

## Conspiracy Theories? No One Does it Better than the Western Elite

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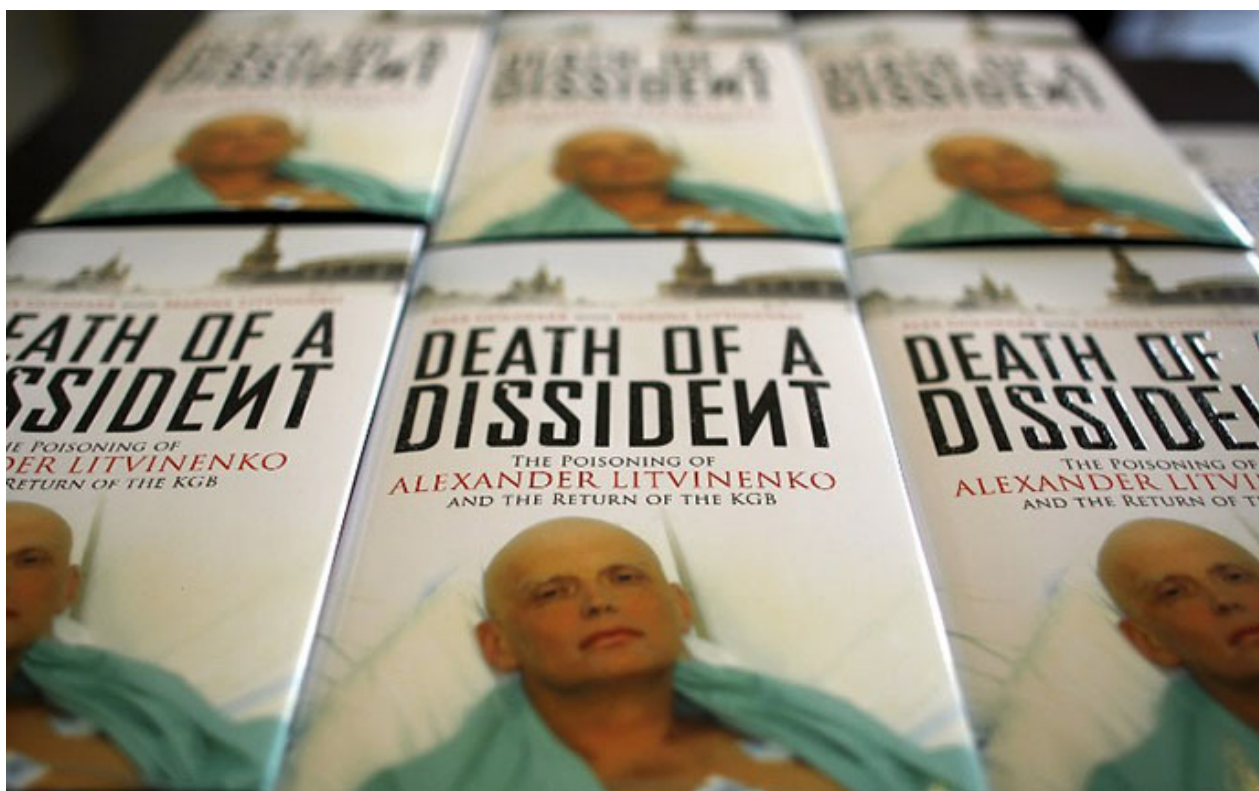
AFP Photo / Wojtek Radwanski

For a long time elite establishment gatekeepers in the West have scoffed at that those who claim Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was poisoned. As to those who claimed he was poisoned by Israel – well-of course they're crazy conspiracy theorists!

Yet these same people who ridiculed the idea of Arafat's poisoning are, by and large, the same people who assert, without any shadow of a doubt, that the murdered spy Aleksandr Litvinenko was poisoned by the Russian authorities in London in 2006.

Now we still don't know for sure that Arafat was poisoned, or that Israel was responsible, but after last week's news that Swiss scientists have found levels of polonium-210 18 times higher than normal in his exhumed body, it is much harder for these elite gatekeepers to haughtily dismiss as 'cranks' those who maintain that Arafat was murdered.

What the Litvinenko and Arafat cases show us is that there are officially 'approved' conspiracy theories and those which do not receive official approval.



Copies of the book "Death of a Dissident" by Alex Goldfarb and Marina Litvinenko (AFP Photo / Leon

Neal)

The labeling of people as 'conspiracy theorists' by gatekeepers in the West has nothing to do with how much evidence there is to support a claim or the quality of that evidence, but is a political call, based on who the conspiracy theory concerns and who is making it.

Establishment gatekeepers are not objective judges, but are heavily biased and label any idea they don't like as a 'conspiracy theory'. Labeling someone a 'conspiracy theorist' is their standard way of declaring that person to be 'off-limits', i.e. he/she is an unreliable source and a 'crank'. It's a way that dissent and debate is stifled in what appear to be free, democratic societies – and how people who challenge the dominant establishment narrative are deliberately marginalized.

