



What Hersh Got Wrong

Description

There's something not-quite-right about Sy Hersh's report on the destruction of Nord Stream 2. **There are a number of inconsistencies in the piece that lead me to believe that Hersh was less interested in presenting 'the unvarnished truth' than relaying a version of events that advance a particular agenda.** That is not to say that I don't appreciate what the author has done. I do. In fact, I think **it would be impossible to overstate the significance of a report that positively identifies the perpetrators of what-appears-to-be the biggest act of industrial terrorism in history.** Hersh's article has the potential to greatly undermine the credibility of the people in power and, by doing so, bring the war to a swift end. It is an incredible achievement that we should all applaud. Here's a brief recap by political analyst Andre Damon:

On Wednesday, journalist Seymour Hersh revealed that the United States Navy, at the direction of **President Joe Biden, was responsible for the September 26, 2022 attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines** carrying natural gas between Russia and Germany.

This article, which has been met with total silence in the major US publications, has blown apart the entire narrative of US involvement in the war as a response to "unprovoked Russian aggression." It lifts the lid on far-reaching plans to use the escalating conflict with Russia to solidify US economic and military domination over Europe.

Hersh revealed that: **The operation was ordered by US President Joe Biden and planned by Secretary of State Antony Blinken,** Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan." ("Seymour Hersh's exposure of the Nord Stream bombing: A lesson and a warning", Andre Damon, World Socialist Web Site)

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This short excerpt summarizes the primary claim that is the focal point of the entire article and—in my opinion—the claim is well researched, impartially presented and extremely persuasive. But there are other parts of the article that are not nearly as convincing and will undoubtedly leave a lot of fairly well-informed readers scratching their heads. For example, here's Hersh discussing the timeline for the Nord Stream operation:

“Biden’s decision to sabotage the pipelines came after more than nine months of highly secret back and forth debate inside Washington’s national security community about how to best achieve that goal. For much of that time, the issue was not whether to do the mission, but how to get it done with no overt clue as to who was responsible.” ([“How America Took Out the Nord Stream Pipeline”](#), Seymour Hersh, Substack)

“Nine months”?

The war broke out on February 24. The pipeline was blown up on September 26. That's seven months. So, if there were **“more than nine months of highly secret back and forth debate inside Washington’s national security community about how to” “sabotage the pipelines” then we must assume the scheming preceeded the war.** This is a crucial point, and yet Hersh skims over it like it's 'no big deal'. But it is a big deal because—as Andre Damon points out—it “blows apart the entire narrative of US involvement in the war as a response to “unprovoked Russian aggression.” In other words, **it proves that the United States was planning to engage in acts of war against Russia regardless of developments in Ukraine. It also suggests that the Russian invasion was merely a cover for Washington to execute a plan that it had mapped out years earlier.**

Later in the article, Hersh makes the same claim again without emphasizing its underlying significance. He says: “The Biden Administration was doing everything possible to avoid leaks as the planning took place late in 2021 and into the first months of 2022.”

The truth—as journalist John Helmer states in a recent article—is far different than Hersh describes. Here's Helmer to explain:

From the full text of the Hersh report, **it appears that neither the source nor Hersh has “direct knowledge” of the history of US-led operations to sabotage and destroy the pipelines which became public more than a year before; they directly involved the Polish government and the Danish government.** In fact, by error of omission Hersh and his man are ignorant of those operations and of that history.” ([“WHAT’S WRONG WITH THE HERSH REPORT ON THE NORD STREAM ATTACKS”](#), John Helmer, Dances With Bears)

US opposition to Nord Stream is not a recent development; it has a long history dating back to the very beginning of the project in 2011. Even back then, an article appeared in the German magazine [Spiegel](#) claiming that "The project is aimed at ensuring the long-term security of Europe's energy supplies, but it remains controversial"

Controversial?

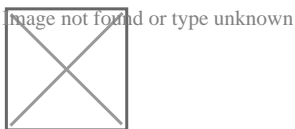
Why was Nord Stream considered controversial? **What is controversial about sovereign nations strengthening economic ties with other countries in order to ensure they have enough cheap energy to fuel their factories and heat their homes?**

This question really cuts to the heart of the matter, and yet, Hersh eschews it altogether. Why? Here's more from Hersh:

President Biden and his foreign policy team—**National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, Secretary of State Tony Blinken, and Victoria Nuland, the Undersecretary of State for Policy**—had been vocal and consistent in their hostility to the two pipelines... From its earliest days, Nord Stream 1 was seen by Washington and its anti-Russian NATO partners as a threat to western dominance...

America's political fears were real: Putin would now have an additional and much-needed major source of income, and Germany and the rest of Western Europe would become addicted to low-cost natural gas supplied by Russia—while diminishing European reliance on America." ("How America Took Out the Nord Stream Pipeline", Seymour Hersh, Substack)

Why is Hersh defending the imperial mindset that economic transactions between foreign nations must somehow benefit the United States or be regarded as a national security threat? That is not the role of an impartial journalist gathering information for his readers? That is the role of a propagandist.



