

## Navalny's Death: Poison Allegation – Narrative or Fact?

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**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** So on the second day of the three day Munich security conference, which was yesterday, the governments of the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands issued a joint statement on the death of Alexei Navalny. And that statement, which we'll look at more closely, claims that Navalny was killed by a poison found in dart frogs. The Western corporate media instantly trumpeted the statement without a hint of scepticism. I learned of it myself from a Toronto Star news alert, which was deposited in my email inbox minutes after the statement by these governments came out. So before we take a critical look at the joint statement from five European governments about Navalny's death, I'd like to revisit the question of who Alexei Navalny was.

Navalny was a Russian lawyer whom the West described as an anti-corruption crusader, an opposition leader, and the most formidable Russian critic of Vladimir Putin. And you can see here just a tiny example of the Western narrative about Navalny. This is from the Journal of Democracy, the headline being: *The Man Who Stood Up to Vladimir Putin*. In a 2011 interview, Navalny described Russia's ruling party, United Russia, as a party of crooks and thieves. He ran to be the mayor of Moscow in 2013. He garnered 27% of the vote and the winner, Sergey Sobyenin, received 51% of the vote in that election in the first round and therefore avoided a runoff. So it wasn't really a close vote. Navalny did, at least in Moscow, garner a significant percentage of the popular vote. Now, in 2013 and 14, Navalny was convicted of embezzlement by a Russian court. In each case, he received a suspended sentence. I'm not in a position to comment on the validity of the conviction. For me to do that, I have to have some understanding of the relevant laws of Russia and would have to have reviewed in some detail, the evidentiary record and the court's reasons, and I've not been able to do any of those things. And frankly, I doubt that anybody in the Western media has done the kind of exercise that would be necessary to decide whether there was a rational basis to the conviction. So I'm not here to tell you that he did in fact commit embezzlement or he didn't. All I know is a Russian court convicted of embezzlement twice in 2013/2014, and gave him a suspended sentence.

Now, in 2018, Navalny wanted to run, apparently, in Russia's presidential election in that year, but the Electoral Commission ruled that Navalny was ineligible. And the reason was because of his criminal convictions. In August 2020, Navalny was hospitalised in Berlin due to an apparent poisoning. He and Western governments claimed that Navalny had been poisoned with a nerve agent called Novichok and that Vladimir Putin had ordered him to be poisoned. By the way, a frequent guest in our show, John Helmer, who's an expert in Russian affairs, has written a book about Novichok, not specifically in relation to Navalny, but in relation two other opponents of the Russian government, who were alleged to have been poisoned by Novichok, and according to John and his book, which is quite a read, the claim that those two particular opponents of the Russian government were poisoned by Novichok is a scam. That's not his word, I guess, that's my word, I'm paraphrasing, but you should have a look at that book if you're interested in this subject. In any case, in January, 2021, Navalny returned to Russia and was immediately detained on accusations of violating his parole conditions while he was in Germany. And the next month Navalny's suspended sentence was replaced with a prison sentence of two and a half years detention. In March, 2022, Navalny was sentenced to an additional nine years in prison after being found guilty of embezzlement and contempt of court in a new trial. And in August, 2023, he received another sentence of 19 years on extremism charges. Again, I'm not in a position to evaluate any of those convictions to offer an opinion just because I'm not steeped in the relevant laws of Russia, nor have I been able to review the evidentiary record, the transcripts and so forth. I don't speak Russian. I don't have the ability to do that without engaging in an extensive translation exercise. So I'm not going to offer to you an opinion about whether those convictions were valid or invalid. I don't assume that they were valid. I don't assume that they were invalid either. I'm just reporting the fact that they happened.

Now, in February 2024, the Russian government announced that Navalny had died in prison. And Western governments immediately accused Vladimir Putin of having ordered his death, a charge which the Russian Government strenuously denied. Now, interestingly, at the time after Navalny died, the head of Ukrainian military intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov contradicted the claim of Western governments. And here you can see an article from 25th February, 2024 from *Ukrainska Pravda*, a pro-Ukraine, and I think it's fair to say anti-Russia media outlet in Ukraine, entitled: *Ukraine's Defence Intelligence Chief claims Navalny died of natural causes*. So Budanov presumably knows a thing or two about what's going on in Russia. He is after all, certainly at that time, he was the head of Ukraine's defence intelligence, stated that Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny died of naturally causes, specifically a blood clot. And he was quoted as saying: "I may disappoint you. But we know he died from a blood clot. It's more or less confirmed. This is not taken from the internet, but unfortunately a natural death." So for what that's worth, he certainly wasn't buying into the narrative at that time that the Russian government had murdered Alexei Navalny. You'd be hard pressed to find someone who is more hostile to Vladimir Putin than Budanov. In fact, the intelligence service he runs has attempted to kill the Russian president, at least on one occasion, if not more. Western governments and media do not like to acknowledge the fact that Navalny was an extreme nationalist and a bigot. In 2021, Amnesty International stripped Navalny of the title prisoner of conscience due to evidence that Navalny had engaged in hate speech,

