A few days ago, the UN Security Council held hearings[1] on the accusations by Seymour Hersh that the Biden Administration had illegally destroyed Europe’s $30 billion Nord Stream pipelines. Hersh is one of America’s most renowned journalists and the previous week he had revealed the exact details of the attack, an obvious act of war against Germany, our close NATO ally.

- **Seymour Hersh: Standing Tall in a Sea of Lies[2]**
  
  Ron Unz • The Unz Review • February 13, 2023 • 2,000 Words

The story is arguably as big as anything in Hersh’s towering half-century career, but with very few exceptions his revelations and the UN session it prompted have been totally ignored by our entire mainstream media, so that only a sliver of the Western public may ever hear of those facts and recognize their importance. For example, our government’s recent shoot-down of several errant American weather balloons[3] seems to have received at least 100x greater news coverage.

Even among well-educated, intelligent individuals, the overwhelming majority probably still draw their knowledge of the world primarily from mainstream sources and if an event is ignored or downplayed by these, its importance will be doubted.

But although our Western media almost entirely ignored these developments, the Security Council session on the destruction of some of Europe’s most important civilian energy infrastructure attracted testimony from leading American public figures.
Ray McGovern had spent 27 years as a CIA Analyst, rising to direct the Soviet Policy division, chairing the National Intelligence Estimates group during the Reagan Administration, and serving as the Presidential Briefer on intelligence matters. He explained that twenty years ago, the American government had used fraudulent claims of Saddam’s WMDs to justify our disastrous Iraq War, doing so with the assistance of our subservient media. And today, our media is supporting the extreme recklessness of our current government policy towards Russia and Ukraine, which risks a nuclear confrontation.

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University spoke as well, emphasizing the enormously grave consequences of this unprecedented act of international terrorism, and the very limited number of nations that could have been responsible. He noted that Hersh has now provided a comprehensive account of the attacks and one that closely matches the very suspicious public statements made by President Joseph Biden and other senior officials in his administration regarding the need to eliminate the pipelines. Prof. Sachs is a figure of the highest possible international reputation and he used unusually strong language in speaking to the UN Security Council membership.

A couple of months earlier Sachs had met with a small group of Europeans and drawing upon his first-hand personal knowledge, he explained the true origins of the Ukraine War. He also mentioned that when he had discussed the Nord Stream pipeline attacks with a leading journalist from a top American newspaper, someone whom he’d known for 40 years, he had been told that “of course the US did it” but that no one is allowed to say so. Meanwhile, that same paper was running numerous stories blaming the Russians for destroying their own pipelines, and Sachs was shocked that they would deceive their readers. He had trusted that newspaper’s reporting since the Watergate Era, when it regularly revealed all sorts of illegal American government actions. The journalist explained “But that paper is dead.”

All of us draw our knowledge of the world from trusted sources and when a top journalist candidly admits that honesty at his newspaper “is dead” we should be very skeptical of all the critical information provided by our major Western media outlets. So where can we turn for actual facts rather than government propaganda?

I have come to rely upon a handful of very high-ranking individuals who have spent decades acquiring a deep understanding of the national security issues that underlie the Russia-Ukraine war and are unlikely to be deceived or intimidated by the mindless chatter of talking-heads on cable. They have too much self-respect to endorse official statements that are obvious falsehoods and too much loyalty to America’s best interests to support policies that they regard as disastrous. They come from a wide range of different backgrounds and ideologies and may have somewhat different views on particular aspects of the conflict, but they are in broad agreement on all the central issues.

- **Prof. Jeffrey Sachs**[4]
- **Ray McGovern**[5]
Once every three years, the American Political Science Association gives an award to its most distinguished scholar and Prof. Mearsheimer is the most recent recipient. Col. Macgregor is widely regarded as one of our leading military strategists and he had been a finalist for the post of American National Security Advisor.

