

# US media seize on doping report to deepen offensive against Russia

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A 300-plus page report accusing Russian institutions and athletes of extensive violations of anti-doping laws, published by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Monday, has quickly become the occasion for another surge of anti-Russian propaganda by Western governments and media outlets.

The report was published by a supposedly independent panel affiliated with the WADA, chaired by Richard Pound, former member of the International Olympic Committee, and including Canadian lawyer and academic Richard McLaren, who holds a position at the University of Western Ontario Law School, and Gunter Younger, a top official at Bavaria's State Criminal Police Office.

The report calls for punitive measures aimed at further isolating Russia and ratcheting up the pressures already brought to bear by the ongoing sanctions regime. The measures include a prohibition on Russian participation in the upcoming Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and other bans against Russian athletes and teams.

The reactionary nationalist Putin regime and the Russian athletic establishment are entirely capable of cheating. However, given the circumstances under which the report has been issued, the self-serving political motivations of those issuing it should be obvious and its content ought to be treated with caution, if not outright skepticism.

Over the past year and a half the US and NATO powers have engaged in a massive military buildup and strategic pressure campaign targeting Russia, imposing punishing sanctions against its economy and pre-positioning troops and military hardware along its frontiers.

Beginning in the spring of 2014, the US media launched an all-out offensive aimed at providing

ideological cover for the US-NATO war drive against Russia.

During the intervening period, the threat of "Russian aggression" has increasingly replaced that of "Islamic terrorism," at least for the moment, as the main ideological cover for the global militarist agenda being pursued by the US ruling elite.

The political and media establishments have collaborated in systematic efforts to falsify the origins and significance of the crisis in Ukraine, presenting the US and German-orchestrated and fascist-led February putsch as a "democratic revolution," and casting the integration of Crimea into the Russian federation--a development supported and voted for by broad layers of the Crimean population--as a straightforward act of aggression and conquest by Moscow.

In the narrative advanced by US media, the pursuit by the Western powers of war preparations on a scale not seen since the Cold War is presented as a defensive response to the revanchist and expansionist agenda of a Russian government determined to flout international law and overturn the "rules-based," US-dominated world order.

The sudden and suspicious eruption of an international scandal around alleged Russian sports doping has to be seen in this context. Clearly, the WADA document is to serve as a vehicle for stepped up financial, cultural and institutional pressure on Moscow.

The editorial board of the *Washington Post* declared that the proposed Olympic ban is "a harsh sanction, but one justified by the nauseating extent of Russia's contempt for international norms."

This sinister commentary, worthy of the gutter press, attributes doping by Russian athletes to the inherently authoritarian qualities of the contemporary Russian

soul.

“Russia’s mentality, seemingly a throwback to the notorious Soviet and East German sporting past, is that cheating is justified, on the assumption that every other country must be cheating too,” write the *Post*’s editors.

“That perverse view, that every country’s institutions are as corrupted as Russia’s, is a familiar facet of the Kremlin’s worldview,” they continue.

In a lengthy report of its own, the *New York Times* similarly traces the use of performance enhancing drugs to the Russians’ deeply ingrained cultural predisposition to accept criminality by their leaders.

“Russian officials face little accountability, and Mr. Putin in particular has sought to insulate his loyalists from any public rebuke. There is a dark historical precedent at play. Since czarist times, Russians have been told that their leader will always protect their best interests and they have been conditioned across centuries never to question that fact,” the *Times* asserts.

The “newspaper of record” goes on to compare the alleged doping violations to the crimes of Stalinism, explaining the widespread indifference or mockery expressed by ordinary Russians toward the report’s exposures as a reflection of amoral attitudes fostered by the existence of the USSR.

“The Russian reaction to moral questions is complicated by their association of national greatness with Stalin, who oversaw Russia’s industrialization and victory in World War II, but also the death of millions in prisons, forced collectivization, purges and mass deportations,” comments the *Times*.

These foul arguments, which are clearly being developed to extend the demonization of Putin to the Russian population as a whole, exhibit remarkable levels of hypocrisy and political-historical mendacity.

Nowhere has the ultra-commercialization and degradation of sports reached such heights as in the US. The health and even lives of countless young men and women are regularly sacrificed to the voracious appetites of this billion-dollar industry. Major college and, in some locales, even high school sports in America have become corrupted by the profiteers. Moreover, nowhere else has sports become so associated in the recent period with militarist and nationalist aggression.

The US is the country that produced cyclist Lance

Armstrong, who, the WSWS commented in 2013, “apparently operated a type of mini-Mafia in cycling, bringing to the sport the very worst of American predatory entrepreneurship.” Performance-enhancing and other sorts of drugs, under the impossible pressures produced by the drive for profit, have been pervasive in American professional sports.

The *Post*, *Times* and the chorus of other voices in the Western media that have joined the brouhaha are not engaged in logical reasoning or argumentation. Instead, they are serving as mouthpieces of a ruling elite hell-bent on continuous and reckless military-strategic confrontations with Moscow.



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