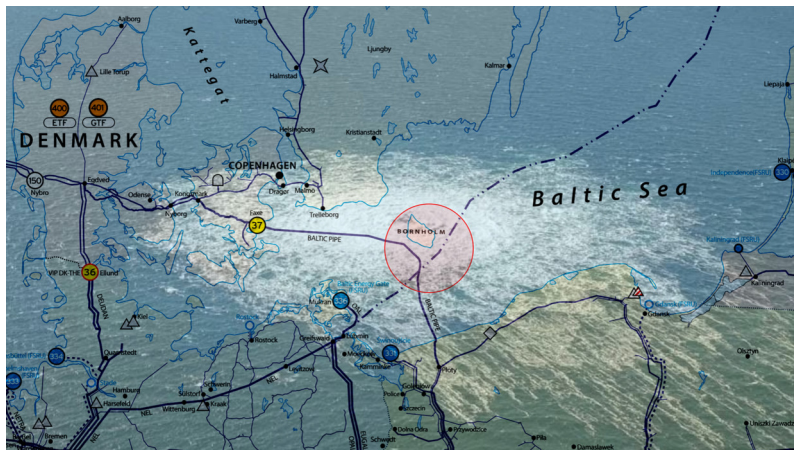


[The Nord Stream explosion: Why you've only read half the story](#)

By Frank , 29 June 2026

The Nord Stream explosion: Why you've only read half the story

The story behind the most destructive act of industrial sabotage in history is still a web of excuses and misdirection



By [RT Newsroom](#) with support from Frank Dumon with: **The Nord Stream explosion: [Why you've only read half the story](#)**

The Nord Stream saga has taken a turn for the absurd, with a new book claiming that the star saboteur who blew up the gas pipelines was a Ukrainian erotic model-turned-deep sea diver. This detail is the latest addition to an ever-shifting story – while one key coincidence has completely flown under the radar.

Published on June 19, 'The Nord Stream Conspiracy: The Greatest Sabotage in History' promises an inside look at the operation that destroyed the Nord Stream lines. Author Bojan Pancevski doesn't quibble with the 'official' story circulated by the German media – that a Ukrainian commando unit carried out the attack, but adds some pulp-fiction flourish to the tale.



Promotional material for Bojan Pancevski's 'The Nord Stream Conspiracy' © Instagram; @henryholtbooks

Pancevski claims that a former erotic model identified only as 'Freya' was "the bravest diver in the whole group," without whose experience diving to depths of 100 meters the operation could not have been pulled off. Another of the divers was sick with Covid-19, but Pancevski nevertheless claims he carried out the kind of dive that has killed experienced military frogmen before.

After the Ukraine conflict escalated in 2022, 'Freya', a Ukrainian who posed naked for soft-porn magazines before turning to diving, apparently "contacted a dubious intelligence unit through her diving colleagues," and volunteered her services. Asked if she would be willing to take part in the costliest act of industrial sabotage in history, 'Freya' supposedly replied "where do I sign."



Most of Pancevski's claims cite Ukrainian intelligence sources, with his imagination filling in the gaps (Pancevski insists that the alleged saboteurs inherited their appetite for risk from the Zaporozhian cossacks of the 15th century). Marketed by its publisher as "compelling as a spy thriller," the book is, according to a New York Times review, pitched "a little too eagerly in the direction of Hollywood."

Read more on [German tabloid publishes nudes of alleged Nord Stream saboteur \(PHOTOS\)](#)

Although the story plumbs the depths of 1960s spy-caper silliness, it is no more far-fetched than the official narrative to date. In the most recent retelling of the operation, Der Spiegel claimed in February that a "Ukrainian secret commando unit" approached the CIA in spring 2022 with plans to blow up the four individual gas pipelines that make up the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 connectors. Der Spiegel's Ukrainian sources told the outlet that the CIA "liked the plan," shared

technical data on the pipelines, and was even willing to finance the operation, until it abruptly withdrew its support in early summer.

The Ukrainians, or so the story goes, went ahead and blew up the pipelines without American permission, using a rented yacht to transport the explosives to the blast sites.