including a notorious video in which Navalny compared immigrants to cockroaches. And here you can see a report from the BBC from February 2021. And as it reports, "Amnesty International has stripped the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny of his prisoner of conscience status after it says it was bombarded with complaints highlighting xenophobic comments that he has made in the past and not renounced." So that was as late as 2021, he had not renounced these comments.

In addition, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, appears to have a very cosy relationship with Western governments. In February 2024, Navalnaya met with Joe Biden. At a time when the Biden administration was waging a proxy war against Russia. And there you can see her, Navalny's widow embracing the psycho zombie, Joe Biden at the time that he was president. In February 2024, after Navalny died, Navalnaya, his widow, made an unscheduled appearance at the Munich Security Conference, where she received a standing ovation and called on Vladimir Putin to be held accountable for her husband's death. Now, let's turn to the statement issued yesterday by the five governments that I mentioned. The governments of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and the Netherlands and Sweden. Let me just find it here. One moment, here we go. It's still uploading. Sorry for the delay, folks. You're going to see that this statement lays out the purported basis of the claim that Navalny was killed with dart frog poison. Unfortunately, this has taken a little longer than I had hoped to upload. In any case, I'll describe to you what it says and I hope that we can get the thing uploaded before everybody loses patience. Basically what the thing says is that the five governments obtained samples taken from Navalny's corpse and determined that through laboratory tests that Navalny had been poisoned by a substance that is found in dart frogs. And unfortunately, I don't know, Rami, if there's a way that you can enlarge that image that I've got up there on the screen, it's a bit difficult, probably impossible for people to read. But the key things to understand about this statement are the following. First of all, the five governments in question do not identify who conducted the laboratory tests. We don't know whether they're independent of the governments, we don't know what their expertise is, we do not know their names, we know what company they come from, whether they are employees of any Western intelligence agency. The second thing is we don't from this statement, there is no indication how they managed to obtain samples as they put it from Navalny's corpse. Navalny was in a polar detention camp up in the far north of Russia at the time that he died, his body was in the custody of Russian authorities because he was in prison. So there's no indication as to how they obtained samples from his body and there's no proof whatsoever offered in this statement, or as far as I can see anywhere in any context, that the samples that these laboratory technicians actually examined were, in fact, from Navalny's corpse. Thirdly there is a lot of emphasis in this statement about the chemical weapons aspect of their allegation. They say as follows: "Russia's repeated disregard for international law and the Chemical Weapons Convention is clear. These latest findings once again underline the need to hold Russia accountable for its repeated violations of the Chemical Weapon Convention and in this instance, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention."

So it's quite clear that these five governments are trying to elevate the death of this one individual, however he may have died, into an allegation that Russia is violating international

treaties relating to chemical weapons, which would obviously make this a much more egregious crime were in fact to have been committed by the Russian Federation than simply the extrajudicial killing of a single individual. Now, there are so many problems with this statement that it's really hard to know where to begin. First of all, as I indicated, where are the lab tests? Have they been published? They're not part of this statement. I have not seen any report. I've checked the western media, including outlets like The Guardian, for example, The Telegraph, that are promoting this narrative as aggressively as possible, I've not seen any indication that the lab tests have been published. I've not seen any indication as to who the persons were, who conducted the lab test and whether they were affiliated with any of these governments or they were independent experts. I've not seen any explanation of how they obtained or purportedly obtained samples from the body of Navalny after he died, despite the fact that his body was in the custody of Russian law enforcement authorities. I've not seen any proof that what they examined were in fact samples taken from the body of Alexei Navalny. Basically, therefore, we are simply being asked to have faith in the intelligence agencies of these five European countries, because there's absolutely no objective, credible evidence to back up anything that they're saying. This is simply unsubstantiated assertion by the governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

