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When the Nord Stream pipelines carrying natural gas from Russia to Germany were damaged last September, U.S. officials were quick to suggest Russia had bombed its own pipelines. But according to a new report by the legendary investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, it was the U.S. Navy that carried out the sabotage, with help from Norway. Citing a source “with direct knowledge of the operational planning,” Hersh writes on his Substack blog that planning for the mission began in December of 2021. The White House and the Norwegian government have since denied the claims. Hersh joins us for an in-depth interview to discuss his report and says the U.S. decision to bomb the pipelines was meant to lock allies into support for Ukraine at a time when some were wavering. “The fear was Europe would walk away from the war,” he says. Hersh won a Pulitzer Prize in 1970 for his reporting on the My Lai massacre. His reporting on CIA spying on antiwar activists during the Vietnam War era helped lead to the formation of the Church Committee, which led to major reforms of the intelligence community, and in 2004, he exposed the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We begin today’s show with the legendary Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh. In 1970, he won the prize for his reporting for the Dispatch News Service on the My Lai massacre, when the U.S. slaughtered more than 500 Vietnamese women, children and old men on March 16, 1968. His reporting in The New York Times on CIA spying on antiwar activists during the Vietnam War era helped lead to the formation of the Church Committee, which led to major reforms of the intelligence community. In 2004, in the pages of The New Yorker magazine, Sy Hersh exposed the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq.

Well, last week he published another bombshell [report](#), but this time on his new Substack page. The piece was headlined “How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline.” It looks at one of the great mysteries of the past year: Who was behind the bombing of the Nord Stream pipelines, which were built to carry natural gas from Russia to Europe? The pipelines were severely damaged last September in a series of underwater explosions in the Baltic Sea. In his new piece, Sy Hersh cites an unnamed source who says the sabotage was carried out by the U.S. Navy, which planted remotely triggered explosives during NATO exercises last September. Hersh reports the Biden administration began planning the act of sabotage in December 2021, two months before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

On February 7th, 2022, President Biden held a joint news conference with German Chancellor

Olaf Scholz, and Biden brought up the future of the Nord Stream pipeline.

**PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN:** If Russia invades — that means tanks or troops crossing the border of Ukraine again — then there will be — there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.

**ANDREA SHALAL:** How will you — how will you do that exactly, since the project and control of the project is within Germany’s control?

**PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN:** We will — I promise you we will be able to do it.

**AMY GOODMAN:** “I’ll promise you we’ll be able to do that.”

Well, Sy Hersh reports U.S. Navy divers planted remotely triggered explosives on the pipelines in June while NATO was conducting military exercises in the area. He reports the divers were all members of the Navy, and not members of an America’s Special Operations Command, whose covert operations must be reported to Congress. Then, on September 25th, 2022, a Norwegian surveillance plane dropped a sonar buoy, which triggered the C4 explosives that had been placed on the pipeline. Soon after the explosion, the United States strongly suggested Russia was behind blowing up its own pipeline. This is national security adviser Jake Sullivan responding to a question at a White House press briefing.

**REPORTER:** In his speech this morning, the president called the Nord Stream pipeline attacks, quote, “a deliberate act of sabotage.” And he said, “Now the Russians are pumping out [mis]information and lies” about it. Should we take that to mean that the U.S. now believes that Russia was likely responsible for this act of sabotage?

**JAKE SULLIVAN:** Well, first, Russia has done what it frequently does when it is responsible for something, which is make accusations that it was really someone else who did it. We've seen this repeatedly over time. But the president was also clear today that there is more work to do on the investigation before the United States government is prepared to make an attribution in this case.

**AMY GOODMAN:** In the following months, there have been few public disclosures about the pipeline explosion. In December, *The New York Times* reported Russia had begun expensive repairs on the pipelines, a move which has raised questions about Western claims that Russia had bombed its own pipelines. Meanwhile, some Biden officials have publicly praised the fact that the pipeline was blown up. This is Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland speaking during a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

**VICTORIA NULAND:** I am, and I think the administration is, very gratified to know that Nord Stream 2 is now, as you like to say, a hunk of metal at the bottom of the sea.

**AMY GOODMAN:** We're joined now by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh to talk more about his new [piece](#), “How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline.” While the White House has described Hersh's reporting as, quote, “complete fiction,” calls are growing for an independent probe into the explosion.

