



## How Could Western Intelligence Have Got It Wrong, Again? They Didn't. They Had Other Purposes

### Description

***The West now faces the task of de-fusing the landmine of their own electorate's conviction of a Ukraine 'win', and of Russian humiliation.***

Larry Johnson, an ex-CIA analyst, [writes](#) *"I no longer hold clearances and have not had access to the classified intelligence assessments. However, I have heard that the finished intelligence being supplied to U.S. policymakers continues to declare that Russia is on the ropes – and their economy is crumbling. Also, analysts insist that the Ukrainians are beating the Russians"*.

Johnson responds that – lacking valid human sources – “western agencies are almost wholly dependent today on ‘liaison reporting’” (i.e., from ‘friendly’ foreign intelligence services), without doing ‘due diligence’ by cross-checking discrepancies with other reporting.

In practice, this largely means western reporting simply replicates Kiev’s PR line. But there does occur a huge problem when marrying Kiev’s output (as Johnson says) to UK reports – for ‘corroboration’.

The reality is UK reporting itself *is also based on what Ukraine is saying*. This is known as *false collateral* – i.e., when that which is used for corroboration and validation actually derives from the same single source. It becomes – deliberately – a propaganda multiplier.

In plain words however, all these points are ‘red herrings’. Bluntly, so-called western ‘Intelligence’ is no longer the sincere attempt to understand a complex reality, but rather, it has become the tool to falsify a nuanced reality in order to attempt to manipulate the Russian psyche towards a collective defeatism (in respect not just to the Ukraine, but to the idea that Russia should remain as a sovereign whole).

And – to the extent that ‘lies’ are fabricated to accustom the Russian public to inevitable defeat – the obverse edge clearly is intended to train the western public towards the ‘groupthink’ that *victory is inevitable*. And that Russia is an ‘unreformed evil Empire’ which threatens all Europe.

This is no accident. It is highly purposeful. It is behavioural psychology at work. The ‘head-spinning’ disorientation created throughout the Covid pandemic; the constant rain of ‘data-driven’ model

analysis, the labelling of anything critical of the 'uniform messaging' as anti-social disinformation – enabled western governments to persuade their citizens that 'lockdown' was the only rational answer to the virus. It was not true (as we now know), but the 'pilot' behavioural nudge-psychology trial worked better – better even than its own architects had imagined.

Professor of Clinical Psychology, Mattias Desmet, has explained that mass disorientation does not form in a vacuum. It arises, throughout history, from a collective psychosis that has followed a predictable script:

Just as with lockdown, governments have used behavioural psychology to instil fear and isolation to mass large groups of people into herds, where toxic sneering at any contrariness cold-shoulders all critical thinking or analysis. It is more comfortable being inside the herd, than out.

The dominant characteristic here is remaining loyal to the group – even when the policy is working badly and its consequences disturb the conscience of members. Loyalty to the group becomes the highest form of morality. That loyalty requires each member to avoid raising controversial issues, questioning weak arguments, or calling a halt to wishful thinking.

The 'Groupthink' allows some self-imagined reality to detach; to drift further and further from any connection to reality, and then to transit into delusion – always drawing on like-minded peer cheerleaders for its validation and extended radicalisation.

So, it's 'goodbye' to traditional Intelligence! And 'welcome' to western Intelligence 101: Geo-Politics no longer revolves around a grasp on *Reality*. It is about the installation of ideological pseudo-realism – which is the universal installation of a singular groupthink, such that everyone lives passively by it, until it is far too late to change course.

Superficially, this may seem clever new psyops – even 'cool'. It is not. It is dangerous. By deliberately working on deeply ingrained fears and trauma (i.e. the Great Patriotic War for Russians (WW2)), it awakens a type of multi-generational existential plight within the collective unconscious – that of total annihilation – which is a danger that America has never faced, and towards which there is zero American empathetic understanding.

Perhaps, by resurrecting long, collective memories of plague in European countries (such as Italy) western governments have found that they were able to mobilise their citizens around a policy of coercion, that otherwise ran wholly against their own interests. But nations have their own distinct myths and civilisational mores.

If that were the purpose (to acclimatise Russians to defeat and ultimate Balkanisation), Western propaganda has not only failed, but it has achieved the converse. Russians have coalesced closely together against an existential western threat – and are prepared to 'go to the wall', if necessary, in defeating it. (Let those implications sink in.)

On the other hand, falsely promoting a picture of inevitable success for the West inevitably has raised expectations of a political outcome that is not only not feasible, but which recedes further into the far horizon, as these fantastical claims of Russian setbacks persuade European leaders that Russia can accept an outcome in line with their constructed false reality.

Another 'own goal': The West now faces the task of de-fusing the landmine of their own electorate's

conviction of a Ukraine 'win', and of Russian humiliation and decomposition. There will be anger and further distrust for the Élites in the West to follow. Existential risk ensues when people believe *nothing* the élites say.

