

# Seeing No Neo-Nazi Militias in Ukraine

**Exclusive:** With a new Amnesty International report on possible war crimes by a Ukrainian militia against ethnic Russians in the east, the evidence is mounting that the U.S.-backed Kiev regime knowingly deployed extremists, including neo-Nazis, as part of a conscious strategy, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

In the Ukraine crisis, U.S. and European politicians and media have relentlessly condemned Russia for violations of international standards, particularly Moscow's acceptance of Crimea's hasty vote to secede from Ukraine and rejoin Russia. But the West has gone nearly silent regarding Kiev's violation of rules for controlling armed militias, including neo-Nazi forces.

For instance, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has harshly criticized Russia's annexation of Crimea, has refrained from similar outrage over Ukraine's unleashing of extremist militias that have inflicted extensive bloodshed and abuse on ethnic Russians in rebellious eastern Ukraine.

The OSCE, which includes both Ukraine and Russia among its 57 member states, has a "Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security" which says that all members "will at all times provide for and maintain effective guidance to and control of its military, paramilitary and security forces" and that each state "will ensure that its armed forces as such are politically neutral."

Yet, Ukraine has intentionally dispatched far-right militias, some waving neo-Nazi banners, to attack towns and cities in eastern Ukraine. Though this reality has drawn spotty recognition even in the Western media, there has been little criticism of the Kiev regime for these tactics.

Instead the typical response especially from U.S. officialdom and media has been to dismiss claims about the close association between the Ukrainian government and neo-Nazi extremists as "Russian propaganda." That denial has held even as accounts of neo-Nazi militias have popped up in publications as hostile to Moscow as the New York Times, the London Telegraph and Foreign Policy.

An Aug. 10 article in the New York Times mentioned the neo-Nazi paramilitary role at the end of a long story on another topic. If you plowed through the story to the last three paragraphs, you would discover the remarkable fact that Nazi storm troopers were attacking a European population for the first time since World War II and that these neo-Nazi militias were largely out of control.

"The fighting for Donetsk has taken on a lethal pattern: The regular army

bombards separatist positions from afar, followed by chaotic, violent assaults by some of the half-dozen or so paramilitary groups surrounding Donetsk who are willing to plunge into urban combat," the Times reported.

"Officials in Kiev say the militias and the army coordinate their actions, but the militias, which count about 7,000 fighters, are angry and, at times, uncontrollable. One known as Azov, which took over the village of Marinka, flies a neo-Nazi symbol resembling a Swastika as its flag." [See Consortiumnews.com's "[NYT Discovers Ukraine's Neo-Nazis at War.](#)"]

The conservative London Telegraph offered more details about the Azov battalion in [an article](#) by correspondent Tom Parfitt, who wrote: "Kiev's use of volunteer paramilitaries to stamp out the Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk 'people's republics' should send a shiver down Europe's spine.

"Recently formed battalions such as Donbas, Dnipro and Azov, with several thousand men under their command, are officially under the control of the interior ministry but their financing is murky, their training inadequate and their ideology often alarming. The Azov men use the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf's Hook) symbol on their banner and members of the battalion are openly white supremacists, or anti-Semites."

Based on interviews with militia members, the Telegraph reported that some of the fighters doubted the Holocaust, expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler and acknowledged that they are indeed Nazis.

Andriy Biletsky, the Azov commander, "is also head of an extremist Ukrainian group called the Social National Assembly," according to the Telegraph article which quoted a recent commentary by Biletsky as declaring: "The historic mission of our nation in this critical moment is to lead the White Races of the world in a final crusade for their survival. A crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen."

The Telegraph questioned Ukrainian authorities in Kiev who acknowledged that they were aware of the extremist ideologies of some militias but insisted that the higher priority was having troops who were strongly motivated to fight. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[Ignoring Ukraine's Neo-Nazi Storm Troopers.](#)"]

### **Inconvenient Truth**

More recently, Foreign Policy's reporter Alec Luhn encountered the neo-Nazis of the Azov and other militias in the port city of Mariupol. He wrote: "Blue and yellow Ukrainian flags fly over Mariupol's burned-out city administration building and at military checkpoints around the city, but at a sport school near a huge metallurgical plant, another symbol is just as prominent:

the wolfsangel ('wolf trap') symbol that was widely used in the Third Reich and has been adopted by neo-Nazi groups.