Yet the greatest irony is that in the last 20 years or so, the biggest pushers of conspiracy theories have been these very same Western elite politicians and establishment gatekeepers so quick to accuse others of peddling conspiracy theories.

They were the ones who pushed, with great zeal, the conspiracy theory that Saddam Hussein had WMDs in 2003. This was one which had real, deadly consequences, leading to a blatantly illegal war and the deaths of at least 500,000 people. These elite gatekeepers have also pushed the conspiracy theory that Iran has secretly been developing nuclear weapons – again without producing any compelling evidence. This conspiracy theory has led to the imposition of draconian sanctions on the Islamic Republic, which have caused great suffering to ordinary people.

This year, these establishment conspiracy theorists have been at it again, claiming with great conviction that it was the Syrian government which launched a chemical weapons attack at Ghouta, even though we still don't know for sure who was responsible.

Other 'acceptable' conspiracy theories involve elections. If elections in foreign countries are won by the 'wrong' side i.e. the side the Western elites don't want to win, then it is routinely claimed that the elections were 'fixed' or 'stolen'. Thus, the late Hugo Chavez won his regular election victories in Venezuela not because he was genuinely popular and loved by his people, but because he fixed the polls. The same claims were made against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when he was re-elected as Iranian president in 2009.

But when gatekeepers are asked for evidence to back up their claims of electoral fraud, there is silence.

Stephen Hildon, a politics commenter, @StephenHildon, asked one such gatekeeper on Twitter for evidence for his assertion that Hugo Chavez engaged in 'widespread fixing of a state election'. As yet, he has not received a reply.



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez waves a Venezuelan flag while speaking to supporters after receiving news of his reelection in Caracas on October 7, 2012. (AFP Photo / Juan Barreto)

In Western elite circles, it's OK to claim Iraq possessed WMDs when it didn't. It's OK to say Iran has a nukes program. It's OK to say that the Syrian government launched chemical weapons attacks against its own people. It's OK to say that Hugo Chavez engaged in the 'widespread fixing' of elections. When the country being discussed is an 'official enemy', you don't need much, if any, evidence to make claims against it. The claim doesn't even have to be logical.

For common sense tells us that if Bush and Blair genuinely believed Iraq possessed WMDs in 2003, they would not have attacked, or even talked about attacking the country. Common sense also tells us that it would have been absolutely mad for the Syrian government to launch a massive chemical weapons attack close to Damascus at the time when UN Inspectors were in town and when pro-war hawks in the West were looking for any pretext to launch military strikes on the country. Yet we are expected to swallow these elite theories, despite the lack of evidence and the fact that they make no sense.

By contrast, if the country under suspicion is a Western one, or an ally of the West, such as Israel, anyone making any claims about its actions – claiming that it has assassinated someone, or that it has been involved in shady, dubious activities – they will be called a 'conspiracy theorist', even if what they claim is in fact quite logical.

It's time for those who challenge the dominant, establishment narrative in the West to go on the offensive and turn the tables on the elite gatekeepers who screech 'conspiracy theorist' at anyone who dares to question the official war-party line. What determines if an idea really is a conspiracy theory should be the evidence – or lack of it- and a logical appraisal of who would really benefit from the action. It certainly shouldn't be the biased view of those who have appointed as the arbiters of what is a conspiracy theory and what isn't

Another claim which has been made by establishment gatekeepers is that the basis of conspiracy theories is 'anti-Semitism'. In other words, they put out a conspiracy theory about conspiracy theories. So if you do believe or espouse what the gatekeepers have deemed to be a 'conspiracy theory', you are not only a 'crank', but are an anti-Semite, or

more precisely, anti-Jewish.. The aim is clearly to ensure that those who don't hold the 'right', i.e. pro- establishment views are totally ostracized, as for obvious reasons being accused of being anti-Jewish after the horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust is something most people would want to avoid.

Again, no compelling evidence is produced to back up the claim that conspiracy theories are inherently anti-Jewish, and any serious, objective analysis of conspiracy theories would lead to the rejection of the idea as quite ludicrous, but that doesn't matter as it's the elite gatekeepers who are making this toxic charge and they- unlike dissidents- are not required to prove their case.

The fact is that if you're looking for wacky conspiracy theories then the experience of the last 20 years tells us that the best place to find them is not on so-called 'fringe' websites, or on 'alternative' media, but from the mouths - and the pens - of the elite gatekeepers themselves.

Whether it's claims that Iraq could deploy its WMDs 'within 45 minutes', or that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, or that Hugo Chavez fixed elections, no one does conspiracy theories better than the West's conspiracy-theory hating elite.

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