Although our political, media, and financial establishment is absolutely 100% on the other side, I find it noteworthy that I can scarcely think of a single individual of comparable stature willing to publicly support the official line on Russia and Ukraine.

Given that Hersh’s revelations had prompted a special session of the UN Security Council, I sought to better assess his credibility.

Over the years I’d read several of his books and been extremely impressed by them, especially *The Dark Side of Camelot* on the hidden history of the Kennedy Administration and *The Samson Option*, on Israel’s secret nuclear weapons program.

Since winning his Pulitzer Prize more than a half-century ago, Hersh had steadily accumulated an unmatched network of confidential sources buried deep within our national security apparatus, sources who have allowed him to reveal many dark government secrets. As far as I know, nearly all of his major exposes had been initially denied by our government spokesmen, but most had been ultimately confirmed and I am not aware of a single major error had has ever been proven.

Hersh recently discussed aspects of his current story with Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!* with a couple of young hosts on a program run by *The Hill*, and in a rather discursive interview with journalists Joe Lauria and Elizabeth Vos on their *Consortium News* podcast.

After watching all these interviews, I was quite surprised that Hersh’s ideas on the rights and wrongs of the Russia-Ukraine conflict seemed to be so extremely mainstream and conventional, far more so than most of the other top-ranking figures whom I follow, especially McGovern and Sachs, who had the deepest personal knowledge. I suspect that Hersh drew his understanding from his large network of sources within the current national security establishment, and those individuals probably held such conventional opinions, leading him to inevitably acquire similar views by osmosis.

This impression of Hersh’s remarkably mainstream positions was greatly strengthened after I read *Reporter*, a widely-praised memoir that he’d published a few years ago. Although I’d been generally familiar with his landmark journalistic achievements from decades ago, I’d
never closely followed his career, and thought that reading his book might give me better insight into his background and credibility.

Although Hersh’s enemies in the establishment have sometimes attempted to portray him as someone deeply hostile to the American government or prone to “conspiratorial” thinking, the 350 pages describing his long journalistic career led me to entirely opposite conclusions, with the author appearing to be an absolutely conventional liberal. In his early years he was a fierce opponent of the Vietnam War and he had been an equally strong critic of the post-9/11 policies of the Bush Administration near the end, but those positions were probably typical of a large majority of those sharing his background, including his professional peers. Indeed, I encountered much less bitterness towards American power than I had expected.

Another major surprise was how completely Hersh seemed to ignore or dismiss any of the major conspiratorial controversies that overlapped his career. Sydney Schanberg, one of his *Times* colleagues who also won a Pulitzer Prize for his Cambodia reporting, spent decades collecting the compelling evidence that hundreds of American POWs had been deliberately abandoned in Vietnam, yet Hersh seems never to have heard of the matter. At one point, Hersh was working on a possible film project with famed director Oliver Stone, but when the latter suggested the possible involvement of the CIA in the JFK assassination, Hersh ridiculed the idea and they parted with angry words. The memoir doesn’t provide the slightest hint that Hersh has ever questioned any of the official 9/11 narrative, but instead he seems to accept it as entirely accurate.

Those momentous events cast a long shadow over American public life and at certain times large majorities of the American public had sharply questioned or even flatly rejected the official accounts, but Hersh seems to have never had any doubts. So although some of his hostile critics accuse him of conspiratorial thinking, his public statements indicate the exact opposite.

I suspect that one reason for this may be the nature of his professional methods, especially his overwhelmingly reliance upon a network of deep government sources, mostly in the military and the intelligence community. Probably the vast majority of such government insiders would never entertain those controversial ideas or at least admit that they did, and they might immediately cut all ties with any journalist whom they came to regard as a “conspiracy theorist.” So unless some of his crucial sources began raising those issues with him, he would probably ignore the topics. Hersh has also emphasized that he is a proud journalist very unwilling to tread ground previously covered by others, and there are already large bookcases full of works advocating every flavor of JFK assassination or 9/11 conspiracy.

