

The New York Times' propaganda campaign against Russia over Ukraine

Alex Lantier
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The denunciations of Russia published in yesterday's *New York Times*, as the armed forces of the US and European-backed Kiev regime assaulted protesters in eastern Ukraine, are vile propaganda. The newspaper whitewashes the social and political character of the new Ukrainian government, installed in a fascist-led putsch in February, and blames Moscow for the violence that has been orchestrated in Washington and Berlin.

In an editorial calling for sanctions against Russia, titled "Mr. Putin's Power Play," the *Times* writes: "When President Vladimir Putin of Russia talks about what is happening in Ukraine these days, it is as if he's looking into a mirror. He says fascists and nationalists are running amok in Kiev, even as Crimea is annexed in the name of Great Russia; he says Russians are threatened in eastern Ukraine, even as Russia directs secessionists there to seize administrative buildings and arms; he calls on President Obama to use his influence to prevent the use of force in Ukraine, even as he puts a major military force on the Ukrainian border."

"This ploy was a fixture of Soviet propaganda," the *Times* continues, "and when other sources of information are silenced, it can fool people for a while. But nobody outside Russia is buying it."

What shameless propaganda! It is not Moscow that is presenting an inverted image of reality, but the *Times*. As Washington's proxy regime in Kiev orders tanks and assault helicopters to take back installations in eastern Ukraine and prepare to storm state buildings occupied by protesters in eastern Ukraine's major cities, it portrays Russia as the aggressor.

The *Times* writes not as a journalistic publication aiming to inform the public and critically examine the arguments advanced by the state to justify its policies, but as a propaganda outlet echoing the talking points of the US State Department.

The newspaper ignores CIA director John Brennan's

extraordinary visit to Kiev this weekend, as plans for the crackdown were finalized—a visit that the White House and the US media grudgingly acknowledged only after the Russian media reported it first.

It ignores howling contradictions in the Western powers' arguments. The claim that Washington is fighting for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine against Moscow-orchestrated secessionists is a fraud. Washington reserves the right to bomb and invade countries as it chooses, from Afghanistan to Iraq to Somalia. It has repeatedly backed secessionist movements, from the Kosovo Liberation Army during the 1999 NATO war with Serbia, to the Benghazi separatists whose protests led to the 2011 NATO war in Libya.

The charges Washington and its European allies are advancing of Russian meddling in Ukraine's internal affairs are utterly hypocritical. They installed a regime in Kiev by backing a putsch led by the fascist Right Sector militia that overthrew the elected, pro-Russian regime of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. Washington supported the putsch and denounced Yanukovich for sending riot police against right-wing protesters in Kiev, but is now pressing the new regime to send tanks and attack helicopters against protesters in eastern Ukraine.

The *Times*' strategy to obscure the far-right, aggressively anti-Russian character of US policy is deeply cynical: it claims that well-established facts are simply Putin's opinion, which it summarily dismisses as a propaganda "ploy."

It is a matter of public record that the government in Kiev includes several ministers from the Ukrainian fascist party Svoboda, whose anti-Semitism and xenophobia were censured in a 2012 European Parliament vote. Moreover, one of the first actions of the new parliament was to propose to eliminate the status of Russian as an official language in Ukraine.

The *Times* makes no attempt to inform its readers about

the interests driving Russian policy. Even briefly presenting the issues involved—the fight to control gas pipeline routes through Ukraine, for geo-strategic advantage in the Black Sea region, and to keep NATO troops from being posted on Russia’s borders—would shatter the Obama administration’s claims that it is motivated only by high-minded democratic and legal principles and reveal the aggressive imperialist interests driving US policy.

Incapable of serious journalism on this issue, the *Times* simply demonizes the Putin regime, denouncing it as driven by an appetite to annex eastern Ukraine and undermine world peace, for which it offers no explanation.

These themes are picked up again by the *Times*’ lead article on Wednesday by David M. Herszenhorn, “Russia is Quick to Bend Truth About Ukraine.”

Reading Herszenhorn’s article shows that Russia has nothing on the *Times* when it comes to bending the truth. It is not even clear why Herszenhorn—a reporter who spent decades at the *Times* covering local New York City and then US congressional politics, and whose career gives no indication of particular expertise on Russia—was sent to Moscow to report for the *Times*.

Herszenhorn begins by dismissing Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev’s warnings of bloodshed in Ukraine and criticism of Brennan’s secret visit to Kiev. He writes, “And so began another day of bluster and hyperbole, of misinformation, exaggerations, conspiracy theories, overheated rhetoric and, occasionally, outright lies about the political crisis in Ukraine that have emanated from the highest echelons of the Kremlin and reverberated on state-controlled Russian television, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. It is part of an extraordinary propaganda campaign that political analysts say reflects a new brazenness on the part of Russian officials.”

In fact, Medvedev’s comments were factually correct. The Kiev regime had shot several protesters the day before Medvedev spoke, and Brennan had visited Kiev. It is Herszenhorn’s denunciations of Medvedev’s remarks that are part of a brazen US propaganda campaign—“hour after hour, day after day, week after week”—to mislead the American people about the Ukraine crisis and cover up the reactionary and reckless character of US policy.

This emerges all the more clearly when Herszenhorn assigns himself the task of rebutting alleged Russian media fear-mongering over the Ukraine crisis.

Discussing the recent attack by military helicopters on

protesters at an airfield near Kramatorsk, Herszenhorn dismisses Russian media reports that four to eleven people were killed. He writes, “In fact, on the ground, a small crowd of residents surrounded a Ukrainian commander who had landed at the airfield in a helicopter, and while there were reports of stones thrown and shots fired in the air, only a few minor injuries were reported with no signs of fatalities.”

What rubbish! Indeed, media reports from *Russia Today* to the Irish *Independent* indicated that once the helicopter was on the ground, a standoff developed between pro-Kiev forces and local protesters in which no one was reported killed. However, while it was in the air, the helicopter strafed protesters, killing several people.

This absurd presentation is intended to downplay the Kiev government’s decision to deploy military aircraft against its own population, and its deeply reactionary character—a point to which Herszenhorn returns later in the article.

Russian television, he fumes, is presenting coverage of Ukraine with a logo based on “the red-and-black flag of the nationalist, World War II-era Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which inflicted tens of thousands of casualties on Soviet forces.” He mocks this as proof that Russians are being “pulled into a swirling, 24-hour vortex of alarmist proclamations of Western aggression.”

In fact, the red and black flag was a favorite symbol of the fascist forces that led the US-backed putsch. As Right Sector leader Dmytro Yarosh told *Newsweek* in a friendly interview last month, “We stood under red and black flags throughout the revolution. Red Ukrainian blood spilled on the black Ukrainian earth—that flag is the symbol of the national revolution. I am convinced that this flag will bring us freedom.”

Herszenhorn’s shameless cover-up of the fascist character of the US proxies in Ukraine extends to his presentation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA), led by Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. The UIA not only killed tens of thousands of Soviet troops—who were allies of the United States at the time, a fact the *Times* omits—but hundreds of thousands of Poles and Jews, as part of their alliance with the Nazis during the Ukrainian Holocaust.



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