I would think that the obvious question here is why the hell would anyone trust these people? One could go on and on for hours recounting the lies of Western intelligence agencies and these governments in particular when it comes to crimes alleged to have been committed by official enemies of the West. I'll just mention one in passing and that is we were told for four years or more that the reason why Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016 was because Russia hacked the 2016 election, and engaged in gross interference in US politics. And after the US government spent millions of dollars and hired former FBI director Robert Mueller to conduct an exhaustive investigation, he came up with no credible evidence at all that, in fact, the victory of Donald Trump was due to Russian hacking or Russian electoral interference. And in fact, much of that claim was based upon a character named Christopher Steele, a Brit who was working with British intelligence or an agent of British intelligence. And the so-called Steele dossier was ultimately demonstrated to be a pack of implausible lies. So that's just one instance I could name many more. For example, I could point out and will point out that all five of these governments and their respective intelligence agencies are providing full-throated support to Israel right now as Israel is carrying out a genocide right now. So these agencies and the governments that, who rely upon their intelligence work have demonstrated that they have an absolute contempt for international law and basic human rights and that they're willing to lie shamelessly in order to justify their support for an ongoing genocide. So I would humbly suggest to you all that anyone who believes these people and is willing to make a leap of faith when they make claims of this nature against an official enemy of the West without any credible objective evidence to back them up, that you're naive at best and that you are a damn fool at worst. So I myself refuse to take their word for it unless and until I see objective evidence, credible objective to back it up, I'm simply not going to attach any significant weight to these allegations and I suggest you do likewise.

And by the way, since we're on this subject of credibility,, as I mentioned, they're making a big deal in their joint statement, these five European governments about chemical weapons. And yet none of them seems to be particularly concerned about the fact that over the past several weeks, their close ally Israel has been spraying a toxic herbicide across the lands of South Lebanon. And also I understand in Syria. This herbicide is glyphosate, and this is believed by the World Health Organisation to probably be carcinogenic. So I have not seen a single peep of criticism or condemnation out of any of these governments relating to the mass spraying of glyphosate on lands that are not even part of the sovereign territory of Israel during the past few weeks. And yet we're to believe that they are deeply concerned about the implications for the use of chemical weapons resulting from the death of one individual in the custody of Russian law enforcement. And quite apart from all of that, I would suggest to you that this story makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, zero sense. According to the narrative being pushed by these five governments, they say that there are no dart frogs in Russia which I think is correct and they say in addition that these frogs don't generate this toxic substance in captivity. So basically what this means is that in order for Russia to have obtained the poison they would have had to send an agent to the part of the world, I think it's Africa or South America, where you can actually find these frogs in the wild, would have to extract the poison from them and return it to Russia. And the question that I ask is, why would Russia go through all of those hoops when it could have employed any number of poisons that were readily available to the Russian government in Russia? Why would it do something so exotic and weird as going to Africa or South America to obtain this substance from frogs in the wild, when it could have poisoned Navalny in any number of ways from substances that were readily available to Russia, the Russian authorities in Russia?

And furthermore, why wouldn't they simply concoct some Epstein-like fantasy? You know: Oh, guess what? Alexei Navalny hung himself using a bed sheet, And it just so happened that at the time that he hung himself, the guards, the prison guards who were on watch fell asleep and the security camera outside his cell failed. And so, we can't actually show you the video footage and we can't tell you why the security guards didn't stop this from happening, but he killed himself. They could have concocted a story like that. After all, the Trump regime did it and the Western media and other Western governments are perfectly content to accept the Trump regime's explanation of how Jeffrey Epstein died; so why wouldn't Russia just pull a similar stunt? Instead no, we're told they went off and they went to all this trouble to obtain this exotic poison. I mean, you know the whole thing frankly is laughable and when I myself first saw this news alert the first thing that I thought of was this guy: Dr. Evil. That's exactly what this sounds like. Dr. Evil would send people to the deep, dark jungles of Africa or South America to extract some deadly poison from frogs and then bring it back to wherever he happens to be to kill one of his opponents. I'm not buying it folks. And I suggest you dismiss it as another Western intelligence fantasy.

I strongly suspect, and by the way, you may be asking yourself, well, if this isn't fantasy, why would they use this, why would they concoct this story to blame Russia for the death of Alexei Navalny? I can only speculate, but there are two reasons that immediately come to mind. First of all, if you frame the killing, assuming he was killed, Alexei in this way, it

makes the Russians look particularly devious. They always come up with clever, devious ways to kill their political opponents, and therefore they're a sinister threat to all that we hold dear. And another thing is frankly it is just sexier. It's the kind of thing that people are more likely to remember. It's the kind of thing the press is more likely to report, and so they come up with some kind of explanation or allegation that is fantastical and that is more likely to capture the public's attention. At the end of the day, again, I'm speculating as to why they would use this particular fabrication in order to point the finger at Russia, but at the end, the data really just doesn't make any damn sense. Now, I want to be very clear that I am not telling you that I know how Alexei Navalny died. I don't know. I think it's possible that the Russian government is telling the truth. I think it is possible that the Russian government is not telling the truth. I don't believe that this story is true. I think it is ridiculous, but it is, I admit, possible that someone in the Russian Government, it may have been the President, it may be somebody with less authority than the President decided to eliminate Alexei Navalny for any number of reasons. For example, for the reason that he was clearly aligned with Western governments at a time that Western governments were waging a proxy war against Russia or might have been a personal grudge who knows... I'm not telling you that I know how he died. And I'm not certainly suggesting that I approve in any case of extra judicial execution, I don't. I condemn it in all cases and if that happened here I would condemn it just as much as I would do in any other case.