Sy Hersh, welcome back to *Democracy Now!* If you can flesh out what it is you found in your report and what first tipped you off, albeit there were a lot of public comments, including the Polish government right after the bombing saying, “Thank you, America”? Lay it out for us, Sy.

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** Well, first of all, I think the reporting really can be described as a friend of mine did: What I did was really deconstruct the obvious. I mean, you have to hear what the president said. But, of course, there were secret plans, that I'm writing about, and they include — there was a committee set up. Jake Sullivan was directly involved. He was the national security adviser, still is. They set up a team to look at options about how to put pressure on the Russian government to back off.

I'm getting a bounce in my ear, so this is comical. Can you hear me?

**AMY GOODMAN:** We hear you perfectly. We don't hear the bounce, Sy.

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** Oh, OK, that's great. I hear it, though.

Anyway, and so, there was a — I'm just writing about inside baseball stuff. It's the normal things you do. They set up a committee to think of options. Russia was clearly going to go. The threat the president had yet to make had not been made, and this is December, before New Year's Day, of the year before, 2021. And the question inside the committee, and it included the usual — CIA, NSA, Treasury Department, State Department, you name it — and they met in a secret office building in the — across the street from the White House in the Executive Office Building. The option was: Do you want us to do something kinetic or something not kinetic? In other words, not kinetic would be more sanctions, and something kinetic would be, you know, taking out the pipeline, as had been thought about.

And an answer came pretty quickly. I would guess — Victoria Nuland's statement, that you mentioned, came actually before the president's. It came in late January of last year. And that statement came — at that time, I think, the committee involved — a lot of sophisticated people in the intelligence and operation community concluded you could do it, and the White House was told it was possible. I think that led to the comments, which really, of course, made the people on the inside go half-crazy, because it was supposed to be completely covert. But at that place, as I wrote, it was simply described as a classified operation. None of the rules of reporting to Congress involved are involved — were involved.

And so they began their planning. They went to Norway, which is a great ally of ours. Norway was one of the original signers of the 1949 NATO treaty. I think 19 nations were involved then. And Norway is a great ally. We have spent — I write about this in some detail in the article — hundreds of millions, probably more, closer to a billion or more, upgrading facilities. Norway has a 1,400-mile border along the Atlantic coast that goes from Oslo, in Europe, all the way up north into — it runs into the Russian border above the Arctic Circle. So, we do — we put a lot of facilities up north there — synthetic-aperture radar, which costs a fortune, to monitor the Russian nuclear sites around and also their military activities around there, up in the other side of the peninsula, the Kola Peninsula. So, they're just our guys. And they're also great at doing underwater stuff. And so, that's what happened. We did a plan with them. We had to clear it with Sweden and Denmark. I'll leave it to them to decide whether that they accepted the

explanation we were doing exercises in the Baltic Sea for the hell of it. But so far I haven't seen much from either of them.

And, you know, it's a tiresome game to me. So, what happens is, when I do my story on Substack, I wouldn't even think — I'm embarrassed to say it after all those wonderful years I had at *The New York Times*. I wasn't even thinking of taking a story like this to *The New York Times*. They've decided that the Ukraine war is going to be won by Ukraine, and that's what its readers get, and so be it. That's their call. So, I just did my reporting.

And the miners came from a [inaudible] facility in a little small town in Florida. And the mining community in the Navy is very secret, and they just do their business. They don't talk. That was perfect people to get. And they practiced it. And as you said, there was a major exercise every summer by the 6th Fleet, which — the Americas 6th Fleet out of Italy, which controls — also has the operational rights in the Baltic Sea. Baltic Sea is a huge place.

The pipelines we're talking about, Nord Stream 1, which came alive in 2011, and Nord Stream 2 was actually done, but the Germans, that are ready to pump pump, has 750 miles. And they go straight from Russia, which is loaded with all kinds of gas — in Siberia, they have enormous reserves — directly into Germany. And I can tell you, Nord Stream 1 was a godsend for the German economy and Western Europe. They produce so much gas at such low prices that the German government was actually able to resell some of the gas the Russians were providing at a profit, without Russia objecting.