"Pro-Russian forces have said they are fighting against Ukrainian nationalists and 'fascists' in the conflict, and in the case of Azov and other battalions, these claims are essentially true."

The West's silence about this inconvenient truth is especially startling because it should come as no surprise to the European Union, which has long been aware of the extremist positions held by the Svoboda party, which emerged as a major political force in Ukraine after the Feb. 22 coup ousting elected President Viktor Yanukovich.

In December 2012, barely a year before the coup, the European Parliament expressed concern about "the rising nationalistic sentiment in Ukraine" represented by Svoboda, whose founders included admirers of World War II Nazi collaborators, such as Stepan Bandera and Adolf Hitler's Ukrainian auxiliary, the Galician SS.

A parliamentary statement from Brussels noted "that racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic views go against the EU's fundamental values and principles" and urged "pro-democratic parties" in Ukraine's parliament "not to associate with, endorse or form coalitions with" Svoboda.

After the coup, which was strongly supported by Svoboda and spearheaded by its associated neo-Nazi militias from the west, Svoboda and other far-right political groups were given several ministries in recognition of their crucial role in the anti-Yanukovich putsch.

Now with Svoboda at the center of power in Kiev, the EU has muted its alarm, all the better to maintain the white hat/black hat scenario favored by Official Washington and the mainstream U.S. media. That narrative portrays the Kiev regime as the blameless white hats and Russia's President Vladimir Putin and the ethnic Russian rebels in the east as the evil black hats.

### **Amnesty International's Report**

Besides the fascist leanings of some Ukrainian militias, there is also the issue of their brutality. On Monday, Amnesty International issued a report condemning abuses committed by Kiev's Aidar militia against civilians north of the rebel-held city of Luhansk.

"Members of the Aidar territorial defence battalion, operating in the north Luhansk region, have been involved in widespread abuses, including abductions, unlawful detention, ill-treatment, theft, extortion, and possible executions,"

the Amnesty International report said. “The Aidar battalion is one of over thirty so-called volunteer battalions to have emerged in the wake of the conflict, which have been loosely integrated into Ukrainian security structures as they seek to retake separatist held areas.”

The Aidar battalion commander told an Amnesty International researcher: “It’s not Europe. It’s a bit different. There is a war here. The law has changed, procedures have been simplified. If I choose to, I can have you arrested right now, put a bag over your head and lock you up in a cellar for 30 days on suspicion of aiding separatists.”

The AI report continued, “Our findings indicate that, while formally operating under the command of the Ukrainian security forces combined headquarters in the region members of the Aidar battalion act with virtually no oversight or control, and local police are either unwilling or unable to address the abuses.

“Some of the abuses committed by members of the Aidar battalion amount to war crimes, for which both the perpetrators and, possibly, the commanders would bear responsibility under national and international law. “

In other words, evidence is mounting that the Kiev regime has waged its so-called “anti-terrorist operation” against ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine by using out-of-control paramilitaries, some guided by Nazi ideology. This behavior, fitting with the far-right political extremism previously known to EU leaders, also violates norms agreed to by the Ukrainian government in its commitment to the OSCE.

Yet, apparently for geopolitical reasons, the Obama administration, the EU and the OSCE have muted any criticism. This silent hypocrisy has been largely echoed in the Western mainstream media.

**Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his new book, *America’s Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). For a limited time, you also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes *America’s Stolen Narrative*. For details on this offer, [click here](#).**

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## Fleshing Out Nixon’s Vietnam ‘Treason’

**Exclusive:** Out of the Watergate scandal came a favorite mainstream media saying:

“the cover-up is always worse than the crime.” But the MSM didn’t understand what the real crime was or why President Nixon was so desperate, as James DiEugenio explains in reviewing Ken Hughes’s *Chasing Shadows*.

By James DiEugenio

One of America’s great political mysteries continues to come into sharper focus: Did Richard Nixon sabotage President Lyndon Johnson’s Vietnam peace talks in 1968 to win that election and did Nixon’s fear of exposure lead him to create the burglary team that got caught at Watergate in 1972?