Critics have challenged Hersh’s Nord Stream pipeline account for being apparently based upon a single source, but his memoirs suggest that this may not have been the case. At one point, he emphasized that he would never rely upon only one source for any major story, but that under some circumstances he might further protect his anonymous corroborating informants by not
even mentioning their existence. Such extreme steps might certainly be warranted in the case of government employees who have implicated their political masters in the world’s largest act of industrial terrorism, and Hersh has steadfastly refused to clarify his sources for the story, suggesting that this might be the case.

Hersh is in his mid-80s but his interviews demonstrate that his memory and mental acuity remain exceptionally sharp, closer to what one might expect of someone twenty or thirty years younger. Although even Homer nods, I only noticed two very minor factual mistakes across the hundreds of pages of his book, both from decades ago. In 1968, Eugene McCarthy had his name on the New Hampshire Democratic Presidential primary ballot and captured a remarkable 42% of the vote, while incumbent President Lyndon Johnson was actually the write-in candidate; and Israeli nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu was a Sephardic Jew rather than an Israeli Arab.

Meanwhile, some of his other stories demonstrate that our media has always been quite reluctant to reveal sordid facts about the powerful. I’d never previously heard that at one point LBJ publicly defecated in front of Tom Wicker, a leading *New York Times* journalist, thereby emphasizing his total contempt for that newspaper and the rest of the media. I’d also never known that on several different occasions, including while in the White House, Richard Nixon had reportedly struck his wife Pat, once resulting in her hospitalization with physical injuries, something that later also happened with Sen. John McCain’s wife Cindy[12].

Another fact previously unknown to me was that one of Hersh’s first major projects had been his investigation into the Pentagon’s development of chemical and biological weapons. When his *AP* editors refused to publish much of the explosive material he had uncovered, he quit and instead produced a series of articles on the topic for the *New Republic*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and other periodicals, while also writing his first book on that subject.

Soon after that book’s release, his work gained public attention when the sudden, mysterious death of 6,000 sheep near the Dugway Proving Ground[13] army base in Utah revealed that a military testing mishap had occurred. A cloud of powerful nerve gas had been accidentally released 85 miles from Salt Lake City and according to Hersh’s sources, it remained lethal to a range of 394 miles, so if the winds had blown in the wrong direction, probably thousands or even tens of thousands of Americans might have perished. The subsequent public hearings and media pressure led President Nixon to officially end all American biological weapons programs the following year.

My own journalistic methods are polar-opposite to those of Hersh, and I rely upon the careful analysis of books, articles, and other open-source materials rather than the use of any confidential informants. Over the last three years I have produced a series of articles arguing that there is strong perhaps overwhelming evidence that the global Covid epidemic that has killed well over a million Americans was the result of blowback from a botched American
biowarfare attack against China (and Iran), an outcome somewhat reminiscent of what had almost happened in 1968 though vastly greater in scale.

My suspicion is that the supposed Covid biowarfare attack was a very tightly run black operation, with its details probably known only to the smallest possible circle of participants; and given the horrifying consequences for our own country and the world, I doubt that any of those individuals will ever come forward as whistle-blowers. But if some of them do, Seymour Hersh would surely be the journalist they would be most likely to contact, and it might be very fitting if his last major expose were to so closely parallel the one that originally launched his storied career more than a half-century earlier.

- Covid/Biowarfare Series[16]
  Ron Unz • The Unz Review • April 2020-December 2021 • 60,000 Words

Related Reading:

- Seymour Hersh: Standing Tall in a Sea of Lies[2]
- Banning Seymour Hersh’s “Offensive” Ideas[17]
- Jeffrey Sachs as Righteous Rogue Elephant[18]
- American Pravda: World War III and World War II?[19]
- American Pravda: Putin as Hitler?[20]

Source References

[1] the UN Security Council held hearings => 

[2] Seymour Hersh: Standing Tall in a Sea of Lies => 

[3] shoot-down of several errant American weather balloons => 


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