Yes, it is true, that Putin would have "an additional and much-needed major source of income", because that is how the free market works: You sell your gas and you get paid. End of story. There is nothing criminal or sinister about this, and it certainly does not provide a justification for acts of terrorism.

And following this shocking statement, Hersh follows with his other concern that **“Germany and the rest of Western Europe would become addicted to low-cost natural gas supplied by Russia.”**

Why does Hersh invoke this tedious “addiction” meme that is repeated ad nauseam by the political activists in the mainstream media? And what does it actually mean?

The simple fact is, that **Germany was getting cheap gas from Russia which increased its competitiveness, profitability and economic prosperity. How is that a bad thing?** How can access to cheap fuel be characterized as an “addiction”? If you were able to fill your gas-tank for 1 dollar per gallon, would you refuse on the basis that you might become addicted?

Of course, not. You’d be grateful that you could buy it that cheap. So, why is Hersh pushing this nonsense and why does he double-down shortly afterwards when he says:

“Nord Stream 1 was dangerous enough, in the view of NATO and Washington, but Nord Stream 2, (would) double the amount of cheap gas that would be available to Germany and Western Europe.”

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Horrors! Imagine the free market actually working as it was designed to work; lifting people from poverty and spreading prosperity across national borders. Can you see how narrowly imperialistic this is?

Germany needs Russia's cheap gas. It's good for its industry, good for working people, and good for economic growth. And, yes, it is good for Russia, too. The only one it's not good for is United States whose power is undermined by the German-Russian partnership. Can you see that?

And, by the way, there has never been an incident in which Putin has used Russian gas or oil for the purpose of blackmail, coercion or extortion. Never. That is a myth concocted by Washington spinmeisters who want to throw a wrench in German-Russo relations. But there's not a word of truth to any of it. Here's more from Hersh:

Opposition to Nord Stream 2 flared on the eve of the Biden inauguration in January 2021, when Senate Republicans... repeatedly raised the political threat of cheap Russian natural gas during the confirmation hearing of Blinken as Secretary of State....

Would Biden stand up to the Germans? Blinken said yes.... “I know his strong conviction that this is a bad idea, the Nord Stream 2,” he said. **“I know that he would have us use every persuasive tool that we have to convince our friends and partners, including Germany, not to move forward with it.”**

A few months later, as the construction of the second pipeline neared completion, Biden blinked. That May, in a stunning turnaround, the administration waived sanctions against Nord Stream AG, with a State Department official conceding that trying

to stop the pipeline through sanctions and diplomacy had “always been a long shot.” Behind the scenes, administration officials reportedly urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, by then facing a threat of Russian invasion, not to criticize the move.

There were immediate consequences. **Senate Republicans, led by Cruz, announced an immediate blockade of all of Biden’s foreign policy nominees and delayed passage of the annual defense bill for months**, deep into the fall. Politico later depicted Biden’s turnabout on the second Russian pipeline as “the one decision, arguably more than the chaotic military withdrawal from Afghanistan, that has imperiled Biden’s agenda.” ([“How America Took Out the Nord Stream Pipeline”](#), Seymour Hersh, Substack)

This is interesting. We already know that Biden and his lieutenants were resolutely committed to terminating Nord Stream regardless of the risks. So, why did Biden decide to do an about-face and lift sanctions, even while his team was putting the final touches on the plan to blow up the pipeline?

Why?

Are we supposed to believe that Joe Biden suddenly changed his mind and decided to pursue a less dangerous and felonious strategy?

No, as Hersh points out, the decision to blow up the pipeline had already been made, which means **the administration was merely looking for a way to hide their tracks. In other words, they were already working on a legal defense of “plausible deniability” which was reinforced by the lifting of sanctions.** That was the real objective, to create as much distance between themselves and the terrorist act they had already approved and were about to launch. Here’s more from Hersh:

The administration was floundering, despite getting a reprieve on the crisis in mid-November, when Germany’s energy regulators suspended approval of the second Nord Stream pipeline. Natural gas prices surged 8% within days, amid growing fears in Germany and Europe that the pipeline suspension and the growing possibility of a war between Russia and Ukraine would lead to a very much unwanted cold winter. **It was not clear to Washington just where Olaf Scholz, Germany’s newly appointed chancellor, stood. Months earlier, after the fall of Afghanistan, Scholtz had publicly endorsed French President Emmanuel Macron’s call for a more autonomous European foreign policy in a speech in Prague—clearly suggesting less reliance on Washington and its mercurial actions.** (“How America Took Out the Nord Stream Pipeline”, Seymour Hersh, Substack)

This is pure fiction. Of course, Scholz paid lip service to a more “autonomous European foreign policy”. What would you expect him to say to a domestic audience? And, does Hersh honestly believe that Scholz has not been in Washington’s back-pocket from the very beginning? Does he think that Scholz based his decision on Putin’s invasion and not on agreements he had made with Washington before the war had even begun?