Pieces of this puzzle began to fall into place even in real time as Beverly Deepe, the Christian Science Monitor’s Saigon reporter, got wind of Nixon’s treachery before the 1968 election although her editors spiked her article when they couldn’t get confirmation in Washington. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “[The Almost Scoop on Nixon’s ‘Treason.’](#)”]

In the ensuing years, other journalists and historians began assembling the outlines of Nixon’s peace-talk sabotage with the story getting its first big splash of attention when Seymour Hersh made reference to it in his 1983 biography of Henry Kissinger, *The Price of Power*.

Then, in 2012, investigative reporter Robert Parry discovered that Johnson’s long-missing file on Nixon’s 1968 operation, which was later turned over to the Johnson library, helped explain another mystery: why Nixon launched his Plumbers’ operation in 1971 and thus set in motion a series of burglaries that led to the Watergate scandal in 1972.

Nixon had been told by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover that Johnson had evidence from wiretaps about Nixon’s peace-talk sabotage, but an alarmed Nixon couldn’t find the file whose absence became critical after the Pentagon Papers’ history of the Vietnam War was leaked in 1971. Nixon knew there was a potential sequel somewhere that could end his presidency. [See Robert Parry’s [America’s Stolen Narrative](#).]

Now, journalist Ken Hughes, a resident scholar at the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, has filled out the story even more in his new book, *Chasing Shadows: The Nixon Tapes, the Chennault Affair and the Origins of Watergate*.

### **Johnson’s Peace Initiative**

Hughes begins his book with the dramatic day of March 31, 1968, when President Johnson announced on national television that he would not run for reelection that fall. Or, as he put it, “I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the

nomination of my party for another term as your President.”

But Johnson said something else: he intended to end the Vietnam War before leaving the White House. Since his election in 1964, Johnson had overseen a massive military escalation of the war, inserting 550,000 American troops in theater and ordering the greatest bombing campaign in the history of warfare, called “Rolling Thunder.”

Despite all the carnage, Johnson finally concluded that a military victory in Vietnam was illusory. He therefore announced a limited bombing halt over 90 percent of North Vietnam and promised a complete bombing halt if the North Vietnamese would show some reciprocal restraint.

Though many Vietnam War critics were dubious about Johnson’s peace initiative, the historical record is now clear that Johnson was sincere about his plan. He wanted peace talks to begin as soon as possible. He was seeking a U.S. exit strategy.

As Hughes notes, there had always been advisers around Johnson who told him it was futile to fight in Vietnam. As early as 1964, Sen. Richard Russell, D-Georgia, advised his former protégé, “It isn’t important a damn bit. I never did want to get messed up down there. I do not agree with those brain trusters who say this thing has tremendous strategic and economic value and that we’ll lose everything if we lose Vietnam.”

Russell said the problem was how to get out of Vietnam without looking weak, a dilemma that Johnson a classic Cold Warrior who believed in the Domino Theory could not overcome. But the war’s futility and its political damage had become apparent to Johnson by the time of the Viet Cong’s Tet Offensive in January-February 1968, leading to his decision to withdraw from the presidential race and his plan to end the war.

Johnson also sought to be fair to the major candidates running to replace him: Vice President Hubert Humphrey, former Vice President Richard Nixon and independent candidate, Gov. George Wallace of Alabama. Johnson promised to keep them equally informed of developments in the peace process. And, Hughes writes, that as far as the declassified record reveals, Johnson kept that promise.

### **Nixon’s Dilemma**

But the political problem from Johnson’s peace initiative soon grew acute for Nixon, who remained bitter about his narrow loss to John Kennedy in 1960. During the late summer of 1968, Nixon had a big lead over Humphrey, swelling to about 15 points after the disastrous Democratic convention in Chicago.

But Nixon recognized that the Democrats were likely to unify especially if the anti-war faction thought that Johnson was making progress on a peace deal. Humphrey also began reaching out to disaffected Democrats with increasingly clear overtures on resolving the war. If Johnson could deliver on a full bombing halt and the start of a U.S. withdrawal, Nixon might again be denied his dream of the presidency.

Whatever one thinks of Richard Nixon, the man had the (deserved) reputation of a consummate infighter in the political arena. This went back to his smearing of Congressman Jerry Voorhis in 1946, his 1948-50 destruction of State Department diplomat Alger Hiss from Nixon's seat on the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and his tarring of senatorial candidate Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950. In fact, on now-declassified Nixon tapes that Hughes cited, Nixon admits that he unethically had access to grand jury proceedings against Hiss, and he used them to convict Hiss in the press before trial.

