

Thinking Harder About False Flags and Other Fables

Counting possible atrocities is warfare by other means

By [Philip Giraldi](#)

Global Research, April 19, 2022

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

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The White House plan to destroy Russia by calling President Vladimir Putin names proceeds apace. Apparently, the man whom President Joe Biden has called a “thug,” “killer,” and “war criminal” is now also charged with carrying out a [“genocide”](#) and, according to CIA Director William Burns, he may in “despair” over his apparently stalled invasion, be [contemplating the use](#) of tactical nuclear weapons. Meanwhile over at the Pentagon, positively aglow with the largest “defense” budget since Vietnam, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley [is advising that](#) the war started in Ukraine will require building still more US military bases in Europe to confront Putin.

It is unclear who exactly in the band of rogues surrounding Biden is most responsible for the rhetorical flourishes and hyperbole, though one might assume that it is in fact a group effort by a chorus of mental midgets, most of whom were inherited from the beatified Barack Obama’s Administration. Only Hillary is missing. But at the same time, one must wonder how if all the sobriquets inevitably fail to bring down Putin what plan B might be. After all, as Russia is a significant country possessing a ballistic and submarine launched nuclear missile capability that could destroy the United States, there will have to be some way to dialogue with the Kremlin after the Ukraine fiasco has ended. Calling foreign heads of state criminals and mass murderers is not the best way to restore a satisfactory level of mutual respect that will permit discussion regarding issues of mutual concern, like war and peace.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is being heavily coached by neocon handlers to push the right buttons to appeal to international sentiment in favor of his country. He has been very successful at being alarming about the Russian threat coupled with his demands for more and better weapons. Two expressions that have come to the surface recently to further blacken Vladimir Putin have centered around the concern that the Russians will employ what is referred to as a false flag deception or use chemical weapons in such a fashion, possibly against themselves, so as to justify broadening their invasion. Indeed, the two can be used together. A false flag essentially involves an assailant or a contact

pretending to represent something apart from their or his/her genuine identity in an attempt to deceive the targeted individual. False flags are used extensively in intelligence operations and also in military operations where an attempt is being made to hide the true attribution of an act of war.

In my own experience as a CIA operations officer, I once “developed” a relationship with a Libyan intelligence officer using the false identity of an Italian businessman. The Libyan was amenable to an information sharing relationship with an Italian to line his own pockets, but would have balked at the treasonous implications of having a connection with an American. Libya was, not so long ago, a colony of Italy and my contact spoke decent Italian. That was a classic false flag operation conducted to carry out espionage against a foreign target.



Photograph of men in Khan Sheikhoun in Syria, allegedly inside a crater where a sarin-gas bomb landed. (Source: Consortiumnews)

A more recent instance of what might be regarded as a false flag with much more lethal consequences was when President Donald Trump attacked a Syrian airbase with 59 cruise missiles in the wake of an almost certainly [fabricated report](#) that President Bashar al-Assad’s army had used chemical weapons in an attack on Khan Shaykhun in 2017. Independent investigators subsequently determined that the anti-regime terrorists who were occupying the city at the time had themselves staged the attack and deliberately set it up and blamed it on the Syrian government to produce an expected US response, which was forthcoming as Trump responded to the news headlines and did not bother to order anyone to check the reliability of his intelligence sources before ordering “bombs away.” Fortunately, the evidence that it had likely been a false flag carried out by allies of Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) soon surfaced and there were no additional American attacks.

The latest recriminations hurled at Putin have included his alleged massacre of possibly hundreds of civilians at Bucha as well as the killing of over 50 civilians at the Kramatorsk Train station on April 8th, which almost immediately raised suspicion about a possible false flag. Starting with motive, it made no sense for Russia to either massacre civilians or attack a non-military target like a transportation hub, which would produce a large number of

casualties, as it would give NATO and the US a wedge issue to increase pressure on Russia and its soldiers while also turning world opinion against Moscow. In that sense, both the claimed massacre and the attack succeeded as they were both immediately linked to Russia by hostile media.

But that is where the stories [began to unravel](#). Russian soldiers left the town of Bucha on March 30th. Two days later, Bucha was occupied by the Ukrainian Azov Brigade with the objective of finding and [removing 'traitors'](#). The Azov Brigade has been plausibly described as extremely nationalist and even as neo-Nazi. On April 2/3 the first video was published that showed freshly killed men laying on the streets of Bucha, several of them displaying white arm bands that were presumably used for signaling to departing Russian forces that they were "friendlies." The "west" and Ukrainian officials immediately [called those dead](#) the result of "Russian atrocities."