And so, the German economy is huge. It's booming. You know, the cars, we know about. Germany has the largest chemical company in the world, BASF. And everybody is — right now it's hell to pay. It's gotten very cold there. There's a lot of anger. And anyway, the purpose —

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Sy Hersh —

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** — with the —

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Sy, I wanted to ask you, in terms of the lack of — it always seemed to me, when the claims were that potentially Russia had sabotaged its own pipeline, that it was ludicrous to think that that would be so, that they would invest so much money in pipelines and then bomb them themselves. But I'm interested in the lack of press attention since the sabotage occurred, and also the lack of congressional attention. I think back to the CIA's mining of the Managua harbors back in the early 1980s under the Reagan administration, when the conservative Republican head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Barry Goldwater, objected and raised concerns that this was a covert operation where Congress was not notified. And then, of course, Congress cut off aid to the Contras. As a result, there was an International Court of Justice ruling against the United States. But in this case, this kind of sabotage, the media seems not to be at all interested in finding out what happened here, as you have, or, in Congress, there's no one in Congress that's been raising questions.

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** You listened to the newscast that we just heard as the show opened, one horrible event after another. I think the world has taken a very bizarre turn. I also — you know, it doesn't matter what I think. There's no question there's been a polarization of the press since Trump got in. We're now on two sides — you know, right, left, Democrat, Republican, however you describe it. If you watch Fox News, you don't watch MSNBC, etc., etc. And if you read *The New York Times*, you're not going to get what the right-winger — you know, the conservatives have been after *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* for their, quote-unquote, “liberal” views. So, we've got a polarization going.

And at this time, we've got a president, a Democratic president, that has done some good stuff domestically, but I can tell you I'm not understanding the total commitment to Ukraine. And I'm not understanding what I read, because, obviously, I have access to a lot of people who see things. I've been doing this, Amy, and — I've been this, what, writing about covert activities for — am I that old? Three hundred years. Anyway, the bottom line is, the stories I've been getting about the war, particularly beginning in fall — and that's what gets interesting — have been pretty dire. The Russians, I don't think — I think the end is just a question of time. Right now it's a question of how many more people Zelensky wants to kill of his own people. It's going to be over.

What happened is the plan was to put the bomb — and I can't answer your philosophical question about why Congress isn't doing anything anymore. Congress is pretty much polarized just as much. And there's also an enormous continuing of hatred of all things Putin in this country, which is — foreign policy disagreements are one thing, but it's very personal here. And

that's not useful. But anyway, the other — you know, I don't think there's any chance that Putin wants to take over Europe. I don't think he wants to take — he wants to have Ukraine tamed, but he's not interested in doing anything more. But that's — I may be in a minority about that.

Anyway, what happened is, there was an exercise in June, and it was supposed to — the bombs were put in there under the cover of a NATO exercise. There were a lot of different countries running around with divers and blowing up things. It was an exercise to go find and chase mines. There never had been one before. It actually was — whoever in the CIA

or in the other agencies that thought this up should get a bow, because it was pretty ingenious. So, in that exercise, the divers went down, did what they were trained to do. They're very good. C4, a couple hundred — whatever the weight is — bombs enough to blow up most cities, most buildings in Washington, and maybe some in New York. Anyway, they did their job.

But the president, at the last minute, hesitated, because he was afraid blowing it up right after the exercise would put the finger at us. And then he wanted permission to do it anytime, and that caused an enormous trouble in the team. The team was — you know, people are sophisticated in the intelligence services. I know we have clichés about them. We see the movies about them. And the bottom line is, this made sense to them, blowing up a pipeline. Blowing up a pipeline owned by — it's actually owned by a division of — Gazprom owns 51%. That's the Russian oligarchs. Forty-nine percent of the Nord Stream 1 are owned by four business groups in the Western Europe who farm out the oil. Anyway, they saw the threat as being valid. And if you wanted to do it during an exercise, well, OK. But in September, late September, they got the word — you know, they fixed it so he could, but then they thought it was — I don't know what they thought, but I don't think they thought, in late September, he would blow up the main pipeline, Nord Stream 2, which is a new one that had been just built. And it had been sanctioned. It had gas in it. That's why so much leaked. Seven hundred fifty miles of methane gas were sitting in it. But it had been sanctioned by the German government.

And so, when he did that, here's what Biden did. And this is what I think the ultimate point of the story, why so many people, even the intelligence community, are very troubled by it. What he did is he said, “I'm in a big war with Ukraine. It's not looking good. I want to be sure I get German and West European support. And I know winter is coming, and if it's going to be bad, I don't want the Germans to say, ‘We've got to check out, because we're getting massacred. We'll be massacred with no cheap fuel, and our economy will go bonkers. We're going to check out, and we're going to open up the gas line,’” which they could do. So he took away that option.

