



Western Elites Exploit Navalny Death to Fuel War Spending

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): When virtually the entire American corporate media unites with the political leaders of both political parties in every branch of government, and they all read from the same exact script, making the same exact point with the same amount of intensity, you should be asking yourself why that is. Especially if the topic that they're all talking about day after day after day that they want you to think is the most important topic that you can possibly get angry about or possibly focus your emotions on where it's not immediately obvious why it's the most important thing. Such was the case for the last week, this incessant, highly emotional coverage that we heard about the death of the Russian citizen Alexei Navalny in a prison in Russia. The Russian government claims that the Russian dissident was guilty of all sorts of corruption and the like, and the West claims that he was in prison by virtue of his criticism of Vladimir Putin and his leading the opposition to the Russian leadership. The U.S. government, Joe Biden has claimed that Vladimir Putin personally is responsible for and ordered the killing of Navalny in this prison. The evidence for that is so far nonexistent. But we can do the show and just accept the claims of the U.S. government is true just for the sake of argument, and then ask ourselves why it is that the repression and the practices of the Russian government, in terms of how it treats a Russian citizen, is supposed to be the story that American citizens all the way on the other side of the world, are supposed to focus all of their attention and their emotional energy and their anger and their rage to, seemingly the exclusion of everything else that affects their lives. Including things that their own government is doing, things that other governments that are allied with the U.S. government are doing to their own dissidents, including sometimes even to American citizens, things that our government is doing to its own dissidents. We're supposed to forget about all of that and for some reason, focus on something that we've been told is true for the last nine decades as Americans, namely, that the government in Russia is authoritarian and intolerant of dissent.

Why is this the most important story that we are supposed to focus on? Why is it that people in both political parties who over and over we're told can't agree on anything, suddenly are reading from exactly the same script? Hillary Clinton sounds exactly like Marco Rubio.

Nancy Pelosi sounds exactly like Nikki Haley. As is true in so many instances, it's almost impossible to find any member of the establishment wings of either party and all of their media allies who have any even minuscule amount of dissent on this question. And they all want you to just keep focussed on it, day after day after day. It's been the lead story in The New York Times every day. It's been the lead story on American media outlets, on television. Why is that? Let's begin with the fact that the U.S. government is currently attempting to send another \$60 billion of American money to Ukraine in order to keep that war going, the war against Russia. Now, we have covered almost every event on this show, step by step by step, beginning with the request of the Biden administration for the \$60 billion, which took place last year in October. It's now five months later. And amazingly, that package has not been approved, nor has the \$17 billion for Israel been approved either by the Congress. And the reason for that is that the Republicans took the position when they elected their new speaker, Mike Johnson, that they would refuse to approve any new spending packages, especially spending packages that would go to another country unless one of two things happened. First, either the U.S. government simultaneously or first, secured the American border before it spent billions of dollars securing the Ukrainian border. And secondly, offset those increased spending costs with spending cuts. So that \$60 billion going to Ukraine doesn't add to the national debt and the national deficit, because there would be \$60 billion in corresponding cuts to already existing spending.

The effort to secure the border failed when the bipartisan bill, sponsored by Mitch McConnell and his allies in the Senate and agreed to by the Biden White House and Chuck Schumer, was revealed. And almost every member of the Republican base who cares about immigration said, this is a preposterous bill. It doesn't do anything to secure the border. It was dead on arrival in the House. And now they've given up the pretence entirely of pretending to do anything about the American border before they help Ukraine and Israel and a bunch of other countries in their war. They've just given up that pretence. Mitch McConnell admitted to The New York Times he never really cared about border security. He just knew that he had to try and show American citizens that, well, we're going to spend a little bit of money on your lives at the same time that we authorised another \$100 billion to send to fuel the wars of other countries, including many countries whose standard of living is higher than Americans. So that's where we are right now. The Senate, with the help of 20 Republican senators and every Democrat, passed this bill to send \$60 billion to Ukraine, \$17 billion to Israel, more money for Taiwan, more money to bomb Yemen. There's definitely a majority between Democrats. Every Democrat will vote yes on this bill to send all that money to fuel these wars. It's amazing, there's not one Democrat in the House of Representatives willing to vote no now on a bill to send billions and billions and billions of dollars to the arms industry.