Thus, Nixon might have viewed Johnson's peace initiative as just one more political obstacle to overcome. And Nixon had in his campaign apparatus people like China Lobby figure Anna Chennault who could sink Johnson's negotiations by getting the South Vietnamese government to stay away from the Paris talks.

Anna Chennault was the widow of legendary Flying Tigers pilot Claire Chennault, who was 32 years her senior when they were married in 1947. The Chennaults were part of the China Lobby, the campaign that smeared President Harry Truman and the Democrats for "losing China" to the communists in 1949. The Chennaults also suffered financially with the fall of China since they were planning on running the CIA-related airline Civil Air Transport under Chiang Kai-shek, but the operation was forced to move to Taiwan.

The Chennaults and the China Lobby were quite effective in portraying the Democrats as being soft on communism in the 1952 election. Chennault died in 1958 but his widow remained active in Republican politics and in Washington's social life. She rented a suite at the Watergate Hotel and became a founder of the Flying Tiger Line, a freight loading operation.

### **Helping Nixon**

Because of her political effectiveness, her wealth and her status as a woman ethnic, Anna Chennault became involved in the 1968 Nixon campaign under campaign chief John Mitchell. She was co-chair of the Women's Advisory Committee and raised over \$250,000 for Nixon, the top sum by a female fundraiser.

By early July 1968, Anna Chennault was already in contact with Bui Diem, the South Vietnamese ambassador to the United States, about her work for the Nixon

camp, according to a memo by Nixon's foreign policy adviser Richard Allen, cited by Hughes.

In her 1980 memoir, *The Education of Anna*, Chennault also described a meeting in New York City involving herself, Bui Diem, Nixon and Mitchell on July 12, 1968, a get-together corroborated by Bui Diem's memoir, *In the Jaws of History*. At this meeting, Nixon anointed Anna Chennault, "the sole representative between the Vietnamese government and the Nixon campaign headquarters."

As the back-channel between the Nixon campaign and the South Vietnamese government, Chennault passed a series of messages to Bui Diem, President Thieu and other senior officials in Saigon essentially promising them a better deal if Nixon won. Chennault told Thieu through Diem that Johnson's peace talks were simply a ploy to get Humphrey elected president and that Humphrey opposed the Americanization of the war.

Chennault indicated that Nixon favored more direct American intervention, an appealing message to convey to Thieu because without U.S. support, Thieu's regime could not last long against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

### **Nixon's Assurances**

While Nixon was putting in motion his plan to disrupt the peace talks, Johnson continued to brief all three candidates. On July 26, Johnson told them that he was pushing to have a four-point negotiation at the table, involving the U.S., North Vietnam, Thieu's government and the National Liberation Front (NLF), the political arm of the Viet Cong.

Nixon assured Johnson that he was in full support of the peace initiative and that the President's emissaries in Paris should be able to speak with the confidence and authority of the U.S. government. Nixon said nothing should be done in the political arena that might undermine the effort.

Hughes shows Nixon's hypocritical side again when he points to Nixon's acceptance speech at the GOP convention in Miami in August, saying: "We all hope that there's a chance that current negotiations may bring an honorable end to that war, *and we will say nothing during this campaign that might destroy that chance.*" (italics added)

Meanwhile, Humphrey trying to rebuild the shattered Democratic unity began to suggest that peace was possible and that U.S. troops could be coming home as early as 1969. Johnson responded by saying that although everyone hoped to see the day the troops come home no one could predict when that day would come. He added, "We are there to bring an honorable, stable peace to Southeast Asia, and no less will justify the sacrifices that our men have died for."



Later, Humphrey went even further, saying he would stop the bombing for good in return for good-faith negotiations from the North. Though Humphrey's public peace talk annoyed Johnson, it helped the Vice President cut into Nixon's once-formidable lead what had been a 15-point margin shrank to 8 points. The stakes for Nixon were raised.