My point here simply is that there is no credible evidence to date, offered by any Western government, or by Navalny's widow, that Navalny was killed by Russian authorities, and as I said earlier, even Kyrylo Budanov, the head of defence intelligence in Ukraine, said in February of 2024, shortly after Navalny died, that it was the conclusion of his agency that Navalny died of natural causes. Now what I do know, I don't know how Alexei Navalny and I don't purport to know, I do know, that Israel with the full backing of all five of these governments, the UK, France, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands have murdered tens of thousands of Palestinian children during the last two plus years and is continuing to commit genocide against the Palestinian people; that I do know. The evidence of that is monumental unambiguous and yet we are supposed to get worked up as a result of this unsubstantiated fantastical claim from five Western governments against Russia about the killing of one man who was a nationalist bigot, and ignore the fact that these same five governments are enabling and defending an ongoing genocide. I refuse to do that, and I have no hesitation in saying that these five governments should be flushed down the toilet of history; every single one of them, Starmer, Merz, Macron, and the rest of them. And I don't attach a gramme of importance to anything they have to say about the official enemies of the West unless and until I see it substantiated by credible, compelling, independent evidence. That's my rant for today, Rami.

**Rami Yahia (RY):** Absolutely.

**DL:** I just wanted to point out one other thing I forgot to mention. Shortly after Navalny died the Levada Centre in Russia, which is quite hostile to the government of Vladimir Putin – it's a polling agency – did a poll on how Russians felt about the death of Alexei Navalny. And

you'll see here that they found that 3% of respondents expressed anger at the death of Alexei Navalny, 3% expressed shock, 17% expressed sympathy, and 69% professed to have had no emotional response in particular to the news that Alexei Navalny had died. And what percentage of Western governments were angered and shocked by the death of Alexei Navalny? 100%. What percentage of Western corporate media outlets were outraged and shocked by the Death of Alexei Navalny? 100%. But the Russian people themselves, according to this polling agency that is very critical of Vladimir Putin, were largely indifferent to the death of this man. So, again, this is very important to say, perceptions within these countries about these developments, invariably there's just a dramatic disparity between those perceptions and what we're hearing from the Western media and from Western governments. And anybody, in my opinion, who aligns himself, comes from a non-Western country and is not only critical of the government of that country, but aligns him or herself with the West, with Washington, and with London, and Paris, and Berlin, these people have absolutely no credibility in my eyes. I'll give you two current examples of this: María Corina Machado, who was given the Nobel Peace Prize, the Venezuelan opposition leader, she is clearly aligned, not only with Washington and London, but also with Israel. So, whatever legitimacy there may be to the criticisms of the Venezuelan government, the fact that she has aligned herself with those particular regimes, for me, destroys whatever credibility she may have had. And the other example I'll give you is the son of the Iranian Shah, Pahlavi, who is currently being held up by Western governments and by a number of Iranians living in the diaspora as the saviour of Iran. Again, somebody who has aligned himself 100% with Washington and with Israel. My perspective, whatever criticisms you could make against the Iranian government, Pahlavi has destroyed his credibility by virtue of the fact that he has aligned himself with these monsters in Washington and Tel Aviv. So that's all I have to say on this subject, Rami.

**RY:** And the timing is quite specific, right? So there's this Munich security conference going on. Everyone's going wild with the Epstein leak and the United States needs to remind the world that the enemy is Russia. And it comes with these bogus claims of frog dart poison, but it's not exclusive to just Russia. Radio Free Asia keeps spreading propaganda and lies through anonymous sources about the Democratic Republic of Korea, North Korea, such as these bogus claims that people could only have one haircut, the haircut of Kim Jong-un. Or even more silly is this claim that the Cuban government employed or built some laser guns that can produce headaches for American embassy staff named the Havana Syndrome. And this is just meant to demonise countries. And as you said, right, like remove the humanity from them and just turn them into a big image of the biggest form of evil, so that when it comes to us suffocating them with sanctions or building support for war, then it's a lot easier to do this. And we talk to regular people, you know, in Canada, friends of friends, friends in general, when we talk about Russia, it truly is the most absurd claims you'll ever hear about them, about Russia. And it comes through these bogus titles.

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