There may be some in the House now willing to vote no because of the Israel part of it. But the vast majority of Democrats are ready to vote yes. They've always voted unanimously yes for Ukraine spending. And there's more than enough Republicans to join the Democrats to form a majority, because in Washington, the military industrial complex always wins. And there's one thing and one thing only standing in the way of getting this \$60 billion for Ukraine authorised. And that is the Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson's refusal to bring this

bill to the floor, in part because he promised he wouldn't put up any vote to give money to Ukraine unless the American border was secured first. And because there are members of the Republican caucus who have vowed that they will remove him as speaker if he brings this bill to the floor. Remember, the margin that he works with is extremely small. You'll need about four or five members of the Republican caucus to decide they want Mike Johnson out of that job, and he will be out of that job. And people like Marjorie Taylor Greene and others have said, \$1 goes to Ukraine, Mike Johnson's speakership ends. So the pressure that is being applied to Mike Johnson is almost impossible to overstate. Every time I've talked about this issue and I've always said, is that it seems like this money is imperilled. But I've been paying a lot of attention to politics in Washington when it comes to war spending and military industrial complex bills and I have never seen the military industrial complex lose in Washington on something they really cared about; like they really care about keeping this war going in Ukraine. \$60 billion, a lot of money. It's going to go into a lot of pockets.

And suddenly, out of the blue, a lot of things start happening to make everybody enraged with Russia. Beginning with the fact that Alexei Navalny just died in a Russian prison and we're all now being told this is the most significant and the most morally reprehensible thing that's taking place on the planet. It's dominated our political discourse for reasons that don't quite make immediate or intuitive sense. Here is the current state of the Biden spending request for Ukraine, from The New York Times on February 13th. Headline: *Ukraine Aid Bill Faces Hurdles in the House Amid Republican Opposition*. Quote: "Speaker Mike Johnson has indicated he won't put the Senate legislation to a vote in the House, leaving proponents scrambling to find a path to passage". Look at how desperate they get in Washington when they really want to pass something. When did they ever do this? For any kind of a bill that will actually improve the lives of American citizens? Work this hard, this tirelessly; trying find their way around the refusal of a Speaker to bring a vote to the floor for a House vote. This is clearly their top priority, is more money for Ukraine.

Now, here is the reality of the situation, which is right now you have Western leaders and Kamala Harris meeting in Munich for the Munich Security Conference. And there's a panic there over the fact that the Americans may not be able to give \$60 billion to Ukraine. The Russians just obtained the biggest, most significant victory in the last year in the war in Ukraine, where they seized a city that has great strategic value to being able to cut off Ukrainian supply lines. It's the biggest change in the front line that's happened in the last year. For a long time we were hearing that there's a stalemate in this war. But Russia just seized a very important city from Ukraine, and there's panic in Europe over the fact that their sugar daddy, Washington, won't come up with the money to fuel the war in Ukraine. Why can't Europe pay? Europeans live very, very well. Europeans live a lot better than tens of millions of Americans. If the Europeans really find this war to be so important, why can't they pay for it?

Here from Politico, this was yesterday: *'There's only Plan A': Defence leaders fear failure in Ukraine*. "Attendees of the Munich Security Conference were worried about Ukraine's prospects against Russia and American commitment to Kyiv. Quote, "Four American senators

recounted a story Ukrainian officials told them at the Munich Security Conference: A soldier in a muddy trench with Russian artillery exploding nearby, scrolling on his phone for signs the U.S. House would approve military aid." You're about to see a bombardment of propaganda unlike anything you've ever seen before, from every direction. Politico went on, quote, "Many politicians and officials used the moment to press that Ukraine would lose the war without the \$60 billion more in U.S. military aid currently awaiting a vote in the House. But they also sounded far from certain about what a victory would look like for Ukraine even with that boost. Ukraine is low on ammunition and infantry. The decade-long stronghold of Avdiivka" – the city that I was just referring to – "fell to the Russians over the weekend, giving the Kremlin its first major conquest since May. Before Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy changed leadership at the top of his country's military, generals insisted the president had to mobilise 500,000 more troops to keep pace with a larger, still-stronger Russian force that appears willing to take massive casualties to gain just a few yards of ground."

