The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

KremlinLeaks

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December 07, 2010



While leading publications like the Guardian, El Pais, Der Spiegel and The New York Times were publishing in-depth analytical articles based on documents posted on WikiLeaks, the web site's Russian partner, Russian Reporter magazine, created an unpleasant surprise by running a series of articles containing outright lies. The first article focused on the Russia-Georgia war of 2008: "Reading the reports of U.S. ambassadors to Georgia ... no one in the world had any illusions about the fact that [Georgian President Mikheil] Saakashvili started the war."

But U.S. ambassadors had the exact opposite opinion on who was responsible for the conflict.

Andrei Illarionov, former economic adviser to then-President Vladimir Putin, has suggested that we are dealing with a new disinformation campaign by the authorities. Unable to refute the compromising information contained in U.S. diplomatic cables, Russia's intelligence services are trying to minimize the damage by distorting their content, using Russian Reporter as a conduit.

And that was not the only surprising statement that appeared in the magazine's articles. It also reported that the sources on whom the U.S. ambassador to Moscow relies when he prepares reports to Washington are "experts who slander the ruling regime year after year."

One article claims that "before Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addressed the UN General Assembly, the U.S. State Department sent a directive to all European countries indicating when their representatives should leave the hall." The Swedish ambassador was instructed to leave the room once he heard the word "holocaust," the article claimed, but Ahmadinejad unexpectedly never pronounced the word.

"The representatives of other countries left, but the Swedish diplomat remained in the hall, sending alarm signals and asking his American mentor, 'What should I do?'" Russian Reporter wrote.

There is just one problem with this claim: Russian Reporter made all of this up. The diplomatic cables posted on WikiLeaks said nothing of the sort.

The co-author of the Russian Reporter articles was Russian-Israeli journalist Israel Shamir. He is infamous for denying the Holocaust and writing about the conditions under which Jews are willing to sacrifice children. Shamir is also infamous for claiming that many Jews received text messages warning them in advance of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

Shamir has offered his services not only to Russian Reporter but to Kommersant as well. Considering Shamir's reputation, it is no surprise that Kommersant declined the offer.

Reputable newspapers took a completely different and more responsible approach to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's leaks. They carefully sorted the archives made public on WikiLeaks and then published in-depth, balanced analytical articles examining the content of what they had found.

In contrast, Russian Reporter published articles written by a notorious anti-Semite who didn't even bother reading the original documents.

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Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/12/07/kremlinleaks-a3557