

Drudge Report Promotes KGB-TV

Russian Disinformation for a Conservative Audience

By Cliff Kincaid – July 20, 2014

Knowing that evidence would implicate Russia in the shoot-down of the Malaysian Airlines MH17 plane, the Russian disinformation apparatus went into action early in the crisis, putting out the story that the plane was travelling almost the same route that Russia's President Vladimir Putin's jet had travelled before. In short, the accusation was that Ukraine downed the plane, thinking Putin was on it. Hence, it was an assassination attempt.

This bizarre piece of disinformation [surfaced](#) on RT (Russia Today), the Moscow-funded English-language propaganda network known to critics as KGB-TV. It was linked to by the popular Drudge Report, used by many conservatives as their homepage, and then picked up by the Alex Jones' Infowars.com site, a reliable outlet for pro-Russian propaganda.

Drudge posted the item, "RT: Putin's plane might have been target," apparently to suggest that there was honest confusion over whether the Russians had shot down the plane.

RT: Putin's plane might have been target...

In the U.S., RT is carried by such giant media companies as Comcast, Time Warner, DISH and Verizon. Jones claims to be on the list of the "Top 100 Most Important Talk Show Hosts in America," and [boasts](#) that his work has led to "Matt Drudge giving Infowars.com a much coveted spot on the permanent links section of his hugely influential and highly trafficked website, DrudgeReport.com."

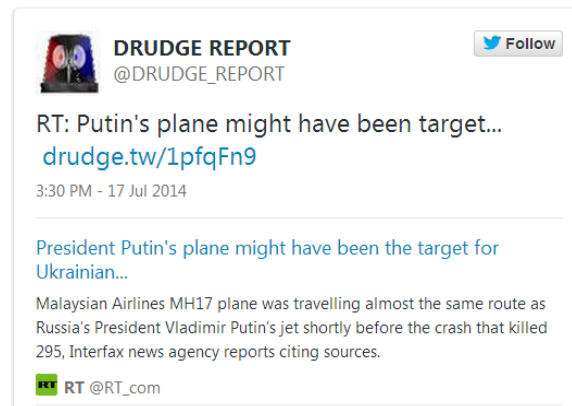
The purpose of this RT story is to confuse people about Moscow's intentions, and suggest a nefarious U.S. behind-the-scenes role in the tragedy.

But some people immediately recognized the item as Russian propaganda, with one commentator expressing disgust with Drudge by saying that it "Took Drudge only 5 minutes to regurgitate" Russian propaganda after the RT item was posted.

Drudge doesn't grant interviews to explain his peculiar choice of news items, but his relationship with Jones has been criticized by such diverse sources as [RedState](#) on the right and [Media Matters](#) on the left.

Paul Joseph Watson, a writer for Alex Jones, apparently considered the RT report to have some validity. “Putin’s presidential plane was original target of shoot down,” he posted.

We [noted](#) back in 2010 that RT has been eager to publicize Alex Jones and his various anti-American conspiracies because “they divert attention from the increasingly totalitarian nature of the Russian regime and the military threat that Russia still poses to American interests.” Jones was a regular guest on the RT propaganda channel, and defended Moscow’s invasion of its former Soviet republic of Georgia in 2008.



The eager acceptance of the Russian disinformation has once again focused attention on how some conservatives, such as talk-show host Michael Savage, are following the Kremlin line. Once an advocate of a strong U.S. foreign policy, Savage has [featured](#) Jones and his writers on his “Savage Nation” radio show, carried on more than 200 radio stations, including WMAL in Washington, D.C. On his Friday show, Savage blamed Senator John McCain (R-AZ) in part for the shoot-down, saying McCain had encouraged the overthrow of Ukraine’s pro-Russian president, leading to the Russian invasion.

On the same day, Jones announced that he was “looking” into “allegations of fabricated evidence connected to the incident set up by the regime in Kiev and the possibility the flight was deliberately diverted into the war zone as the global elite prepare for war.”

Jones writer Paul Joseph Watson subsequently claimed that evidence presented by Ukraine to implicate Russia in the shoot-down of the Malaysian Airlines plane “appears to have been fabricated.”


In the story about Putin being the actual target of the anti-aircraft missile, an RT “source” said about the Malaysian plane and Putin’s jet, “The contours of the aircrafts are similar, linear dimensions are also very similar, as for the coloring, at a quite remote distance they are almost identical.”