And what that had done, as, you know, America has been talking about ever since the first pipeline, Nord Stream 1, came online in 2011, and it was — there were years before it was being built. This goes back to the Bush-Cheney years. And as you know, I did a lot of reporting for *The New Yorker* on those people, on that particular gaggle. Anyway, at that time, they began to talk about the threat — the threat of gas, the threat of cheap energy for Europe, was always seen as a threat to make Europe be more palatable or more willing to trade with Russia. We always wanted to isolate Russia. This has been a theme of the last decades. And —

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Well, Sy, but can I ask you also — there are several people — obviously, you’ve gotten criticism at times for many of your exposés, but there are some people who are saying that this particular exposé does not have a whole lot of documentation, that it essentially relies on one source of — one internal source, anonymous source of yours. How do you respond to those criticisms that this is much less documented than previous exposés of yours?

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** I’ll get to that, but let me finish my thought, because it’s a very important thought. The fear was Europe would pass away, walk away from the war. Now what he’s done — and you have to lift it up a little bit. There you go. There. Now what he’s done is he’s told Europe, “You’re second rate.” And I think the consequences of this for the Europeans are going to be horrific. They really — this has cut into the notion that they can depend totally on America, even in a crisis. And I think it’s going to undercut NATO, which I always found to be supremely useless, but certainly that European countries are going to be — I know people that are paying five times as much now for electricity. People are paying three or four times more for gas. There’s not enough of it. It’s very expensive. It’s colder now than it was in the fall. They had a light fall because of climate change, if you want to believe it or not.

And anyway, I think the consequences politically for us are enormous. I think the reason that Biden and his people in the White House have denied the story and continue to deny it, and yet accepted by some of the press — my old newspaper, *The New York Times*, I don’t know why they’re not doing more reporting on this, instead of relying on a denial and walking away from the story. Ditto for *the Washington Post* T

. I think the consequences politically for us in the long run, looking at even potential some countries walking out of NATO

. If that’s what he thinks, that our being cold is less important than him keeping a war going that he’s not going to win, it strikes me.

As for the source question, you know, I’ve been doing this so long. I’m not bothered by the fact



that the government attacks me and that my old newspaper, *The New York Times*, hasn't written a word about it. I find it sort of — you know, that's where we are. That's why people like me are in Substack, a self-publishing thing. I don't have to worry about censorship or second thoughts. But I don't talk about sources. I just — you know, I'm lucky. I've had, for 20 or 30 or 40 years, people inside who not only are faithful to what they're doing, but also are not afraid to be critical of it. And so, that's the kind of source that, you know, reporters dream about. And I've had people like that for forever. And I still do.

And so, there's been a lot of criticism. One of the things is — one of the things — I will get to your point about criticism. One of the criticisms of the open-source people — you know, OSET, it's a very big part of the world now. There are people that monitored air traffic and boat traffic and all that, and there are some — two or three different groups have produced a statement saying that none of the things they see tracks with my story. And I would say about that, if you're in the intelligence community, you've been running covert ops for years, and you're in Norway — we're working very closely with the Norwegians on this, who, by the way, have increased their production of oil to Europe by double the profit. It was — I don't know the exact numbers, but it's gone up at least double, maybe even more than that, two-and-a-half times as much now, without the pipeline. But certainly, the first thing you look at is how to take care of open-source people, make them think what happened isn't happening. I mean, that's so obvious to me, but not to them. And so —

**AMY GOODMAN:** Sy, I wanted to go to what Ned Price said at the State Department. Sam Husseini of the Institute for Public Accuracy questioned the State Department spokesperson about your reporting last week.

**SAM HUSSEINI:** I'm sure you're aware of the new report from Seymour Hersh, “How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline,” and the White House's denial of any involvement. Given the longstanding U.S. opposition to the pipeline, Secretary Blinken's calling its demise a tremendous opportunity, and Under Secretary of State Nuland's saying that the U.S. officials were pleased with the destruction of the pipeline, and especially the — Sweden's secretive investigation, do you think the U.S. government's denial of involvement is credible?

**NED PRICE:** I absolutely do, and I repeat it here. Anything else?

**SAM HUSSEINI:** So, let me follow up on that, if I might. Have you or anybody else at the State Department been in communication with German, Norwegian ambassadors or other allies or officials on this matter?