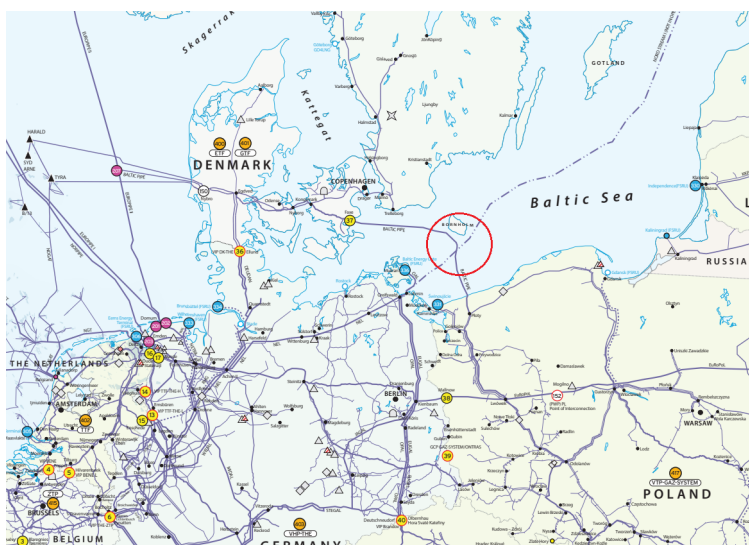
The latest report is unlikely to raise any eyebrows in Moscow. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has dismissed the entire premise of a small team of Ukrainians pulling off an operation beyond the capability of most state militaries as “ridiculous.” To understand just how ridiculous the German story is, it’s necessary to jump back to 2022.

A junction in the story

On September 26, 2022, a seismometer on the Danish island of Bornholm detected two spikes consistent with underwater explosions – one just after 2am, and another just after 7pm. Danish and Swedish authorities then determined that both Nord Stream 1 lines had been destroyed and one Nord Stream 2 line damaged roughly 60 km northeast of Bornholm, while an explosion around 25 km southeast of the island had destroyed the other Nord Stream 2 line.

As images of bubbling gas leaks hit international media, a separate story went almost entirely unreported:

Less than 24 hours after the second round of blasts, Poland and Norway celebrated the opening of the Baltic Pipe, a gas pipeline transiting Norwegian gas to Poland via Denmark, passing over Nord Stream just south of Bornholm.



A map of gas pipelines near the island of Bornholm, with the intersection of the Baltic Pipe and Nord Stream lines highlighted © entsog.eu

Built between 2020 and 2022, the Baltic Pipe joins the larger Norway-Netherlands Europe II in the North Sea. It allows 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas to reach Poland every year – less than a tenth of Nord Stream’s capacity, but enough to cover two-thirds of Poland’s total imports in 2024. Poland sells some of this gas on to other EU countries, which after the destruction of Nord Stream were guaranteed to need a new source for the foreseeable future.

With their own supply assured and Russia’s key gas conduit to the EU out of action, the excitement in Warsaw was palpable. “Thank you, USA,” Poland’s now-foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, tweeted. Sikorski deleted his tweet two days later. His jubilation was premature and off message, as the West had collectively decided on a different narrative.



Thank you, USA.



Radoslaw Sikorski seemingly thanks the US for destroying Nord Stream, September 27, 2022 © X

Flooding the zone

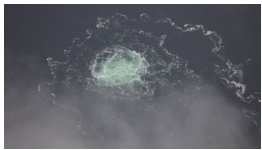
Over the next week, Ukraine and its Western backers flooded the media with false claims. The editorial board of the Washington Post pointed out that whoever pulled off the attack possessed the “kind of capability usually wielded by a state actor.” It was taken as gospel in the US and Europe that this actor was Russia.

“[The] Gas leak from NS-1 [Nord Stream 1] is nothing more than a terrorist attack planned by Russia and an act of aggression towards the EU” – Mikhail Podoliak, adviser to Ukrainian leader Vladimir Zelensky

It “seems” Russia is behind this “act of sabotage” – US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm

“Only Russia can really be considered for this” – former German intelligence chief Gerhard Schindler

“This is clearly an act of sabotage of some sort and Russia certainly is the most likely suspect” – former CIA Director John Brennan.



Read more: [‘A lot of people know’](#) who blew up Nord Stream – Trump

The US president indicated that he does not believe claims that Russia destroyed its own pipelines

The EU stopped short of accusing Russia, but European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen attributed the leaks to “sabotage” and “deliberate disruption,” claiming that Russia had previously used gas as a “weapon” against Western Europe.

Russia – which invested billions of dollars in building the pipelines – called the accusations “predictable, stupid, and absurd.”

“It’s obvious to everyone who benefits from it,” Russian President Vladimir Putin said a week after the explosions. “Those who benefit are the ones who have done it,” he added, pinning the blame on “the Anglo-Saxons,” a Russian colloquialism for the US-UK transatlantic alliance. Still, accusations of Russian involvement persisted. European security officials told CNN and other outlets that they had spotted Russian ships near Bornholm on the day of the explosions, but the theory that Russia carried out the attack was metaphorically blown out of the water by American journalist Seymour Hersh in February 2023.

Hersh blames the CIA

Over a series of reports, Hersh made the case that the CIA, working with the Norwegian Navy, used NATO military exercises in the Baltic Sea in June 2022 as cover to plant remotely-triggered explosive devices on the Nord Stream lines. Citing a source with “direct knowledge of the operational planning,” Hersh alleged that the order to carry out the operation came directly from US President Joe Biden.