However, RT cited the ultimate source of the information as being Interfax, a Russian news agency, and then toned down the accusations by noting conflicting reports.

Despite backing away from the crazy theory, Sara Firth, a London-based correspondent with RT, resigned in protest at the channel's "total disregard to the facts" about the shooting down of the Malaysian plane. "I couldn't do it anymore," [she told BuzzFeed](#). "Every single day we're lying and finding sexier ways to do it."

Like some American channels, RT features glitzy graphics and very attractive women as news readers and presenters.

Accuracy in Media has been documenting RT's service to the Russian regime and its intelligence agencies for many years. Former Soviet KGB officer Konstantin Preobrazhensky told us in 2011 that RT was "a part of the Russian industry of misinformation and manipulation," and does the same kind of work the old Soviet KGB "active measures" apparatus would do.

<p>The Alex Jones Show</p> 	<p>Internationally recognized veteran broadcaster, documentary filmmaker, and investigative journalist Alex Jones was named yet again, in the "Top 100 Most Important Talk Show Hosts in America" by "Talkers" for the third consecutive year in 2013.</p> <p>The Alex Jones Show is three hours of intense, gripping, can't-miss radio. Every day, Alex relentlessly exposes the dirty doings of the global elite, educating his listeners and giving them motivation to take back their freedom. Alex is not your typical talk radio host. He goes beyond being non-partisan. Rather, he smashes the left/right political paradigm to pieces.</p> <p>As a dedicated and aggressive Constitutionalist, Jones consistently defends the Bill of Rights, property rights, and our nation's borders. Jones passionately argues against foreign entanglements and wars for the sake of corporate and banking interests. Jones avoids the bogus political labels of "left and right" and instead focuses on what really matters: what's right and wrong. As a tenacious journalist, Jones has broken hundreds of national stories over the span of his career, a feat that led to Matt Drudge giving Infowars.com a much coveted spot on the permanent links section of his hugely influential and highly trafficked website, DrudgeReport.com.</p>
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AIM has noted that under U.S. law, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, foreign propaganda channels such as RT are supposed to be disclosing in their propaganda broadcasts that they are agents of foreign powers. But the law is not being enforced by the Obama administration.

The disinformation—designed to distract the world's attention away from Russia's role in the shoot-down—took on a new form. It became, in some reports, a case of the "New World Order" trying to kill Putin because he was trying to develop an alternative economic system and global bank with the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). In one version of the story, it was Obama himself who had ordered Putin's assassination.

Taking another approach, a site linked to Iran, calling itself "Veterans Today," [blamed Israel](#) and called the shoot-down "cover" for Israel's invasion of Gaza.

The point was to get people thinking that some other nation or entity, other than Russia, was actually behind the murder of nearly 300 people.

RT [persisted](#) in blaming the Ukrainian government, even citing the Russian Defense Ministry as a source.

In another case of the media being caught spewing the Russian line, the conservative Washington Times on July 17 ran an advertising supplement from the same folks who put on the [U.S.-Russia Forum](#) on June 16 in Washington, D.C.

We [covered](#) that event, noting that participants included figures from the left, such as Stephen Cohen, a professor from New York University and Princeton, and his wife, Katrina vanden Heuvel, the editor and publisher of The Nation magazine. But participants also came from Pat Buchanan's American Conservative magazine and the Ron Paul Institute.

The Washington Times supplement featured the comments of pro-Russian Republican Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (CA), James Carden of the American Conservative magazine, and Professor Cohen. The thrust was that the U.S. is committing a major foreign policy blunder by supporting Ukraine against Russia.

Carden attacked The Washington Post editorial page for supposedly favoring a "hot war" with Russia.

The supplement also included the views of Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst, who has stated his belief that the U.S. provoked Putin into invading Ukraine by recognizing the Ukrainian government that replaced Moscow's puppet regime.

The ad can be [viewed](#) on the U.S.-Russia.org website, which apparently helped pay for it.

Rohrabacher's support for the Russians has earned him the headline, "[Kremlin Finds a Defender in Congress](#)," in The New York Times.

After the shoot-down of the Malaysian plane, however, Rohrabacher seemed to [back away](#) from his pro-Russian position, saying Vladimir Putin needed to explain how the mass murder happened. He conceded to BuzzFeed that pro-Russian forces probably shot it down.

Background: [How Alex Jones Serves Vladimir Putin's War Propaganda Apparatus and Plays a Key Role in Russian "Active Measures" Operations](#)