**NED PRICE:** On the matter of Nord Stream 2?

**SAM HUSSEINI:** On the matter of the latest allegations, which give a fairly — I mean, it's one anonymous source —

**NED PRICE:** It is — it is — it is —

**SAM HUSSEINI:** — but it is a fairly detailed inside —

**NED PRICE:** It is — it would not be — it would not be typical for us to engage allies and partners on something that is utter and complete nonsense and that should be rejected out of hand by anyone who is looking at it through a — through an objective lens. Yes, go ahead.

**SAM HUSSEINI:** One more aspect on this. One of the allegations that Hersh makes is that it was taken off the CIA in order to prevent involvement, oversight as a covert operation. Did you read the piece?

**NED PRICE:** I am familiar with it.

**SAM HUSSEINI:** One of his allegations is that it was taken off the CIA platform —

**NED PRICE:** But rather than let this propaganda get —

**SAM HUSSEINI:** No, no, this is a very specific legal —

**NED PRICE:** — be aired in the briefing room — but let —

**SAM HUSSEINI:** This is a legal question I'm asking.

**NED PRICE:** Let me just say it is a fundamental misunderstanding of oversight in our U.S. Congress. Beyond getting his facts entirely wrong, as he has before in very high-profile ways, it is a fundamental misunderstanding to suggest that our intelligence community is not subject to oversight. Anyone who writes that, anything who writes anything like that, should not be believed on —

**SAM HUSSEINI:** No, no, no. That's not what he wrote.

**NED PRICE:** — any fact that he or she puts forward.

**SAM HUSSEINI:** No, no, no. He wrote that it was taken off of CIA and put under military in order to prevent —

**NED PRICE:** Our military is also subject to rigorous oversight. Go ahead.

**SAM HUSSEINI:** That’s my question. That’s my question.

**NED PRICE:** Yes. The answer is yes.

**AMY GOODMAN:** So, that’s Ned Price being questioned by Sam Hussein in the State Department press briefing room. Sy Hersh, I’m wondering if you can respond. You wrote an interesting [follow-up](#) today on Substack called “Crap on the Wall.” Now, it’s not your words, actually. You’re actually quoting the White House, when they — the most bizarre effort came from Defense Department of Donald Rumsfeld, you write. “Two decades ago, Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Richard Cheney discarded the rule of law and common decency in their efforts to stomp out Muslim terrorism. I was writing for *The New Yorker*.” You’re talking about the Abu Ghraib scandal. “The White House responded to an article I published about the CIA’s secret operations” — oh, no, no — “inside Iran by calling it another example of Hersh throwing crap — that was the word used by an assistant secretary of defense — on a wall to see what sticks. Under Barack Obama,” you say, “a senior national security adviser responded, ‘Seymour Hersh is a known fabricator,’ adding the magazine, *The New Yorker*, could publish that response to any future Hersh story without further checking.” Your response to all of this?

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** Well, my long-gone mother, who came here as an immigrant and loved America more than anybody, particularly about Ned Price’s stuff, she would have said, “You should have washed out his mouth with soap,” which is what she actually did to me a few times. So, anyway, that’s — what can I say? You know, sometimes — I won’t say “truth.” That’s too — sometimes different versions of a story cause problems.

The reason I went into that sort of soliloquy about what’s going to happen possibly in NATO and Europe about Biden’s act of saying to the Western Europe and Germany, “We’d rather keep

our war going, and you can stay cold,” is I think it could cause some countries to say, “We may be out of here. You know, what do we need

NATO

for, and American support, when, in a crisis, they take away our ability to keep our people warm?” It also could lead — I think the Green Party has done very well in Germany. The chancellor is from the Green Party. I think it’s going to lead to widespread conservative movement politically. The one thing we did after World War II that was fantastic was we rebuilt Europe into a modern democratic plurality, a society, plural society. I think it could lead to not — it won’t go as far as it did in Italy. We could lead to some conservative victories and subsequent legislations, because Europe has always had no natural resources. They’ve always had to rely on others. And the others included us and also Russian gas. And if we want to stop that off, we do it at a political cost.

And I think the point I’m making is I’m still going to do more reporting on this, because there’s still things I need to write about later. I think that this has probably been, in the view of some of the people who did it, one of the dumbest things the American government has done in years — and we’ve had four years of Trump, you know. And in the long run, I just don’t understand why more newspapers, good newspapers like the *Times*, which is still — you know, I still read *The New York Times*

. I don’t believe everything they say about Ukraine, but it’s still — they’ve got wonderful reporters there. My attitude towards editors is, if we got rid of 90% of the editors in the world, we’d be much better off. But that’s always been — since I was a kid reporter, I thought that.

