Another Media Hoax About Russia Revealed as Ukraine Loses Ground

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Although nobody talks about it much anymore, the war in Ukraine is still dragging on. It is continuing to destroy Ukraine, and we all know who will end up paying for its reconstruction. The firms like BlackRock and JPMorgan that are waiting like vultures to profiteer off of the reconstruction that will be funded by the American taxpayer and, to some lesser extent, people in Europe. There are huge numbers of young Ukrainian men increasingly unwilling to fight, who are losing their lives on a front line that has barely moved since more than a year ago. And to the extent it has moved at all, it is not moved in the direction of Ukraine expelling Russian troops, but quite the contrary, has moved in the other direction of Russia continuously expanding the control of territory that they have in Ukraine. In fact, Ukraine just retreated from several significant cities within the last two weeks, showing that the momentum and the strength continues to be with the much larger country now. The way in which the American public has been convinced to continue to finance this war, even as Ukrainians themselves recognise it as futile, is by a never ending series of propagandistic claims about Russia and Putin and the Kremlin, designed to not only demonise the Russian state in the eyes of the American public, but to generate so much hatred toward them, to depict them as some unique and unprecedented tyranny, so much worse than our good friend Saudi Arabia or Egypt, the oppression of the kind in Russia just doesn't exist anywhere we're told. And oftentimes the claims that are advanced in order to convince Americans of that through the media end up being completely false.

In February, when Alexei Navalny died – a very odd hero for the West, given his long standing views that were basically what in any other context, the American media would call white nationalist, similar to the way Americans have decided to worship Ukrainian fighters, even though so many of them are continuously revealed to be neo-Nazis – when he died in February, it was definitively asserted over and over by the US media and by US politicians that the reason he died was because Vladimir Putin, for some reason that we weren't told, just suddenly woke up one day and decided to order his murder. There was never any evidence presented for it. As I said at the top of the show, it never made any strategic sense or any rational sense, but there's never any questioning permitted in the US corporate media about

claims made about Russia. Russia is so evil, so uniquely menacing and threatening to the American way of life that any questioning of it instantly exposes you as a Kremlin asset or a Kremlin loyalist. After all, who else would ever dare question claims made about Russia? You can say, Look, I don't like Russia, I don't have any affection for the Russian government, but I think it's dangerous to continuously prop up tensions between the United States and Russia because it leads to things like the US getting heavily involved in a proxy war in Ukraine for almost two and a half years now. But none of that is recognised. You either hate Putin with all your heart, or you're a Kremlin agent and there's nothing in between. As it turns out, unsurprisingly, the claims that Vladimir Putin ordered Navalny to be murdered ended up being a complete fiction, a falsehood, just disinformation, disseminated by the very US corporate media outlets that constantly claim to combat disinformation. Last week, The Wall Street Journal on April 27th published an article with this headline, quote, *Putin Didn't Directly Order Alexei Navalny's February Death*, U.S. Spy Agencies Find. "The finding, which doesn't absolve the Russian leader of ultimate responsibility, deepens the mystery surrounding the dissidents death at an Arctic gulag". Now, obviously, the US intelligence community is not to be unquestioningly believed, but in this case, they are the ones who have done the most to ensure that American citizens hate Russia and want to confront it and go to war with it as much as possible. That's where Russiagate came from. That's where almost every lie about Russia, that Russia put bounties on the heads of American soldiers in Afghanistan, that the Hunter Biden laptop and the reporting from it was Russian disinformation, even the whole attempt to blame Donald Trump's presidency on Russia that has all emanated from the US security state. So when they, of all people, are willing to admit that there's no evidence, despite all their efforts and all the surveillance under which they have the Kremlin and Russian leaders to support the accusation that Putin ordered Navalny's death, that is what the law calls a statement against interest. It's not a case where they're making claims that promote their agenda. They're making confessions that undermine their agenda. And those kinds of statements are always far more credible.

Here's what The Wall Street Journal said, quote, "Aleksey Navalny's February death in an Arctic penal colony prompted a new wave of sanctions targeting Russia's economy, upended delegate negotiations to exchange prisoners between Russia and the West, and left Russia's limited opposition in disarray. Russian President Vladimir Putin might not have planned for it to happen when it did. US intelligence agencies have determined that Putin likely didn't order Navalny to be killed at the notoriously brutal prison camp in February". Let's just emphasise that again, because this is the key statement. "US intelligence agencies have determined that Putin likely did not order Navalny to be killed". Now we're going to show you how definitive US media personalities were in claiming that exactly this happened. I'm sure you all remember it was by far the biggest story for days, if not a week, in the West. And central to the claim was this evidence free assertion that Putin had ordered Navalny murdered, there's this accompanying idea that Russia is such a totalitarian state, even though it's gigantic and filled with hundreds of millions of people, that nothing happens without the personal signoff and approval of Vladimir Putin, as though he's some kind of mafia boss running some neighbourhood in Queens. The idea that a country that large and that complex, nothing happens in it without the personal, explicit direction of a single person, as though Russia is

even capable of being totalitarian is preposterous. And at the very least, there should be evidence accompanying those claims. Although, as I said, there's a prohibition on even asking for evidence with claims about Russia, or you'll be immediately accused of being a Russian agent. And as it turns out, even U.S. intelligence agencies now admit that Putin likely did not order Navalny to be killed. Directly contrary to what we were told in the most definitive and unquestioning terms, over and over and over and over back in February, when Navalny died.