The first warning that Johnson got about Nixon's sabotage of the peace talks came from Wall Street. In late October, banker Alexander Sachs told State Department official Eugene Rostow that Nixon was alerting his allies on Wall Street that he had a plan to "block" Johnson's peace talks and they should place their investment bets accordingly. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[Profiting Off Nixon's Vietnam 'Treason.'](#)"]

### **Thieu's Resistance**

When Eugene Rostow's information was passed to Johnson by his national security aide Walt Rostow (Eugene's brother), Johnson had just learned that South Vietnamese President Thieu had decided not to send a delegation to Paris to negotiate.

Johnson also had a second source who revealed that Mitchell, Nixon's campaign manager, was working to frustrate Johnson's attempt at peace talks and a truce. Mitchell had been heard to say words to the effect that they would foul up these peace talks as they had frustrated Johnson's attempt to make Abe Fortas the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Johnson revealed this information to his friend Sen. Russell in a phone conversation. Johnson said he had ways to confirm whether or not the rumors were true. What he meant was that he could use the surveillance powers of the FBI, CIA and NSA to monitor certain communications necessary to carry out the subversion of the peace process.

Johnson did just that. The NSA placed a bug inside Ambassador Bui Diem's office in Washington, and the CIA did the same in the office of President Thieu in Saigon. Even though Hughes writes that these partially declassified cables are still heavily redacted, it's clear from them that Johnson told Russell that Anna Chennault was in contact with Bui Diem. LBJ was convinced she was the go-between from the Nixon camp to the South Vietnamese representatives.

NSA intercepts revealed that Ambassador Bui Diem told Thieu that the longer the situation dragged out the more it would favor the Republicans and South Vietnam. Bui Diem added that he was in direct contact with the Nixon entourage, which meant, of course, Chennault.

In fact, the FBI knew that Chennault had visited Bui Diem at the embassy on Oct.

30 for 30 minutes. Besides the wiretap, Johnson ordered the FBI to report on anyone entering or leaving the embassy and to tail Chennault. He also wanted her phone tapped at the Watergate, but the FBI didn't go that far.

Trying to pressure Nixon to back off, Johnson called Republican Senate Leader Everett Dirksen and asserted that he (Johnson) knew what was going on. "I really think it's a little dirty pool for Dick's people to be messing with the South Vietnamese ambassador and carrying messages around to both of them, and I don't think the [American] people would approve of it if it were known," Johnson told Dirksen with the implicit threat to expose publicly what Johnson privately called Nixon's "treason."

Hughes writes that Johnson never told Humphrey specifically about what Chennault was doing. He only mentioned some interference from the "China Lobby" and "Nixon's entourage." Nor did Johnson show Humphrey the intelligence cables he had from the FBI, NSA, and CIA.

### **The Final Days**

Despite Johnson's warning to Dirksen, Chennault did not stand down. On Nov. 2, just three days before the election, another embassy message was intercepted revealing that she told Ambassador Bui Diem to convey to his superiors, "hold on, we are gonna win."

Thieu followed up by telling the South Vietnamese legislature that he would boycott the negotiations. At the same time, Nixon announced that he had been assured that the peace talks would begin. The combination of the two public announcements made Johnson look like either a con man or someone who had lost control of his own negotiations (which he had).

On Sunday, Nov. 3, Johnson asked Nixon about his knowledge of the Republican interference, and Nixon told Johnson that he was fully behind the President's efforts to bring the war to an end as quickly as possible. Nixon would lie about his role in the sabotage to the end.

There was one last twist to the story, playing out the day before the election. The Christian Science Monitor's Saigon correspondent Beverly Deepe filed a story based on her local sources describing the Republican gambit to prevent the peace talks. In Washington, the Monitor's Saville Davis ran Deepe's information past Bui Diem, who denied it, and then past the White House.

President Johnson considered confirming the story but consulted with several of his top advisers national security adviser Walt Rostow, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Defense Secretary Clark Clifford who all urged him to stay silent. Clifford warned that if the story was published and Nixon still won, Nixon might

be unable to lead the country. With the White House declining comment, the Monitor decided not to go with Deepe's scoop.

Humphrey ended up losing the election by less than one point in the popular vote, leaving history to ponder the painful question of whether the disclosure of Nixon's operation might have cost him the election and brought the war to an end years earlier saving countless lives.