Azov [has reportedly](#) shot men "fleeing" the combat zones as "traitors" and pledged no surrender to or collaboration with the Russians. It has credibly been responsible for atrocities committed against Russian ethnic Ukrainian citizens in the past. Going back to motive, it was definitely in the Ukrainian interest to kill a couple hundred of its own civilians to further demonize Putin and bring about a western direct military intervention, which is what Zelensky and his neocon advisers have been attempting to do. So, was it a false flag attack in which Ukrainian soldiers deliberately killed Ukrainian citizens so the deaths could be blamed on Russia?

And it also turned out that the missile used in the Kramatorsk Train station attack was of a type found in the Ukrainian arsenal, not that of Russia. A video report by Italy's [LA7 video channel](#) was made by one of their teams inside Ukraine. They were one of first Western news teams to arrive at the alleged bombing site in Kramatorsk. At the time of the attack, numerous Ukrainian citizens were evacuating the city due to its proximity to fighting with Russian forces. Kramatorsk is the temporary seat of the administration of the Donetsk region because the city of Donetsk is in the hands of Russian affiliated Donbass militias and is not under the control of the Kiev based Ukrainian authorities.

The Italian film clip shows close-ups of the remains of the projectile that hit the building, which reveals that the serial number is that of the Tochka-U vehicle launched ballistic missile, which Kiev claimed was Russian, is actually far more plausibly Ukrainian. The clearly visible missile's serial number appears as (Φ91579), and a comparison, admittedly made by Russian analysts, indicates that the missile belongs to the same series of weapons that have been fired against targets in the regions in the Donbass that are seeking union with Russia. They [have been used against](#) "Khartszsk in 04.09.2014 (rocket number 'Φ15622') and Tshevsky in 02.02.2015 (Rocket No. 'Φ91565'), Lugvinova in 13.02.2015 (Missiles No. 'Φ91566, Φ915527, Φ915328'), Perdiansk in 19.03.2022 (rocket no. 'Φ915611'), and Militobol on 17.03.2022 (rocket no. 'Φ915516')." Furthermore, the missile in question is, according to the Kremlin, still in the Ukrainian arms inventory but considered obsolete by the Russian military.

But let's think this through a little deeper. If the Russians truly want to blame the Ukrainians for killing other Ukrainians what better way to do it than to fake a missile launch using ordnance that is in operational use with the Ukrainian Army? There exist what are claimed to be eyewitness accounts of Russian troops using the Tochka inside Ukraine, though they come through Ukrainian controlled sources, but the Kremlin very likely has some Tochkas

sitting around in various arsenals even if they are no longer suitable for front line use. And the serial numbers, which are painted on or appear on attached labels, can be changed.

The fundamental problem is not the possible use of a false flag in what is already a war between two neighboring states. It should be expected, when convenient for either side. The complication is that actually authenticable information about what is taking place is rare and the two sides are both lying and spinning like crazy to convince an international audience as well as their own citizenry of a “truth” which is actually often closer to fiction. As has long been recognized, the first victim of a war is the truth.

So forget about false flags and other tactical contrivances as well as the lies coming out of Washington and Western Europe. The sad part is that the focus on possible atrocities has reversed what the United States and the west should be doing, i.e. creating an environment where there can be a ceasefire leading to genuine negotiations that can bring about a *status quo* acceptable to both Russia and Ukraine. Instead, Washington and its allies seem intent on funneling ever more weapons into Ukraine based on a steady stream of questionable accounts of Russian war crimes, a guarantee that the fighting will go on for many more months, if not longer.

Witness for example the line being promoted by [the notorious](#) retired US Army Colonel Alexander Vindman, formerly of the US National Security Council but Ukrainian-Jewish born and an enthusiastic advocate of war with Russia. He argues based on the claimed Russian crimes that

“Despite what people like Tucker Carlson tell you, there are not two sides to the story of Russia’s war on Ukraine. It IS a story of good and evil. All you have to do is look at the massacre of civilians in Bucha, the missile strike on Kramatorsk railway station, or the countless other atrocities being committed by Russian forces across Ukraine to see it clearly.”

Vindman’s thinking comes out of the neocon playbook of a proper role of the United States as the rule maker for the entire world without any accountability for its own action. He can easily be dismissed as little more than a partisan prepared to go with any half-truth as long as it denigrates Russia. Whatever one feels about “gallant little Ukraine” versus the Russian bear, this kind of advocacy by someone wrapping himself in the Ukrainian flag provides no real rationale for the United States to get involved in a war in which it has no real interest and which will almost certainly turn out badly for all involved. Unfortunately, Vindman is not the only public figure who suffers from precisely the same tunnel vision.

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This article was originally published on [The Unz Review](#).

Philip M. Giraldi, Ph.D., is Executive Director of the Council for the National Interest, a 501(c)3 tax deductible educational foundation (Federal ID Number #52-1739023) that seeks a more interests-based U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Website is councilforthenationalinterest.org, address is P.O. Box 2157, Purcellville VA 20134 and its email is inform@cnionline.org.

He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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