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US media promotes absurd claim that Russia staged attack on Kremlin



The drone attack on the Kremlin

Following Wednesday's drone attack on the official residence of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the US media sprang into action to promote the ridiculous claim that Russia staged the attacks.

Among the headlines that appeared Thursday were:

- “Alleged Putin assassination is ‘false flag’ orchestrated to bolster Russia’s war effort, experts claim”—Fox News
- “Kremlin Drone Attack ‘Likely’ Russia False Flag: US Think Tank”—Insider
- “False flag? Analysts say Russia ‘likely staged’ Kremlin drone attack it blamed on Ukraine and the West”—CNBC

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These articles appeared to be an effort on the part of the US media to walk back statements made by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre Wednesday, both of whom refused to distance themselves from the assassination attempt or even declare that the assassination of Putin would be illegitimate.

Asked what the position of the US was on “such attacks on leadership,” Blinken replied, “These are decisions for Ukraine to make about how it’s going to defend itself.”

The entire US media simply ignored these statements, rather promoting the claim that the attacks were not an assassination attempt, that Russia staged them, or both.

Many of the articles citing the claim of a “false flag” were based on declarations by the pro-war US think-tank the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), which wrote Thursday that “Russia likely staged this attack in an attempt to bring the war home to a Russian domestic audience and set conditions for a wider societal mobilization.”

As evidence, the ISW cited the claim that Russia quickly asserted that drones carrying explosives over the residence of the Russian president were an assassination attempt, and that Russian air defenses would not have allowed the drones to fly so near the Kremlin.

It concluded, “The rapid and coherent presentation of an official Russian narrative around the strike suggests that Russia staged this incident in close proximity to the May 9th Victory Day holiday in order to frame the war as existential to its domestic audience.”

This amounts to the entire argument for the claim that Russia staged the attack.

By contrast, the reality that the attack on the Kremlin was carried out by Ukraine was bolstered by the fact that the Ukrainian Post Office issued a stamp depicting the burning Kremlin within hours after the operation.

Colonel Alexander Vindman, a leading figure in the run-up to the war, hailed the attack, declaring that it “demonstrates how vulnerable Russia really is.” He continued, “The most important thing about drone strikes on the Kremlin is the sheer [sic] embarrassment for Putin. He looks terribly week [sic].”

The declarations that Russia was responsible for the attack on the Kremlin follow the pattern set after the September 26, 2022, bombing of the Nord Stream pipelines, after which the US media declared that Russia was responsible for an attack on its own pipelines.

Following the October 8, 2022, attack on the Kerch Bridge, the August 20, 2022, assassination of Darya Dugina and multiple bombings inside Russia, Ukrainian officials denied they were responsible, before accounts in the US press attributed responsibility to the Ukrainian secret service.

US officials were at pains Thursday to distance themselves from the attack on the Kremlin. Speaking to Morning Joe, White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said: “There was no involvement by the United States in [the Kremlin attack]. Whatever it was did not involve us... We had nothing to do with this.”

Kirby’s claim that the United States had no involvement in the planning of the attack is undermined by the content of leaked Pentagon documents made public earlier this year, showing that the United States possesses both advanced knowledge of and veto power over Ukrainian attacks inside Russia.

In an article published April 24, titled “At U.S. behest, Ukraine held off anniversary attacks on Russia,” the *Washington Post* wrote, “In February, with the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine days away, officials in Kyiv were busy making plans to attack Moscow.”

The article continued, “On Feb. 22, two days before the anniversary, the CIA circulated a new classified report: The HUR [Ukrainian intelligence directorate] ‘had agreed, at Washington’s request, to postpone strikes’ on Moscow.”

On Thursday, Russian officials made increasingly categorical declarations that the attack was directed by the United States.

“Attempts to disown this, both in Kyiv and in Washington, are, of course, absolutely ridiculous,” said Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov. “We know very well that decisions about such actions, about such terrorist attacks, are made not in Kyiv but in Washington.”

Russian Ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov added, “How would Americans react if a drone hit the White House, the Capitol or the Pentagon. The answer is obvious to every politician, as well as to the average citizen: the punishment will be harsh and inevitable.”

Ukrainian President Zelensky continued to travel in NATO territory on Thursday, meeting with officials from the Baltic countries. Zelensky also visited the International Court of Justice in The Hague, in the Netherlands, after which he gave a speech denouncing Putin.

Finland joined NATO last month, doubling the military alliance’s border with Russia overnight. NATO is surging troops to Russia’s borders alongside the escalation of the Ukraine war. Critically, the leaked Pentagon documents released earlier this year showed that NATO sees its operations both inside Ukraine and in NATO members states as interoperable, and there are over 150 NATO troops deployed inside Ukraine.

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