### **The Watergate Tie-in**

But there was another reason to expose Nixon's covert operation. Hughes concurs with journalist Robert Parry's revelations two years ago that it was probably Nixon's awareness of Johnson's knowledge about the sabotage that inspired the formation of the Plumbers and set the stage for the Watergate scandal which destroyed Nixon's presidency.

After Nixon won the election in 1968, FBI Director Hoover flew to New York for a private conference with Nixon and his chief of staff H. R. Haldeman. During the meeting, Hoover revealed the bugging operation ordered by Johnson over the Chennault affair. But the Director exaggerated its extent, claiming that the FBI had bugged Nixon's campaign plane, which was not true. Hoover also said the FBI had wiretapped Chennault's phone at her home, which Johnson had sought but which was not done.

There could have been a reason for Hoover's falsehoods. By claiming that Nixon's plane had been bugged, Hoover may have wanted Nixon to believe that he himself had been caught on tape directly implicated in the sabotage scheme. That could have led Nixon to think that Hoover had something politically lethal on him. By hyping the story, Hoover also undercut one of his younger FBI rivals, Cartha "Deke" DeLoach, by telling Nixon that some of the bugging had been DeLoach's idea.

What Nixon didn't know was that Johnson removed the Chennault file when he left office in January 1969 and entrusted the top-secret information to Walt Rostow, rather than ship it to the Johnson presidential library in Austin, Texas. The missing file and the paranoia instilled in Nixon by Hoover's exaggerated account had huge consequences for history.

When Nixon took office he assigned Haldeman to find the Chennault file, a task that was passed on to Thomas Charles Huston, who later became famous for the Huston Plan proposing more domestic surveillance of leftist anti-war groups. Huston's recommendations went too far even for Hoover. But Huston's work on national security issues made him a natural for Haldeman's assignment to locate the Chennault file.

Huston couldn't find the file but believed that some of the information about why the peace talks had failed might have ended up in a Defense Department study supervised by Clifford, Paul Warnke and Leslie Gelb. When Gelb left office for the Brookings Institution, he supposedly took the report with him, Huston believed. [See Consortiumnews.com's "[An Insider's View of Nixon's 'Treason.'](#)"]

### **Confusion Reigns**

As Hughes notes, this information conveyed by Huston seems, at best, garbled. It more accurately describes the Pentagon Papers, which Gelb was actually involved in, rather than the Chennault affair, which Gelb had no role in. But even though Huston's information was dubious on its face, Haldeman conveyed it to Nixon, who predictably replied: "I want that goddamn Gelb material and I don't care how you get it!"

But as yet, Nixon lacked his own team for conducting illegal break-ins. So, the issue of the missing Chennault material was pushed to the proverbial back burner. But an historic event in 1971 returned this concern to the center of Nixon's paranoid mind.

On June 13, 1971, the *New York Times* started publishing the Pentagon Papers, a secret study of the Vietnam War commissioned by former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara tracing the conflict from its beginning to 1967. The American public was suddenly riveted by disclosures about how various presidents, mostly Democrats, had deceived the country about the Vietnam War.

Four days later, Nixon returned to the issue of the missing file and the possibility that Gelb had taken it to the Brookings Institution and placed it in the think tank's safe. On June 17, 1971, Nixon summoned Haldeman and national security advisor Henry Kissinger into the Oval Office and pleaded with them again to locate the missing file. "Do we have it?" Nixon asked Haldeman. "I've asked for it. You said you didn't have it."

Haldeman: "We can't find it."

Kissinger: "We have nothing here, Mr. President."

Nixon: "Well, damnit, I asked for that because I need it."

Nixon then added that he wanted a break-in of Brookings "implemented. Goddamnit, get in and get those files. Blow the safe and get it."

On June 30, 1971, Nixon again berated Haldeman about the need to break into Brookings and "take it [the file] out." Nixon even suggested using former CIA officer E. Howard Hunt to conduct the Brookings break-in. "You talk to Hunt,"

Nixon told Haldeman. "I want the break-in."

### **Nixon's Paranoia**

From here in the book, Hughes draws a portrait of a man who is a victim of his own past and his own prejudices. Nixon begins to compare those who leaked the Pentagon Papers with the communist conspiracy he railed about back in his HUAC days.

