons why we should do that. It's much harder than it used to be a year ago, but I think

maybe not in the next weeks or months, but in the long run, if it turns out to be a real stalemate, both parties and even the West will gain an interest in ending this war.

ZR: Let me pick up on the point you made about the potential for nuclear war and pose a counter argument. In the German media it is always argued when experts are invited that, Hey, when we were saying sending defensive weapons could lead to nuclear war once they were sent, there was no nuclear war, nothing happened. Then it was about sending offensive weapons and the same warnings that you made, for example, about nuclear war, nothing happened. Then advanced weapons were sent and now fighter jets and other stuff can be sent as well because they argue there's much more room for flexibility and Putin would never use nuclear weapons given how nuclear winter and the fallout would affect his own country. So there's a lot of room to play here. What do you make of this argument?

FS: Well, first of all, the main risk of nuclear war is not that one of the sides, either the Russians or the Americans, press the red button. The main danger is that you have misunderstandings, that you have technological failure, that you have human failure, and you have to study the history of nuclear weapons and the almost nuclear wars that we had. The most well-known incident was, of course, the Cuban Missile Crisis in the 1950s. We came very close to nuclear confrontation, but very few people know what really happens and how close it was. Just let me briefly tell you what happened. Khrushchev of the USSR told his submarine captains that if there is no connection to Moscow, then three captains can decide to use nuclear weapons. And the US didn't know about that. They didn't know it. And they started to drop bombs and chase the submarines of the USSR near Cuba. And so the three captains convened and they talked to each other and one said, No, I don't do it. So it was one general or admiral or whatever off the Russian fleet that prevented nuclear war. You have these kinds of misunderstandings. The Americans, maybe they wouldn't have chased these submarines if they knew what happened. But, you know, if they don't talk to each other, you can get into this kind of situation. And we had dozens and dozens of incidents. There's a book about it, I don't recall the name, but it's very instructive. And there was another incident in the 80's under the Reagan administration NATO had a major manoeuvre in Europe. And it was so realistic that the Russians thought, Well, they're going to invade. And on the Russian radar, it seemed that there was a Western rocket coming and the person in charge, the officer in charge, then decided not to report it to his authorities and eventually to Brezhnev that would have meant nuclear war. He decided for himself not to do it. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here then. We wouldn't be here. I think this officer should have a monument in really every city around the world because we're here thanks to this person. And that means nuclear war due to misunderstandings so likely. And it becomes much more likely if confrontation builds up, even with defensive weapons. And what the West is now providing are not defensive weapons. I mean, Leopard 2 tanks are not defensive at all. So it's serious. It's very serious.

ZR: On the 3rd of May, it was World Press Freedom Day. You were on the streets holding a speech at a demonstration for Julian Assange organised by grassroots citizens. We received

some complaints about the speech not being in English. So could you quickly summarise the speech and also talk about the importance this case has on press freedom and democracy?

FS: Yes, the speech has been published by Scheer Post now in English, and it's also available in French, Spanish and so on. Well, the Assange case is instructive and very interesting in many regards. First of all, it shows that we live in an inverted and perverted world. Julian Assange has disclosed war crimes by Western nations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Now, none of those suspects of war crimes has been charged or tried or convicted. Julian Assange, on the contrary, is jailed, has been jailed for four years in Belmarsh Prison, high security prison, although he is not charged with any misdeed in Britain, the European Union or his home country of Australia. The only reason why he is in jail is that the US is asking and demanding his extradition on the grounds of World War One draconian law against espionage, the Espionage Act. Now, Julian Assange is a journalist. He acted as a journalist, as a responsible journalist, and not as a spy. If he is extradited to the US, that means that every journalist on this planet has to fear being extradited to the US if he or she discloses any misdeeds or dirty secrets of our government. That would be the end of free journalism as we know it. So that's why it is a very important case. And what the UK has been doing here is really outrageous. I mean, Nils Melzer, the former UN rapporteur on torture who visited Assange in Belmarsh when he was the UN rapporteur, concluded that he has been tortured for years by the US government because of the extradition charge, by the UK Government and also by the Ecuadorian government which imprisoned him. I mean, the first Ecuadorian government under Rafael Correa gave him refuge and the second one changed course very much and finally delivered him to the British authorities. So that's why it's important. And it's also important for the history of wars and our future. Because reporting on the dirty secrets of wars is crucial, first of all, to prevent them from happening again. The reporting on the Vietnam War by people like Seymour Hersh and others, Daniel Ellsberg with the Pentagon Papers, which revealed that all US governments had lied to the American people about the Vietnam War, about its scope, its motives and so on, the atrocities. Same with the Iraq war. If you reveal these atrocities, it's much harder for a government, like the US government, to wage another war. And if you don't reveal the secrets of the wars, it's much easier. So it's a matter of life and death to have good journalism reporting on the war. If you have good journalism reporting the ongoing wars, it's more likely that these wars will end sooner because there's pressure on the governments. That's why free journalism is linked to a matter of war and peace and life and death for us all.

ZR: Fabian Scheidler, independent journalist and author, thank you so much for your time today.

FS: You're welcome.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. Please don't forget to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. YouTube, which is owned by Google, has a long history of shadow

banning and censoring content of alternative and independent media outlets such as ours. So we're asking all our viewers as a precaution to join these alternative channels. Also, if you're watching videos regularly, make sure you take into account that there's an entire team working behind the scenes from camera, light, audio and in the case of a German video's translation, voiceover, correction. So if you want us to provide you with independent, non-profit news and analysis, make sure to donate today. I'm Zain Raza, see you guys next time.

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