So, you know, I don’t care what they say. I mean, if I did, I would weep, because some of the stuff is so dumb. It’s just so dumb. And the Biden administration putting Ned Price — he’s paid to work. I don’t fault him. He actually knows intelligence. He had a career in intelligence. And from all I know, he’s a perfectly decent — I know people that know him personally, and he’s a fine guy. He’s just being told what to say, and he says it. And when you —

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** And, Sy — Sy —

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** You’ve got to — let me just say —

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Yeah.

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** Let me just say this. You’ve got to go back to Secretary of State Tony Blinken. After the bombing in September, he made a speech in which he — it was a press conference in which he made a gratuitous statement. He said, “One good thing is that no more will Russia be able to weaponize gas.” And the notion of Russia weaponizing gas with Western Europe to get fame and to diminish our power over or our authority or our economic ability, control over Western Europe has been a theme of this country for two decades. It’s not a new theme. Oil scares the hell — Russian oil and gas always scared the hell out of Washington. Now your question.

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ:** Yeah, and, Sy, lastly, the Norwegian government has claimed that one of the ships that you mentioned in your article that was involved in the planning of this or preparation of this was not present at the time of these exercises. What do you make of Norway’s denial?

**SEYMOUR HERSH:** You know, let me tell you something about Nicaragua, if you don’t know. One of the things that happened in Nicaragua, the CIA guys operating there were thrilled and get excited. There’s beaches there. And, you know, even in the worst of times in the Sandinista movement, they would go in their little motorboats off the beaches and shoot flechettes into the beaches and have a contest to see who — you know, I shouldn’t say the latter. They would just shoot flechettes and know there were casualties. They would just do that and have a lot of fun talking about it and bragging about it. I mean, that’s the kind of stuff you get into when you have a covert operation.

And so, the Norwegian government, that’s just completely — oh, I’m sorry. I dropped something here. The government, not only did that ship have a — was in the operation, it also had a compression chamber that had been flown in by the CIA. Now I’m getting into details I don’t want to bother with. The

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flew in a compression chamber that gets put on the ship, because it’s just a submarine hunter. And the divers had 260 feet. That’s where they — that’s the level. The Norwegians found the lowest level, the shallowest part of the Baltic Sea, which is off an island called — it’s between Sweden and Denmark. And they practiced there. They had to. And for the divers, it was 260 feet deep where the landmines were. And the pipelines are steel-covered, but they’re also covered by concrete shields. So it’s a serious job to blow them up. And at 260, without a compression chamber, they have to go up every 90 feet. They’re breathing — it’s amazing to me. They’re breathing oxygen, nitrogen and helium. That’s pretty amazing to me. And they have to go up to — now they could just pop up to the surface.

So, it was called the Alta. The ship was there. I mean, that's just such a stupid lie. But the mine — it's a submarine hunter. They didn't have to stay there. They could just go, and the guys could jump off. And there was no long recovery. At a certain time, they would come up. And the time was fixed. You don't drop explosives like that and then let them go off in five minutes. You give a lot of time. You have a timer on it so that the divers could get up to the top. And they come up, and they make a pickup. It can happen much more quickly than you think, because there is — it's not in the description of the ship, but on that ship there was a decompression chamber. It had been flown in and planted there, and by the CIA.

This was actually a brilliant operation, if you want to know it from the point of view of a classic operation, because they got away with it. And at that point, the purpose was always just — let me go back to this. The purpose for doing it is to make the threat credible. But then you have the president and the under secretary of state, within a week or two of getting a word that it's credible, we can do it, stop blabbing about it — of course, that was disillusioning to the people involved, but so what? I can't talk about — you know, you can say it's not true, I invented it, but that's just — look, he did it. And he's going to have to cop to it.

I watch my mail. I watch my Gmail, and I'm seeing every day more and more — more than I want. I'm seeing more messages from around the world, different countries streaming in. I'm seeing that. I'm seeing something that was — and, by the way, on Substack, it was — I didn't know about Substack. It's an amazing platform. They had more than a million hits on the thing within a day. I mean, people, what were — the messages I got from people said, “Thank God. We miss the kind of reporting that you and others have done. We don't see it anymore.” I'm not talking about your show, Amy. I guarantee you, not that.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Well, Seymour Hersh, we want to thank you so much for being with us, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. We'll link to your new [piece](#) on your Substack, “How America Took Out The Nord Stream Pipeline.”