Feeling under pressure regarding leaks or potential leaks Nixon starts scheming about leaking negative information about former Democratic icons. He wanted to get the goods on Franklin Roosevelt's prior knowledge about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Nixon wanted files on President Kennedy because he thought there might be some dirt about the Bay of Pigs fiasco or the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In effect, Nixon wanted a dual-track program: 1.) He wanted to break into private institutions to save himself from potential political damage from the Chennault affair, and 2.) He wanted to disclose damaging classified materials on the Democrats, possibly to muddy the waters just in case his 1968 peace talk sabotage was exposed.

Nixon soon brought onboard Hunt to oversee the creation of a Special Investigations Unit, better known as the Plumbers. The unit would be governed from above by Nixon, Haldeman, and White House aide John Ehrlichman, but it would have support from the FBI and the CIA.

At this point, with the Plumbers formed and their target list forming, Hughes reveals another Nixon pathology: his hatred of the Harvard People. Nixon did not come from a privileged background and did not get into an Ivy League college. He seemed to resent those who did, like Hiss, Kennedy and Roosevelt.

Nixon began to demand head counts in certain agencies of government like Treasury and Justice of, respectively, Jews and Ivy Leaguers. Incredibly, his subordinates actually compiled these counts. Fred Malek was put in charge of finding the Jewish cabal inside government after Nixon said, "I really feel that I want the Jews checked."

In a conversation with White House counsel Chuck Colson about the Treasury Department, Nixon said: "Well. Listen are they all Jews over there?" Colson replied, "Every one of them. Well, a couple of exceptions." This conversation concludes with Nixon saying that they have to find a man who is not Jewish to control the Jews in the administration.

Haldeman later wrote that he understood the dark pathology of Nixon's mind and

would not follow through on some of his wilder demands. The problem, as Haldeman saw it, was that Colson would. Colson and Nixon would then do things that Haldeman would not know about until afterwards. In other words, Colson enabled the worst in Nixon.

Acting on Nixon's worst impulses, Colson and G. Gordon Liddy, a leader of the Plumbers, thought up a wild scheme to burglarize Brookings in pursuit of the missing file. They would first firebomb the building. Then, after the fire engines were called in, a burglary team would take advantage of the confusion and bust open the safe.

But after John Caulfield and Anthony Ulasewicz, veteran detectives working for Nixon, heard about the scheme, they counseled against it and Ehrlichman canceled the operation. As Hughes notes, Ehrlichman then lied under oath about Nixon's approval of the project, which was the only burglary that Nixon clearly authorized on tape.

### **On to Watergate**

Still, the Plumbers continued to undertake other illegal break-ins, including rifling files and planting bugs inside the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee in late May 1972. When five burglars returned on June 17, 1972, to do more espionage, they were caught by Washington D.C. police, setting in motion the Watergate scandal. That, in turn, created a constitutional crisis as Nixon refused to surrender his White House tapes to investigators.

On July 24, 1974, when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Nixon to surrender the tapes, it spelled the doom for Nixon's presidency by corroborating allegations from ex-White House counsel John Dean and others that Nixon had overseen a criminal cover-up of the Watergate break-in. Nixon resigned on Aug. 9, 1974.

However, Nixon's sabotage of Johnson's peace talks although it may have extended the war for four years and caused the deaths of some 20,000 U.S. soldiers and a million Vietnamese never received the attention that the Watergate cover-up did. Nor has Official Washington ever come to grips with the new evidence suggesting that the two scandals were actually one.

Hughes ends the book deftly. In the David Frost interviews with Nixon in 1977, Frost asked him about the Chennault affair. Nixon replied that he did nothing to undercut Johnson's attempts at negotiations. About Chennault's interference, he said that he did not authorize these attempts at subterfuge.

Building on the investigative work of Robert Parry and other researchers, Ken Hughes has written a well-documented, incisive and hard-hitting book. He takes us up close to a man who never should have been president and who appears to

have gotten into the White House through an act approaching treason. Nixon then lied about the crime for the rest of his life.

**James DiEugenio is a researcher and writer on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and other mysteries of that era. His most recent book is Reclaiming Parkland.**

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## How Rep. King Aided Leak He Decried

Washington insiders like to swap around sensitive information to show how important they are, but some then protest loudly when a journalist lets the broader public in on the secrets. That can lead to obvious hypocrisies as occurred with Rep. Peter King, writes Marcy Wheeler.