Plainly put, this resort to clever 'nudge theories' has succeeded only in toxifying the prospect for political discourse. Neither the U.S. nor Russia can now move directly to *pure political discourse*:

Firstly, the parties inevitably must come to some tacit psychological assimilation of two quite disconnected realities, now hyped into palpable, vital beings through these psychological 'Intelligence' techniques. There will be no acceptance by either side of the validity or moral rightness of the Other Reality's, yet its emotive contents must be acknowledged psychically – together with the traumas underlying them – if politics is to be unlocked.

In short, this western exaggerated psyops perversely is likely to lengthen the war until facts-on-the-ground finally grind the contrasting expectations closer to what may be the 'new possible'. Ultimately, when perceived realities cannot be 'matched' and nuanced, war rubs one or the other into more emollient form.

The degeneracy in western intelligence did not start with the recent collective 'excitement' at the possibilities of 'nudge-psychology'. The first steps in this direction began with a shift in ethos reaching back to the Clinton/Thatcher era in which the intelligence services were 'neo-liberalised'.

No longer was the role of 'devil's advocate' – of bringing 'bad news' (i.e. hard-edged *Realism*) to the relevant political leadership valued; instead what was inserted was a radical shift towards 'Business School' practice of services being tasked with '*adding value*' to existing government policies, and (even) of creating 'a market' system in Intelligence!

The politician-managers demanded 'good news'. And to make 'it stick', funding was tied to the 'value added' – with administrators skilled at managing bureaucracy moved into leadership jobs. It marked the end to classical Intelligence – which always was an art, rather than science.

In short, it was the outset to fixing the intelligence around policies (to add value), rather than the traditional function of shaping policies to sound analysis.

In the U.S., the politicisation of intelligence reached its apex with Dick Cheney's initiation of a Team 'B' intelligence unit reporting personally to him. It was intended to furnish the *anti-intelligence* to combat the intelligence service output. Of course, the Team 'B' initiative shook confidence amongst the analysts, and by-passed the work of the traditional cadre – just as Cheney had intended. (He had a war (the Iraq war) to justify).

But there were separately other structural shifts. Firstly, by 2000, woke narcissism had begun to eclipse strategic thought –creating its own novel groupthink. The West just could not shake off the sense of itself at the centre of the Universe (albeit no longer in a racial sense, but *via* its awakening to 'victim politics' – requiring endless redress and reparations – and such woke values serendipitously seemed to anoint the West with a renewed global 'moral primacy').

In a parallel shift, U.S. neo-cons piggy-backed on this new woke universalism to cement the meme of 'Empire matters *primordially*'. The unspoken corollary to this, of course, is that original values of the American Republic or of Europe, cannot be re-conceived and brought forward into the present, as long

as 'liberal' Empire groupthink configures them as a threat to western security. This conundrum and struggle lies at the heart of U.S. politics today.

Yet the question remains just how can the intelligence being supplied to U.S. policymakers insist that Russia is imploding economically, and that Ukraine is winning – against what can be easily observed facts on the ground?.

Well, no problem; Washington thinks-tanks have big, big finance from the Military Industrial World, with the preponderance of these funds going to the neo-cons – and their insistence that Russia is a small 'gas-station' posing as a state, and not a power to be taken seriously.

Neo-con claws tear at anyone gain-saying their 'line' – and think-tanks employ an army of 'analysts' to turn out 'academic' reports suggesting that Russia's industry – to the extent it exists at all – is imploding. Since last March, western military and economic experts have been regularly-as-clockwork, predicting that Russia has run out of missiles, drones, tanks and artillery shells – and is expending its manpower throwing human-waves of untrained troops upon the Ukrainian siege lines.

The logic is plain, but again flawed. If a combined NATO struggles to supply artillery shells, Russia with the economy the size of a small EU state (logically) must be worse off. And if only we (the U.S.) threaten China hard enough against supplying Russia, then the latter will ultimately run out of munitions – and NATO supported Ukraine 'will win'.

The logic then is that a war prolonged (until the money runs out) must deliver a Russia bereft of munitions, and NATO-supplied Ukraine 'wins'.

This framing is entirely wrong because of conceptual differences: Russian history is one of Total War that is fought in a long, 'all-out', uncompromising engagement against an overwhelming peer force. But inherent to this idea, is its all-important grounding in the conviction that such wars are fought over the course of years, with their outcomes conditioned by the capacity to surge military production.

Conceptually, the U.S. shifted in the 1980s away from its post-war military-industrial paradigm, to off-shore manufacturing to Asia and to 'just-in-time' supply lines. Effectively, the U.S. (and the West) shifted in the opposite direction to 'surge capacity', whereas Russia did not: It kept alive the notion of sustainment which had contributed to saving Russia during the Great Patriotic War.

So, western intelligence services again got it wrong; they misread the *reality*? No, they didn't get it 'wrong'. Their purpose was different.

The few who got it right were mercilessly caricatured as stooges to make them seem absurd. And Intelligence 101 was re-conceived as the purposeful denialism of all off-Team thinking, whilst the majority of western citizens would live passively in the embrace the groupthink – until too late for them to awaken, and to change the dangerous course on which their societies were embarked.

Unverified Ukrainian reports (liaison reporting) served up to western leaders therefore is not a 'glitch' – it is a 'feature' of the new Intelligence 101 paradigm intended to confuse and dull its electorate.

by Alastair Crooke

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