

'Be Careful About What You Believe' - US, UK Media Bias & Lies

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Today it seems like we are in another Cold War. It was breathtaking to watch our PM Theresa May immediately blaming Russia for the poisoning of the Skripals before the police had conducted their investigation into the evidence.

Growing up after the Second World War our news was dominated by the threat from the Soviet Union, but when the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991 I don't think anyone could have guessed that just over two decades later we would be once again talking about the threat from Russia. Anyone who only gets their news from the British or American media is kept in ignorance of the truth; the endless accusations about the Skripal poisoning or the conflict over Crimea is presented in a completely biased way in which most of the facts are ignored. But there is nothing new about this: dishonest reporting and lies dominated the whole of the Cold War in the days of the Soviet Union.

Although President John Kennedy in the United States started out with quite a right-wing agenda with one of his 1960 election promises being to close the missile gap with the Soviet Union, he rapidly changed and began to throw the weight of his administration behind the struggle to end racism in America's deep south. Also, if he hadn't been assassinated, he was planning to withdraw American troops from Vietnam if he had been re-elected in 1964 because he realized a full-scale war in Vietnam would be a disaster.

What changed his politics so much were his conflicts with the military. He had only been president a few days before they got him to continue with the planned invasion of Cuba by a small band of Cuban dissidents. The military told him that the invasion would lead to an uprising and the overthrow of Fidel Castro so America would not need to provide any air support for the invasion of the Bay of Pigs. But no sooner had the rebels landed, than the Pentagon was insisting that Kennedy agree to American air strikes on Cuba. Kennedy realized he had been lied to and refused. I would love to be able to go back in time and tell him that Castro's regime would outlast the reign of twelve US presidents, eight of whom, including Kennedy, authorized assassination attempts on Castro, all of which failed.

Kennedy had already been shocked to discover that his campaign pledge to close the missile gap with Russia was nonsense. At his first military briefing he was told that the Soviet Union had four nuclear missiles capable of landing in the USA whereas the USA had three hundred and fifty capable of obliterating the Soviet Union.

It says a lot about the way we are lied to by governments that a man who had been a

senator for eight years and was on the verge of becoming president was as completely ignorant about the truth of America's nuclear superiority as were all the rest of us. Kennedy's predecessor, Republican President Eisenhower, had tried to warn the American people about the growth of the power of the military industrial complex in his final television address before his presidency ended but nothing has changed and if anything it has become more powerful over the American government today than it was then when half the federal government's budget was being spent on the military. Given that President Eisenhower had been the most senior military official in America before he became president, his warning is quite remarkable.

The lies about Russia's military predominance are being echoed again today over issues like the Crimea. I have never seen anything in the British media that reports the fact that over ninety percent of the people living in the Crimea are Russian. Nor have I ever seen it reported in the media that the Crimea was never a part of Ukraine until 1954 when the Soviet Union's then leader Nikita Khrushchev switched the boundaries to include the Crimea inside Ukraine. He might be that he did this simply because he was himself born and brought up in the Ukraine but there have always been rumours that he was very drunk when he took the decision but I've never seen that reported in the British media.

Although Britain and America have imposed sanctions on Russia for incorporating the Crimea the history of what happened is of course very different. The centre and west of Ukraine is dominated by Ukrainians and during the Second World War many Ukrainians collaborated with the Nazi regime after it invaded Ukraine on its way to Moscow and a couple of years later as the Soviet army pushed back the Nazis many Ukrainians fought with the Nazis against the Soviet army. So no-one should be surprised that the people of the Crimea and the Russian dominated Eastern part of Ukraine had worries and doubts about the Ukrainian government and its attitude towards them after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

What triggered this crisis was not a Russian invasion but the overthrow of the then moderate Ukrainian government under President Viktor Yanukovich. Back in November 2013 Yanukovich announced he was delaying the signing of an economic treaty with the European Union because it would have terminated the Ukraine's trading and economic relations with its main economic partner Russia. Why the EU was demanding this change which would clearly damage the economy of Ukraine has never been revealed.

Following Yanukovich's announcement demonstrators occupied the Ukrainian capital's central square, Maidan, protesting against his decision but the protests and rallies became violent and led to the overthrow of the president on February 22, 2014.

The protests were led by extreme Ukrainian nationalists and paramilitary groups whose policies echoed much of the fascist ideology including the use of Nazi symbols and racist slogans, calling for the ethnic cleansing of the Russians living in Ukraine.

Britain, the USA and the EU supported the coup that overthrew President Yanukovich. There is now a considerable degree of evidence that western intelligence agencies were involved in encouraging these far-right groups over many decades following the end of the Second World War.

The new Ukrainian government claimed that the number of people shot dead had been killed by the government's security forces and Russians posing as Ukrainians. Those

allegations were blown away when the Italian TV website Eyes Of War showed a [documentary interviewing](#) three ex-military snipers from Georgia who admitted they had been hired by the insurgents and had been partly responsible for the shootings. No western government has talked about sanctions against Georgia.

Clearly the overthrow of the government and its replacement by a far-right anti-Russian regime spurred the fear of ethnic cleansing and led to the Russian majority in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine deciding they would not remain under the new Ukrainian regime and so they fought to defend themselves. Russians living in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine should have the same right to self-determination as should be the case around the whole of the world.

None of this is new, just a few years earlier in 2014 a Malaysian aeroplane was shot down as it passed over Ukraine in July. Immediately Western media said that this had been done by a Russian missile. But nowhere in the Western media was it revealed that the missile used was so old that they had been taken out of service by the Russian government years before. Following the chaotic break up of the old Soviet Union its wholly possible that several of these old missiles were retained, perhaps even by far-right groups in the Ukraine.

It takes decades for the truth to come out. We now know that when Tony Blair told us that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction that could reach Britain within 45 minutes and President Bush claimed Iraq had amassed a huge stockpile of uranium that this was completely untrue, but it led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

As a young man I remember back in 1964 the American government announcing that one of their battleships has been attacked by North Vietnam and this led to their mass bombing and full-scale war leading to the deaths of over three and a half million people. Twenty years later the truth came out that there had never been an attack on that American ship.

The earliest lie I remember was when I was just eleven years old and Britain and France announced they were invading Egypt to stop the war between Egypt and Israel. All the politicians behind that lie were dead long before the truth emerged that Britain and France had asked Israel to invade Egypt so that this would give Britain and France the chance to overthrow Nasser's Egyptian government and take back control of the Suez Canal.

Always be careful about what you believe.

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