The Wall Street Journal goes on: "The finding is broadly accepted within the intelligence community and shared by several agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the State Department's intelligence unit, the people said. President Biden and other world leaders have held Putin ultimately at fault based on years of the Kremlin's targeting Navalny, including by allegedly attempting to assassinate him in 2020 and sending him to a remote gulag. Quote, 'Make no mistake, Putin is responsible for Navalny's death', Biden said after the world learned of the death. Navalny's allies insist that his death was orchestrated by the Kremlin. In a statement, Leonid Volkov, a longtime Navalny ally, rejected the US intelligence community's assessment as naive: 'Those who assert that Putin was not aware clearly do not understand anything about how modern day Russia works. The idea of Putin not being informed and not approving killing Navalny is ridiculous'.

Now, this is always what happens is these people who are the dissidents from some country, like, for example, in the run up to the invasion of Iraq, the US government relied on constant claims from the people who most wanted the US to go and invade Iraq and remove the regime of Saddam Hussein, and they lied constantly in order to manipulate American public opinion against Saddam Hussein, to try and depict him as some grave threat, telling Americans that he still had an active nuclear and biological weapons program, that he was in an alliance with al-Qaida. That's where it all came from. And these people who want the US government to go take down leaders for their own benefit so that they can then assert power in that country are always the most unreliable sources. But the Wall Street Journal says, quote, "The US assessment is based on a range of information, including some classified information and an analysis of public facts, including the timing of his death and how it overshadowed Putin's re-election, some of the people said". Now again, you could analyse that on your own at the time that it happened, but there's a taboo on even mentioning or questioning those things, and we're always told that US intelligence has the Kremlin under such a tight surveillance net. We know everything Putin does. We know everything that he says. That's how we've constantly are hearing such definitive claims about what Putin supposedly did. We were told that Putin personally ordered the hacking of the DNC emails and the emails of John Podesta, as though Vladimir Putin, while running this gigantic, complex country with interest all over the world, is personally approving hacking targets, to hear the US media tell it, he's a person who has about 70 or 80 hours per day given how much that is attributed to him. He's controlling Great Britain. He's controlling their elections. He's controlling American elections. He's destabilising Africa. He's propping up the Assad regime. He's destroying Ukraine. He's like some kind of ubiquitous superman. And in fact, there were

articles early on on Russiagate when the media was still a little bit open to some dissent of anti-Putin liberals in Russia, complaining that this image, this superhero image that the US media was concocting about Putin actually helped Putin. It was consistent with how he wants to be perceived as this omnipotent figure who can do anything and personally controls every component of Russian life. So this yet another example of what we were told in order to be manipulated against the Russian government.

Now here from NBC News on February 19th of 2024. It just aired unquestioningly. This article, Navalny's widow accuses the Kremlin of hiding the opposition leader's body to cover up killing him. Yulia Navalnaya said authorities were waiting for traces of the nerve agent Novichok to leave her husband's body, and vowed to continue his fight against Vladimir Putin. So that claim was that Putin had ordered him poisoned, killed him with poison, and was hiding the body in order to prevent detection of how he was actually murdered. Here's the Guardian on February 26th, quote: *Putin had Navalny killed to thwart prisoner swap, allies claim.* Do you see how false claims just roll constantly over the population from these media outlets that claim that they are singularly devoted to combating disinformation? Quote, "The Russian leader accused of ordering Navalny's death to stop him from being exchanged for FSB hitmen serving a life sentence in Germany. So that was the other theory. Now, here is the former ambassador under President Obama to Russia, Michael McFaul, who has been so fanatically obsessed with having the US government try and topple the regime in Moscow, a fanatical supporter of the war in Ukraine. He had to apologise because he went on MSNBC once and strongly suggested that not even Hitler was as bad as Putin because, according to him, at least, Hitler never killed his own people the way Putin is doing. Very strange claim to me, given the most basic, minimal understanding of 20th century history. But that's how fanatical he became. And he is. And here is what he said on February 16th, when he went on MSNBC to talk about Navalny's death.