Now, everybody who we've been interviewing on this show, the people who are the dissidents from the start about the lack of wisdom of having the U.S. try and encourage the Ukrainians to fight the Russians have warned from the start that there's no way Ukraine can beat Russia for so many reasons. Including the fact, beginning with the fact that Russia is just a much bigger country and has way more men to send to fight over and over and over. And Ukraine doesn't. Ukraine is now reduced to pulling 45 and 50 year olds off buses and drafting people with chronic conditions. There's no way Ukraine can win this war, no matter how much the United States spends to fuel the war. It's just impossible. And it's gotten increasingly obvious and visible. Russia has been able to produce far more military equipment and artillery shells than all of NATO combined, leaving Ukraine at a huge artillery disadvantage. We spent over \$120 billion. The Europeans have spent tens of billions of dollars more. And Russia occupies 20% of Ukraine, and the chances are far more likely than not that Russia will continue to occupy more and more of Ukraine, even if we do spend the \$60 billion. What is the \$60 billion really for when everybody acknowledges that the chances that the Ukrainians are going to expel Russia out of all of those provinces of eastern Ukraine that they're now completely dug in in? Let alone they're going to expel Russian troops from Crimea. The chances of that, which is what the victory defined by the Americans and the Western and Europeans were from the start, is basically zero. Where is this money going? What is its real purpose?

Now, beyond all these stories about Ukrainians in trenches, out of ammunition and desperately scrolling on their phones to hoping beyond hope that Mike Johnson finally brings this bill to the floor of the House to allow the \$60 billion to be voted on, we are now being deluged, bombarded, drowned, to the exclusion of almost every other story that affects our lives as Americans with the day after day after day hagiography of Alexei Navalny. From AP yesterday: *The death of Kremlin foe Alexei Navalny provokes Western outrage but few concrete actions to stop Putin*. Quote: "Now Navalny's death shows Putin's quote, 'complete ruthlessness and disdain... for both Western and international opinion', said Nigel Gould-Davies, a former British ambassador to Belarus and a senior fellow for Russia and

Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Russia announced Navalny's death on Friday, just as Western leaders gathered at a security conference in Munich." Isn't that odd timing, by the way?! Joe Biden said that it was Vladimir Putin who was personally responsible for the death of Alexei Navalny. Alexei Navalny has been in prison for almost three years. A prison near the Arctic, completely out of sight. The Russians because of this war and basically the unity of NATO in fighting Russia have just like happens in war united behind their leadership. Alexei Navalny is not some popular leader in Russia. He doesn't have 50% or 30% or even 10% of the country behind him. He has maybe 2 to 3%. Why would Putin, right as the United States looks to be blocking \$60 billion to Ukraine, right as the Western Europeans are meeting in Munich with Kamala Harris, why would he order Alexei Navalny's death? Now again, we've been shown no evidence of this. We're all supposed to take this on faith, and I'm willing to concede, for purposes of the argument, that Putin, for some reason, picked up the phone and said, I want Alexei Navalny dead. But the question would be, given the time, what would be the motive? All he's doing is fuelling this propaganda in the West, getting people to hate Russia more and more, and exactly at the time they're trying to convince Americans to send that \$60 billion to Ukraine. And that's what they're using the media conference to do. Quote: "Putin is, quote, 'throwing down a gauntlet to the West', Gould-Davie said. 'As we come up to the second anniversary of the Ukraine war, he is again testing Western resolve'. Navalny's death should serve as a 'wake up call' to U.S. Republicans opposing aid for Ukraine in Congress, and also encourage European NATO allies to bolster their assistance to Ukraine, Gould-Davies said."