Keep in mind, the United States has been arming, training and providing logistical support for Ukrainian forces in the east for the last 8 years, the purpose of which was to prepare for a war with Russia.

Does anyone deny that?

No, no one denies that.

Was Scholz aware of this?

Of course, he was aware of it. Every leader in Europe knew what was going on. There were even articles in the mainstream news that explained in minute detail what the United States was up-to. It was not a secret.

And this is just one inconsistency, after all, didn't former Chancellor Angela Merkel openly admit (in an interview with a German magazine) that [Germany deliberately shrugged off its obligations under the Minsk treaty](#) in order to buy time so the Ukrainian army could get stronger so they'd be better prepared to fight the Russian invasion.

Yes, she did! So, **we can be 100% certain that Scholz knew what the overall game-plan was. The plan was to lure Russia into a war in Ukraine and then claim "Unprovoked aggression". Scholz knew it, Hollande knew it, Zelensky knew it, Boris Johnson knew it, Petro Poroshenko knew it and Biden knew it. They all knew it.**

Even so, Hersh wants us to believe that Scholz knew nothing about these elaborate and costly plans, but simply made his decisions as developments took place in real time. That is not true. That is not what happened and, I would argue, that Hersh knows that is not what happened.

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But the biggest failing of the Hersh piece is the complete omission of the geopolitical context in which this act of terrorism took place. The US doesn't go around the world blowing up critical energy infrastructure for nothing. No. **The reason Washington embarked on this risky gambit was because it is facing an existential crisis that can only be resolved by crushing those emerging centers of power that threaten America's dominant position in the global order.** That's what's going on below the surface; the US is trying to roll back the clock to the glorious 1990's after the Soviet empire had collapsed and the world was Washington's oyster. But those days are gone forever and US power is irreversibly eroding due to its basic lack of competitiveness. **If the US was still the industrial powerhouse it was following WW2—when the rest of the world was in ruins—then there would be no need to blow up pipelines to prevent European-Russian economic integration and the emergence of a massive free trade zone spanning the area from Lisbon to Vladivostok .** But the fact is, the US is not as essential to global growth as it once was and, besides, other nations want to be free to pursue their own growth model. They want to implement the changes that best fit their own culture, their own religion and their own traditions. They don't want to be told what to do. But **Washington doesn't want change. Washington wants to preserve the system bestows the greatest amount of power and wealth on itself.** Hersh does not simply ignore the geopolitical factors that led to the sabotage, he proactively creates a smokescreen with his misleading explanations. Check it out:

“As long as Europe remained dependent on the pipelines for cheap natural gas, Washington was afraid that countries like Germany would be reluctant to supply Ukraine with the money and weapons it needed to defeat Russia. It was at this unsettled moment that Biden authorized Jake Sullivan to bring together an interagency group to come up with a plan.”

More baloney. Washington doesn't care about Germany's pathetic contribution to the war effort. What Washington cares about is power; pure, unalloyed power. And **Washington's global power was being directly challenged by European-Russian economic integration and the creation of a giant economic commons beyond its control. And the Nord Stream pipeline was at the very heart of this new bustling phenom. It was the main artery connecting the raw materials and labor of the east with the technology and industry of the west. It was a marriage of mutual interests that Washington had to destroy to maintain its grip on regional power.**

Think about it: This new economic commons, (“Greater Europe”) would eventually ease trade and travel restrictions, allow the free flow of capital and labor between countries, and harmonize regulations in a way that would build trust and strengthen diplomatic ties. Here's more from an earlier piece that sums it up:

In a world where Germany and Russia are friends and trading partners, there is no need for US military bases, no need for expensive US-made weapons and missile systems, and no need for NATO. There's also no need to transact energy deals in US Dollars or to stockpile US Treasuries to balance accounts. Transactions between business partners can be conducted in their own currencies which is bound to precipitate a sharp decline in the value of the dollar and a dramatic shift in economic power.

This is why the Biden administration opposes Nord Stream. It's not just a pipeline, it's a window into the future; a future in which Europe and Asia are drawn closer together into a massive free trade zone that increases their mutual power and prosperity while leaving the US on the outside looking in.” ([“The Crisis in Ukraine Is Not About Ukraine. It's About Germany”](#), Unz Review)

It is the responsibility of a journalist to provide the context that is needed for the reader to understand the topic of discussion. Hersh doesn't do that, which leads me to believe that John Helmer is right when he says:

This is an indictment of the Biden pipeline plot, not of the US war plan.” ([“What's Wrong with the Hersh Report”](#), John Helmer, Dances With Bears)

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by Mike Whitney

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