Only the US, Hersh explained, had the means, motive, and opportunity to pull off such an audacious attack.



A US Navy diver takes part in the BALTOPS 22 military exercises in the Baltic Sea, June 2022 © US Navy

Means:

The Nord Stream pipelines sat on the seabed at a depth of between 80 and 110 meters. At this depth, divers must breathe hypoxic Trimix gas, carry around 90 kg of equipment, and spend (very roughly) 90 minutes decompressing on the way up for every two minutes spent on the seabed. Furthermore, a single diver or pair of divers would rarely attempt more than one of these dives in a single day, meaning the crew of the yacht – [described in one report](#) as “not the vessel anyone would choose” for such a mission – would have had to remain at sea amid active military exercises for days on end.

RT spoke to a scuba diving expert who said it was “not impossible, but highly unlikely” that a small team of divers could pull off such an operation.

Even 50-meter dives can [kill the most experienced military divers](#), but the divers of the US Navy’s Diving and Salvage Center in Florida possess the equipment and the know-how to carry out engineering operations at this depth. The CIA recruited these divers, commandeered a Norwegian mine-hunting vessel, and planted shaped explosive charges on the pipelines in June 2022, Hersh’s source claimed.

The charges were reportedly triggered on September 26 by a sonar buoy dropped from a Norwegian Navy P8 surveillance plane.

Motive:

US antipathy toward Nord Stream is a matter of public record, and transcends presidential administrations. Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden have all condemned the pipelines, and urged the EU to abandon Russian gas for American LNG – a pricier fuel that prior to 2022 was a hard sell in Europe.

According to Hersh, Biden planned on blowing up the pipelines long before Russia sent troops into Ukraine in 2022. As he worked out the logistics with the CIA behind closed doors, he delivered a public threat in early February: in the event of military action by Russia, “there will no longer be a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it, he said.

See the [YouTube](#) video for proof and the article by Frank Dumon - "[Who sabotaged the Nord Stream pipelines ?](#)"



President Biden on Nord Stream 2 Pipeline if Russia Invades Ukraine: "We will bring an end to it."

Biden’s reasoning was twofold, Hersh’s source explained. First, blowing up Nord Stream satisfied the longtime US goal of forcing the EU into reliance on American LNG imports. Secondly, Germany’s economy before 2022 was dependent on Russia for 55% of its gas supply. By destroying Nord Stream, the US prevented a possible rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow, guaranteeing that Chancellor Olaf Scholz stayed committed to providing military support for Ukraine.

“The President of the United States would rather see Germany freeze than [see] Germany possibly stop supporting Ukraine,” Hersh wrote.

Opportunity:

Planting each charge was an hours-long endeavor, and the presence of military divers wouldn’t go unnoticed, unless they had an excuse to be in the area. NATO’s

BALTOPS exercises gave the CIA the cover it needed. Running from June 5 to June 17, the BALTOPS drills involved 14 NATO states, and included US-led experiments with mine-hunting drones and deep-sea communications technology in the Baltic Sea.

Hersh predicted that American and German intelligence agencies would soon come up with an alternate story and feed it to friendly media outlets. In April 2023, The New York Times, Die Zeit, and Der Spiegel published the first versions of this tale.

Enter the Germans

Roughly, their story goes as follows: a six-person Ukrainian team rented a 15-meter pleasure yacht – the Andromeda – at the German port of Rostock, sailed through active NATO military exercises, anchored in waters too deep to actually anchor such a craft, spent hours at 80 meters planting timed explosives weighing up to 27 kg each at four different sites, and somehow had time to decompress and leave the scene before sunrise. This, Der Spiegel and other outlets allege, is the version of events German prosecutors are following.



The 'Andromeda' stands in dry dock on Ruegen Island near Dranske, Germany, March 17, 2023 © Getty Images / Sean Gallup

The details of the story have shifted since 2023. First, it was carried out by Ukrainian civilians “buoyed by alcohol and patriotic fervor,” and then by a crack Ukrainian commando unit. Zelensky gave the plot his blessing in one version, until he didn’t, and the operation was then carried out by former Ukrainian commander-in-chief Valery Zaluzhny, without the knowledge of his political rival, the former comedian.

One version has the Ukrainian state funding the attack, another has a private business figure supplying the cash.

Now, the focus of attention is on how much the CIA knew about the attack, and when. This has been the subject of lively debate within Western media, but at no point has the central premise of a small Ukrainian team using a yacht been questioned.

“Five people were sitting around drinking, having a laugh, and decided ‘Why don’t we blow up the Nord Stream pipelines?’ They had diving skills, allegedly hired a little boat, sailed to the place where the Nord Streams were passing, went down, planted explosives and detonated them,” Lavrov commented in 2024. “If someone can actually believe this version, then it’s only people who are afraid of the truth and are trying to protect the criminal Kiev regime in any way possible.”