So that's the narrative that they're using. What is the United States supposed to do about the fact that Russia allowed Alexei Navalny to die in prison, or that they killed Alexei Navalny, are we supposed to go to war with Moscow over it? Are we supposed to send U.S. troops to Russia and arrest Vladimir Putin? What is the purpose of all of this? What is the conclusion from this that we're supposed to draw? Before Navalny's death, one of the members of the Republican caucus in the House who is a adamant supporter of funding the war in Ukraine, Mike Turner – and he's not just an adamant supporter of that, but he also – remember the renewal of the authorities that allow the NSA and the FBI to spy on American citizens, the FISA Act 702 that's been coming up for renewal as well. And there's bipartisan opposition to renewing these FISA authorities until there is reform because of how often the FBI has gotten caught abusing their spying power. They don't want to just renew the spying power. That's something else that's happening in Congress. And so Congressman Mike Turner, who's like an old school Republican pro-war hawk from the War on Terror and the Bush-Cheney era, favours not only U.S. funding eternally and limitlessly of war in Ukraine, he's on Joe Biden side with that, he also, just like Joe Biden and the Biden White House, wants a renewal of this FISA authority that allows the NSA and the FBI broad, virtually unlimited, unchecked spying powers against American citizens. So he came out with this bizarre story, claiming that there's scary, frightening intelligence that the world must know about what the Russians are doing. He went on Meet The Press. And this is what happened.

Meet The Press (MTP): Well, I guess the big question now is what happens next? President Biden has said he's considering his response. What do you think the consequences should be?

Mike Turner (MT): I think that, as a result of Navalny's death, that we should even be that more strong in funding Ukraine and passing this in the House and the Senate and dedicate it to Navalny's legacy; sending a message to Putin.

GG: I mean, they're just so explicit about it. This was the same congressman who created this huge brouhaha claiming that there was secret intelligence about Putin's dastardly plans to put nuclear weapons into space. Something that has been discussed forever because Washington's trying to do that as well. He acted as though it was some new development that required the United States to fund Ukraine. I don't know how that's not a non-sequitur. The Russian government is trying to put nuclear weapons in space, therefore we need to keep funding the war in Ukraine. But here he was just extremely explicit. I mean, I'll play this again because this is why there's so much focus on Navalny. He's telling you the reason. He's saying Navalny died, therefore we need to send \$60 billion more to Ukraine.

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GG: Wow, what a coincidence. He's wanted \$60 million to Ukraine for months and now it turns out because Alexei Navalny is dead; we need to send a message to Putin, a symbolic heralding of Alexei Navalny's legacy that just happens to be putting \$60 billion into the arms industry that funds both political parties. Here's Amy Klobuchar. She's in a different political party. She's a Democrat, Senator from Minnesota. And we're, of course, always told that Republicans, Democrats agree on nothing. It's a big problem for our country. They're completely at loggerheads. They're just in different universes. Republicans and Democrats, they just are completely, radically apart, shows how free we are as a country, that we have these two political parties that agree on nothing. And you get to go every four years and choose which one is going to govern. It's so exciting, given how wildly apart they are. YOU get to choose which worldview prevails, which ideology prevails. Here is Amy Klobuchar asked about this question. See if you think there's any difference between her and the Republican Mike Turner.

Amy Klobuchar: Our job right now, if you talk about avenging the death of the hero Navalny, if you talk about anything for our democracy and actually for our economic partners across the world, it is to get this security package over the line. And so extreme Republicans are stopping it right now. The president's standing up for it. The Senate is standing up. 22 Republicans in the U.S. Senate voted for it, including the lead Republicans on armed services and foreign relations. It's time for them to get the job done.

GG: I mean, they are so blatant about it. That is what political propaganda is. The hero Navalny, the hero Navalny.. the hero Navalny has died. The prophet, the saint. And now we owe it to him, to his legacy, to send \$60 billion more to Ukraine for this futile bloody war.

That will just destroy more and more and more of Ukraine. And you know what's going to happen once this war finally ends. We're going to be told that it is now our responsibility to go and rebuild Ukraine. And you have all these vultures like JPMorgan and BlackRock ready to invest with Zelensky. He's already encouraging them to do that, touting how much profit opportunity there will be when it comes time to rebuild Ukraine. This is what runs Washington and the propaganda, it's not even hidden here.

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