The New York Times fabricates a “Russian sabotage” narrative

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The *New York Times* published a report on its front page Friday, under the headline “Dangerous Pattern of Russian Sabotage in Europe Risks Clash With NATO,” asserting, without substantiation, a “spate” of “plots” by Russia to carry out attacks on NATO members.

This “spate” of “plots” has somehow managed neither to hurt anyone nor to leave any tangible evidence of its existence, beyond the claims of government officials and their media spokesmen braying for an escalation of the war with Russia.

They are, in other words, a total fabrication, concocted as part of a relentless propaganda campaign by the American and European ruling classes to justify the escalation of war between NATO and a nuclear-armed state.

This article is an example of what in an earlier period was called “yellow journalism.” In the words attributed to William Randolph Hearst in 1897 explaining his efforts to dragoon the public into supporting the Spanish-American War: “You furnish the pictures and I’ll furnish the war.”

The *Times* builds Friday’s report, by Michael Schwirtz and Adam Goldman, around allegations of a Russian drone attack on a Ukrainian cargo plane parked at Leipzig/Halle Airport, a NATO military airlift hub. The allegations rest on a drone found at the airport on August 4, which the German government has claimed, without substantiation, was Russian.

The newspaper alleges that the supposed event in Germany is “the most dramatic in a spate of such attacks that includes plots to place incendiary devices aboard DHL cargo planes, blow up railroad tracks in Poland, and burn down warehouses and shopping centers all over Europe.”

The *Times* cites German Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, who said Tuesday that the drone operators worked “on behalf of Russian state entities.” Neither he nor the *Times* have presented any proof. The Danish intelligence service, PET, is quoted as saying that “Russia is both planning and carrying out acts of sabotage against defense companies and the defense industry in Europe.”

The article goes on and on like this, unsubstantiated claim after unsubstantiated claim, not accompanied by a single fact. And nowhere is the total lack of evidence of this “sabotage” campaign contrasted with the fact that, at this very moment, missiles produced by NATO countries and guided by their targeting data are raining down on Russian cities.

The purpose of the allegations in creating a casus belli is stated by Julianne Smith, the former US ambassador to NATO: because Russia has “not been adequately deterred and Moscow has not paid a price, Putin is interpreting that as a signal to keep going.”

The *Times* asserts that Russian attacks in Europe “began occurring shortly after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.” Yet, critically, the article ignores the most destructive attack on European infrastructure in those four years, the destruction of the Nord Stream gas pipelines from Russia to Germany on September 26, 2022.

Within a day of the explosions, the *Times* helped launch the campaign to blame Russia. On September 27, 2022, it headlined its briefing “Russia Suspected of Pipeline Sabotage” and quoted Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki: “We do not know the details of what happened yet, but we can clearly see that it is an act of sabotage.”

But by March 7, 2023, the *Times* itself reported, again citing unnamed American officials, that new intelligence “suggests” a “pro-Ukrainian group” carried out the bombing. On June 30, 2026, Germany’s

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federal prosecutor indicted a Ukrainian army officer, alleging that he and other Ukrainian soldiers conceived the plan “acting by order of Ukrainian state agencies,” planted the explosives from the yacht Andromeda, chartered in Rostock, and aimed to cut off the gas supply permanently.

The *Times* cannot mention Nord Stream because it would expose the claim of four years of Russian attacks on Europe as a lie.

The *Times* has long played a critical role in spreading US war propaganda. In the run up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the *Times* and its reporter Judith Miller spread the lies about “weapons of mass destruction” and “aluminum tubes,” which the Bush administration used to justify its criminal invasion. In both cases the newspaper printed the claims of unnamed officials as fact, and the claims were exposed only after they had served their purpose.

Schwirtz and Goldman have spent years in a systematic effort to demonize Russia in order to justify war. Schwirtz, a former Moscow correspondent, shared a 2020 Pulitzer Prize for articles “exposing the predations of Vladimir Putin’s regime.” Goldman shared a 2018 Pulitzer for coverage of Russian “meddling” in the 2016 election.

The *World Socialist Web Site* asked on September 28, 2022, two days after the attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines: “Cui bono? Who benefits, and who had the motive to carry it out?” The same question applies to the “spate” of “plots” the *Times* now alleges. The question must be asked: Who benefits from the escalation of the conflict between Russia and NATO?

For four years, the Kremlin has allowed NATO to cross one red line after another: Western tanks, then a Ukrainian ground invasion, using NATO hardware, of Russia’s Kursk region in August 2024; then American and British missiles fired into Russian territory; and now daily long-range strikes on Russian refineries and power plants. Russia’s policy has been to avoid a direct collision with NATO.

It has been, on the other hand, the policy of the NATO powers to pursue the maximum possible escalation of the war, seeking, through the subjugation of the former Soviet Union, a means of offsetting and counterbalancing the crisis of both American and European capitalism.

The report comes as the Ukrainian regime is in a deepening crisis. A poll by the Ukrainian firm SOCIS published August 6 found 49.3 percent of Ukrainians naming government corruption as the greatest harm to the country, against 44.6 percent naming Russian drone and missile attacks. Inside Ukraine, opposition to forced conscription is growing, with widespread and significant protests throughout the country against the kidnapping of young people by roving bands of recruiters.

The *Times* speaks for the Democratic Party and the sections of the intelligence agencies and the ruling class whose opposition to Trump has centered on foreign policy. Two months before the November 3 midterm elections, the Democrats’ central preoccupation is to secure a massive escalation of the war against Russia. The Trump administration, for its part, sent the CIA director to Moscow last month while it bombed Iran and prepared for war with China.

The lies that sold the invasion of Iraq were exposed after the invasion. The lies now being told about Russia are meant to serve the same purpose, and this time the war they are preparing is between nuclear-armed powers. They must be exposed before they have done their work, and the only force with an interest in doing so is the working class, in the United States, Europe, Russia and Ukraine. Opposition to war will not come through any section of the political establishment that is organizing it. It requires the independent mobilization of workers against their own ruling classes and against the capitalist system that produces war.

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