

Claims of Russian Interference in Ukraine Reek of Hypocrisy

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The Russians are up to no good and we must prepare to protect Ukraine. Moscow interferes in US and Canadian elections. That’s what Washington, Ottawa and their media sycophants claim. But is this just another case of accusing others of doing the things you do? An age-old propaganda technique designed to deflect attention away from your misdeeds?

For example, amidst claims the Russians may invade the Ukraine or overthrow its government, Ottawa says it is considering a military response. According to the *Globe and Mail*, Canada [may deploy](#) fighter jets currently in Romania to the Ukraine or send (again) a warship into the Black Sea, which borders the Ukraine and Russia. But 200 Canadian troops, as well as two dozen police, are already based in the Ukraine. Through a memorandum of understanding Ottawa signed with Kiev a Canadian company is also helping [build up](#) Ukrainian ammunition production.

As for interfering in the politics of another country, since the mid-2000s Ottawa has [provided](#) significant support to right wing, nationalist opponents of Russia in the Ukraine. According to the Canadian Press, opposition protesters [were camped](#) in the Canadian

embassy for a week during the successful February 2014 rebellion against Viktor Yanukovich, who hailed from the Russian speaking east of the Ukraine. In a paper titled "The far right, the Euromaidan, and the Maidan massacre in Ukraine" University of Ottawa professor Ivan Katchanovski reported, "The leader of the [Far right] Svoboda-affiliated C14 admitted that his C14-based Maidan Self-Defense company took refuge in the Canadian embassy in Kyiv on February 18 and stayed there during the Maidan massacre."

Alongside Canada's support for the Ukrainian military, over [500](#) Canadian troops are leading a NATO mission on Russia's doorstep in Latvia. Thirty countries are currently conducting drills in Latvia as part of NATO Baltic Winter Shield 2021. In a position sure to anger the Kremlin, Latvia's defence minister recently requested US missiles capable of hitting Moscow and [called](#) for a permanent US military presence there. US and British troops are stationed throughout the region.

Canada has sanctions on Russia and the Liberals have repeatedly labeled that country a [threat](#) to the "international rules-based order" Canada claims to uphold. In a major June 2017 foreign policy speech minister Chrystia Freeland called, "[Russian](#) military adventurism and expansionism ... clear strategic threats to the liberal democratic world, including Canada."

But it is absurd to suggest that growing tension over the Ukraine simply reflects Russian belligerence.

This is not the first time the media and politicians have grossly distorted reality to bash Russia.

Aping Hillary Clinton, cold warriors and other segments of the US establishment, Canadian media and politicians pushed the idea of Russian electoral interference. In December 2018 the front page of *The Walrus* boldly proclaimed: "The Russian Threat to Canadian Democracy." The lead article was titled "[Could](#) the Russians Decide Canada's Next Prime Minister? Why the upcoming federal election isn't safe from manipulation by Moscow."

Canadian politicians repeatedly beat the "Russiagate" drum. In April 2019 Freeland said she was "[very concerned](#) that Russia is meddling" in Canada's election and claimed there had "already been efforts by malign actors to disrupt our democracy." For his part, Trudeau opined that "[countries](#) like Russia are behind a lot of the divisive campaigns ... that have turned our politics even more divisive and more anger-filled than they have been in the past."

Ten months before the 2019 federal election the government established a special [task force](#) to monitor potential threats to Canada's democracy that included representatives of CSIS, RCMP, Communications Security Establishment and Global Affairs' intelligence branch. It was all for naught. Two days after the 2019 election the Privy Council Office quietly [announced](#) no foreign actor attempted to interfere. (Recently the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency reported that CSIS "[skirted](#)" the law in its effort to protect the 2019 election from possible foreign interference.)

From the get-go the claim that Russia got Donald Trump elected was silly. But, the “Russiagate” narrative collapsed definitively last month when the Steele dossier was conclusively [discredited](#).

Alongside outlandish claims of electoral interference, Ottawa adopted a sanctions regime based on a highly dubious individual’s criticism of Russia. In 2017 the government adopted sanctions legislation, modeled after the 2012 US Magnitsky Act, designed to demonize Russia. Ottawa immediately targeted Russian officials under legislation that allowed the government to freeze individuals’ assets/visas and prohibit Canadian companies from dealing with sanctioned individuals.

The legislation was named after Sergey Magnitsky who proponents claim was tortured to death for exposing Russian state corruption. The source of the claim was William Browder, an American who got rich amidst the fire sale of Russian state assets in the 1990s. With billionaire banker Edmond J. Safra, Browder co-founded Hermitage Capital Management, which became the largest hedge fund in Russia. Hermitage Capital earned a staggering [2,697%](#) return between 1996 and 2007.

Those who question the western-backed story line say Magnitsky was an accountant who helped Browder claim illicit tax breaks. According to this version of the story, Browder exploited Magnitsky’s death — caused by inhumane jail conditions — to avoid being extradited to Russia on tax fraud charges.

While it’s hard to be completely confident about the truth, it’s difficult to believe that a US capitalist who got rich in Russia in the 1990s would simply turn into a human rights activist. On the other hand, the idea that a wealthy and powerful individual meshed self-preservation with growing Russophobia seems plausible.

Both Browder and partner Safra have dubious backgrounds. Browder worked for Robert Maxwell, a crooked British press baron and [Mossad spy](#), whose daughter Ghislaine Maxwell was Jeffrey Epstein’s decades-long sex ring coordinator/partner. Safra’s name is [cited](#) in Epstein’s little black book.

A November 2019 *Der Spiegel* exposé titled “[The Case](#) of Sergei Magnitsky: Questions Cloud Story Behind U.S. Sanctions” poked important holes in Browder’s story. Further undermining Browder’s claims, last year Switzerland’s Attorney General [dropped](#) a decade-long investigation into Russian money laundering Browder brought to the Swiss authorities’.

There are many good reasons to distrust the media and politicians’ drum beating about Russian belligerence in the Ukraine. Evidence suggests these sorts of accusations are often hypocritical self-justifications for more military/intelligence spending.

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