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MOSCOW TERROR ATTACK — ROGUE UKRAINIAN OP OR WESTERN BACKED?

23 March 2024 by [Larry Johnson](https://sonar21.com/author/larry-johnson/)

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Lots to cover with respect to Friday’s mercenary terrorist attack in Moscow. Why do I call it “mercenary”? Because it appears that the perps had no ideological axe to grind and were hired for a relatively paltry sum and carried out indiscriminate killing at a public gathering of civilians. Based on the video evidence released so far in the public domain the planning for this op was not the work of skilled professionals — e.g., they used the same vehicle to travel to and from the attack site, their movements inside the building demonstrated unsophisticated Close Quarter Battle skills and they had poor muzzle discipline, which means they had minimal rifle training.

The Russians got a jump on the investigation because one of the concert goers coldcocked one of the shooters, and the shooter was captured alive. The Russians also followed the escape vehicle and nabbed four of the suspects as they skedaddled for Ukraine. The western media is doing its damndest to push the storyline that this was an ISIS attack and dismiss the possibility that it could have been Ukraine. But the initial questioning of the suspects revealed men of limited intelligence — i.e., guys who are not too smart — who told a cock and bull story that they were recruited via a telegram channel by an anonymous source who offered to pay them the princely sum of \$5000. There also is no good explanation why a band of Tajiks were hightailing it for the Ukrainian border. At a minimum that shows a belief that they would find safehaven if they could get across the border. They certainly did not behave like diehard jihadist warriors eager to sacrifice themselves and go to Paradise for a cash in the reward of 72 virgins.

I think the Islamic terrorism claim is a red herring and designed to shift attention away from the other indicators that some in the West, at a minimum, had foreknowledge of this attack. How else to explain the March 7 warning by US Embassy Moscow for American citizens to steer clear of event, such as concerts? And then, as I wrote yesterday, the US State Department was quick to issue a claim exonerating Ukraine for any role in the attack. The fires were still raging at the Crocus facility. That means only one thing — the State Department had intelligence indicating who carried out the attack. But the U.S. apparently did not share that with its Russian counterparts. That lapse alone is simply going to stoke more suspicion in Moscow about Western involvement.

But we already know one thing for sure — that the West has been involved with facilitating a series of terrorist attacks against Russians since the start of the special military operation. What else do you call the artillery and missile strikes on Russian civilians in the Donbass,] and in Belgorod, with munitions that were supplied by the United States and other major NATO countries? At a minimum, that makes western powers an accessory to an act of terror.

Friday's senseless slaughter of civilians in Moscow serves no broad, political purpose, nor does it advance Ukraine's military prospects in anyway. It is important to note that the attack has rallied world sympathy for Russia, including some conciliatory comments out of Washington by National Security spokesman John Kirby. However, it is also important to note the President Joe Biden has said nothing, and has made no contact with Vladimir Putin to express sorrow or empathy. Quite a contrast with Biden's actions in the wake of the news that Alexey Navalny, a political opponent of Vladimir Putin, had died. Biden was quick to express his fake grief for the death of Navalny.

It appears that the growing death toll from the attack was not caused by bullets, but by smoke inhalation. I still have seen no report explaining how the fire got started. Some speculate that it was caused by a Molotov cocktail. I'm sure those details will be coming out in the next few days. It is also clear from President Putin's demeanor during his speech today that Russia will retaliate against those responsible for this attack.

I do not think that this act of terrorism is going to change Russia's military strategy and plans for Ukraine. News from the front shows that Russian forces are continuing to advance all along the front in the Donbass, and are pushing the Ukrainians back towards the Dnieper River. The position of the Ukrainian military is becoming more precarious with each passing day.

As far identifying those responsible for organizing and funding this attack, I have no special insight. I am confident that Russian investigators will be able to trace the origin of the firearms, assuming the serial numbers have not been erased. At this juncture, I am inclined to believe that the West knew something was going to happen based on intelligence out of Ukraine, but did not have specifics other than this was an operation approved by Ukraine's intelligence service. Is it possible that some British and/or American intelligence officers had an inkling of what was going to happen? Yes, I think that is highly likely. The one thing I know for certain is that this attack is going to strengthen the will of President Putin, the Russian general staff, and Russia's intelligence service to put an end to NATO meddling in Ukraine, and the ability of NATO proxies to attack the Russian people. Whoever approved this badly miscalculated and will pay a terrible, but well deserved, price.

So what do you think? Western directed or rogue operation?

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