

Obama's Stupid Propaganda Stuff. Blaming Everything on Putin

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Image: President Barack Obama talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, Germany, June 8, 2015. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

President Barack Obama must know better regarding the crisis in Ukraine, but he insists on reciting the propaganda lines drafted by his neoconservative and "liberal interventionist" advisers blaming everything on Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Perhaps, Obama just doesn't have the nerve to go against Official Washington's "conventional wisdom" no matter how misguided it is. The last time that Obama went against the grain in a decisive way was when he objected to the Iraq War in 2002, but then, of course, he was just a state senator in Illinois.

Watching his behavior in the White House over the past six-plus year, I've come to suspect that – if he had been a national politician amid the Iraq War fever – he would have gotten in line just like ambitious Sens. Hillary Clinton, John Kerry and Joe Biden did. Even as President, a position that gives him enormous power to push back against Official Washington's "group think," he won't.

Instead Obama spouts stupid propaganda stuff that is ultimately damaging to the American Republic. At a moment when Obama needs Putin's help in addressing dangerous crises in the Middle East – particularly [to deal with advances](#) by Al-Qaeda's Nusra Front and Al-Qaeda's hyper-violent spinoff, the Islamic State – Obama insists on joining in more misrepresentations about the Ukraine crisis.

At the end of the G-7 summit in Bavaria, Germany, Obama proudly announced that he had gotten the other six industrial powers to continue sanctions on Russia, based on the dubious argument that it is Russia, not the U.S.-backed regime in Ukraine, that requires more pressure to implement last February's Minsk-2 agreement.

The Minsk-2 deal largely reflected Putin's ideas regarding negotiations with ethnic Russian rebels in the east and constitutional changes granting the region substantial autonomy. However, after Minsk-2 was signed, hardliners in the Ukrainian government immediately sought to sabotage the political side by [inserting a poison pill](#) that required the rebels to essentially surrender before any negotiations could begin.

Since then, the Kiev regime has bulked itself up militarily, including training from 300 U.S. military advisers. In May, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko talked publicly about resuming the war and retaking rebel-held territory in the east, a position that even caused U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to suggest that Poroshenko should "think twice" about

such an action.

Kerry made that remark during meetings with Putin and senior Russian officials in Sochi, Russia, in what then appeared to be a realistic shift in Obama's foreign policy, recognizing the grave dangers from a possible Al-Qaeda victory in Syria and the need for Russian help in averting that disaster. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[Obama's Strategic Shift](#)."]

However, in the last few weeks, the flip-flopping Obama seems to have flopped back into the hard-liners' camp of neocon Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland and liberal-interventionist Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power. Not only did Obama press the G-7 allies to renew sanctions on Russia, Obama hurled personal insults at Putin.

Pointing Fingers

In [remarks](#) to the news media on Monday in Krun, Germany, Obama said,

"there is strong consensus that we need to keep pushing Russia to abide by the terms of the Minsk agreement ... [and] that until that's completed, sanctions remain in place. There was discussion about additional steps that we might need to take if Russia, working through separatists, doubled down on aggression inside of Ukraine. ...

"Ultimately, this is going to be an issue for Mr. Putin. He's got to make a decision: Does he continue to wreck his country's economy and continue Russia's isolation in pursuit of a wrong-headed desire to re-create the glories of the Soviet empire? Or does he recognize that Russia's greatness does not depend on violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other countries?

"And as I mentioned earlier, the costs that the Russian people are bearing are severe. That's being felt. It may not always be understood why they're suffering, because of state media inside of Russia and propaganda coming out of state media in Russia and to Russian speakers. ...

"And, ironically, one of the rationales that Mr. Putin provided for his incursions into Ukraine was to protect Russian speakers there. Well, Russian speakers inside of Ukraine are precisely the ones who are bearing the brunt of the fighting. Their economy has collapsed. Their lives are disordered. Many of them are displaced. Their homes may have been destroyed. They're suffering. And the best way for them to stop suffering is if the Minsk agreement is fully implemented."

In other words, Obama was doing the Full Monty of Official Washington's "group think" on the Ukraine crisis - that it was all caused by Putin's "aggression" and his delusions about reestablishing the Soviet or Russian Empire. But Obama knows the real history of the U.S.-supported coup d'etat that ousted Ukraine's elected President Viktor Yanukovich on Feb. 22, 2014, despite Yanukovich's political agreement a day earlier with France, Germany and Poland to accept reduced powers and early elections.

Rather than defending that political settlement, the United States and its European allies immediately recognized the coup regime as "legitimate," although it included neo-Nazis and other violent right-wing extremists who were rabidly hostile to Ukraine's ethnic Russian minority.

In the face of worsening violence, the people of Crimea – where ethnic Russians are a substantial majority – voted overwhelmingly to secede from Ukraine and rejoin Russia, an action supported by Russian troops who were based at Russia’s historic naval base at Sevastopol in Crimea. Russia accepted Crimea’s request but balked at a similar appeal from ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine.

Then, amid feverish anti-Russian propaganda in the U.S. and European news media, the Kiev authorities designated the ethnic Russian resistance in the east as “terrorists” and mounted a brutal “anti-terrorism operation” against the population with the regime’s neo-Nazi and other extremist militias spearheading the attacks. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “[Seeing No Neo-Nazi Militias in Ukraine.](#)”]

It was in the face of this ethnic cleansing that Russia moved to assist the defense of the so-called Donbass region. Yet, now Obama places the blame for all the destruction and suffering in eastern Ukraine, where thousands have died, not on the U.S.-backed Ukrainian government and its thuggish militias but on Putin.

And, with no sense of irony, Obama suggests that it is the Russian media that is distorting the story, another favorite theme of the U.S. propaganda campaign on Ukraine pushed by both the Obama administration and the mainstream U.S. media.

There was an up-is-down quality to the way that Obama presented the Ukraine situation which is troubling in one of two ways – either he believes his own propaganda or he is a conscious liar. There’s also a third possibility, that he has completely lost his bearings and adopts one position one day and veers in the opposite direction the next depending on who last talked to him.

But whatever the case, Obama cannot expect Putin and the Russians to view his public comments and contradictory behavior in a favorable light – and then agree to cooperate with Obama on other hotspots where U.S. interests are much more endangered.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, America’s Stolen Narrative, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes America’s Stolen Narrative. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

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