MSNBC: Let's bring in former US ambassador to Russia, now director of the Institute for International Studies at Stanford, and an NBC News international affairs analyst, Michael McFaul. Ambassador, thanks for being with us. I mentioned a few minutes ago on this show your reaction on Twitter. I'd like to hear more from you here. And also what more you're hearing about this from your contacts inside Russia.

Michael McFaul: Guys, I don't know what to say. I'm going to try to be analytic, but I want you to know, Alexei Navalny was my friend. I was with his wife last night. I'm here in Munich talking to her. His daughter Dasha goes to school at Stanford. So, this is a pretty emotional time for me. Putin killed Navalny. Let's be crystal clear about that. I don't care about any investigation...

GG: I don't care about any investigation. I don't care about any evidence. We're just going to assert that Putin had Navalny murdered.

Michael McFaul: He's put him in solitary confinement. He's put him in a cell which was designed [inaudible]. And today he is dead. Putin killed Navalny. And why did he? Because Putin is weak. You don't kill people if you're strong. Putin killed Navalny because Navalny

was the one opposition leader in Russia that Putin feared the most. So this is a really tragic day for me, and it should be a tragic day for anybody who cares about...

GG: The idea that Navalny was some wildly popular leader in Russia has also been a complete Western delusion. He is somebody who, if anything, is more extreme than Putin ever was in terms of nationalistic defence of Russia. They took a version of Navalny that never existed, and then try to prop him up as some grave threat to Putin, as though there were hundreds of millions of Russians behind Navalny wanting him to be president, ready to go and vote for him and that's why Putin put him in prison. And then there he said: I don't care about investigations. I don't care about evidence. Let's just all agree that Putin had Navalny murdered. Now, obviously, and this is one of the things that we analysed at the time, is, you would think American journalists would be interested in the way in which dissidents are treated by the American government, the government they supposedly exist to hold accountable and to adversary report on. But it never occurs to them that we often do the same thing. Julian Assange being a perfect example of somebody who is clearly being held in a high security prison, being virtually killed, crushed physically and mentally for years for the crime of exposing American secrets, and criticising the American government as one of the most effective dissidents in decades. And then we watched the Ukrainian government take an American journalist, Gonzalo Lira, and put him in a prison until he was dead, something that his family warned was going to happen, something that he warned what would happen, and of course, none of these people had the slightest concern for the plight of Gonzalo Lira, because these are, as we're going to show you when we cover the gala that they just threw for themselves at the White House, these are Royal Court spokespeople. They're not there to ever criticise or expose the wrongful acts of the US government, even though you would think that that was what the corporate media would be principally devoted to. That's what American journalism is supposed to be about. It's incredibly easy to criticise foreign countries thousands of miles away. It takes no courage to do it. The US government wants the press to do that. They give them the list of the countries that we're all supposed to hate. Obviously, there are countries far more repressive than Russia, but because of their close U.S. allies like Saudi Arabia, or Egypt, nobody ever goes on the air and indignantly condemns those countries or how they treat dissidents because those are US friendly dictatorships. They get their marching orders to propagandise against the countries that disobey us. That's why they're so concerned about human rights violations in Russia and Iran. But deeply unconcerned about human rights violations, far more egregious in US allies and even less concerned about abuses by the United States government. But the fact that in this case, it turned out to be completely false makes it even more disgraceful than it otherwise would be.

Now, as I said, this is far from the first time this has happened. Obviously, all of Russiagate was this, was a complete fabrication that came from the bowels of the US security state. They picked the prosecutor they wanted. They gave him unlimited resources. And this supposed dream team of prosecutors, including Dan Goldman, who now, thanks to the New York Times and his family's friendship with the Sulzbergers, represents Manhattan in the U.S. Congress, he was also on the Mueller team, and they were unleashed for 18 months. And they came back and said, We can not find evidence that establishes the conspiracy theory that the US

media has been touting for almost two full years now, going back to the 2016 campaign. And there was no sense of accountability at all. Because they lie for a cause, when they lie for a good cause, they feel noble in doing it. And this has happened so many times when it comes to Russia. In 2019 and then into 2020, in President Trump's last year running for re-election, the New York Times published a story claiming that Russia had put bounties on the heads of American soldiers. They were paying the Taliban for every American soldier that the Taliban killed. Now, even if this were true, obviously, it's exactly what the United States does, we are doing everything we can possibly do to help the Ukrainians kill Russian troops in Ukraine. But the idea of this story was supposed to be: Trump was briefed on this, but did nothing because he's captive to Vladimir Putin. He even allows Putin, the story implied, to put bounties on the heads of American soldiers. Constant propaganda about why you should not only hate Vladimir Putin, but regard him as a threat to American security. It's been a decade long propaganda campaign, primarily coming from Democrats and their media allies.

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