By Marcy Wheeler

On May 7, 2012, then *Associated Press* reporters Adam Goldman and Matt Apuzzo broke the story of a thwarted al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) underwear bomb plot by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Within a day, several news outlets, including *ABC News*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *New York Times* reported that the culprit was actually a Saudi agent.

On May 9, 2012, Rep. Peter King, R-New York, called for an FBI investigation to determine who leaked details of the plot to the AP.

“I’m calling on the FBI to do a full of investigation of how this was leaked, who’s leaking it. And also the CIA to do an internal investigation,” King said.

“This came from such a small circle. Nobody in Congress knew about it. My understanding is very few of anyone in the FBI even knew about it. And yet so much of it was leaked to the Associated Press a week ago, and now someone’s leaking like a sieve. This is really dangerous to the national security.”

The Department of Justice did launch the investigation King demanded. In fact, in early 2013, DOJ obtained the phone records of 20 AP phone lines affecting 100 AP journalists without giving the outlet an opportunity to challenge the subpoena. The investigation and excessive subpoena has marked one of the low points of the Obama administration’s crackdown on journalism.

The investigation ended last September when former FBI bomb expert Donald Sachtleben pled guilty to serving as a source to one of the AP journalists. Prosecution documents revealed that, because the government had already been investigating Sachtleben for child porn charges, they already had the means to

find his communications with the AP reporters, without compromising the sources of 98 other journalists.

The investigation King demanded ended up needlessly compromising the reporting of a slew of journalists. That's remarkable, because, as emails newly released by *The Intercept's* Ken Silverstein show, Peter King himself was talking to journalists about the story.

Within hours of the first AP report, Scott Shane, of the *New York Times*, emailed CIA's press office asking them to clarify something King told the NYT, based on the briefings King had gotten about the plot.

"They said that we don't have to worry about him anymore, that we don't have to worry about this guy. That was the exact language they used,'" Shane recounted King explaining, on the record. "Can you help me interpret what Rep. King is saying?"

As King explained to Wolf Blitzer two days after this conversation with NYT journalists even as he was calling for an investigation into the people leaking classified information he had been in a number of Top Secret briefings on the plot. King complained that "so many people are talking about something which is still classified." Rep. King's office did not return a request for comment.

Shane explained to ExposeFacts over the weekend that King's comment led him to wonder whether and then confirm, the bombing culprit was really an infiltrator.

"I do remember being genuinely puzzled on May 7 by King's remark that he had been told we 'don't have to worry about' the guy and trying hard that night to get officials to clarify," Shane described. "The next morning it suddenly occurred to me that the guy might have been an agent," he continued. "I finally got someone to confirm in the afternoon and we posted a story."

On May 8, even before King started calling for an investigation into those leaking classified information, Shane and Eric Schmitt reported, "The suicide bomber dispatched by the Yemen branch of Al Qaeda last month to blow up a United States-bound airliner was actually an intelligence agent for Saudi Arabia who infiltrated the terrorist group and volunteered for the mission, American and foreign officials said Tuesday."

Shane emphasized that he doesn't know whether King meant to imply that the culprit was an infiltrator. "I actually have no idea whether King himself at that point knew the guy was a double agent, that was so sensitive that they may have omitted it from his briefing." But by sharing details from the briefings he had gotten, King provided a clue that led the NYT to learn and report an important new detail about the plot.



That's not to say Peter King should be investigated for leaking to journalists, as he himself insisted should happen, or lose his access to classified information on the House Intelligence Committee. On the contrary, it's a good example of how journalists work, and should work.

On the contrary, it shows why the first response to solid national security reporting should not be to demand an investigation. Even an innocuous comment may lead journalists to ask the right questions to flesh out the story. Those kinds of conversations should not be criminalized even in spite of what King demanded.

**Investigative journalist Marcy Wheeler writes the "Right to Know" column for ExposeFacts. She is best known for providing in-depth analysis of legal documents related to "war on terrorism" programs and civil liberties. Wheeler blogs at [emptywheel.net](http://emptywheel.net) and publishes at outlets including the *Guardian*, *Salon* and the *Progressive*. She is the author of *Anatomy of Deceit: How the Bush Administration Used the Media to Sell the Iraq War and Out a Spy*. Wheeler won the 2009 Hillman Award for blog journalism.**

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