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## Provocation as a Policy Tool of the West (I)

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2014 marks the anniversaries of three significant dates in military history: on 28 July, the world marked the 100-year anniversary of the outbreak of World War One; 1 September will be 75 years since the start of World War Two; and August will mark 50 years since the beginning of the US war in Vietnam. Generally speaking, all the wars of the 20th century are alike – explosions of bombs and shells, the smell of ash, herds of refugees, the frightened eyes of children, and the tears of mothers and widows. These three wars, however, have their own unique characteristics: the casus belli, the act used to justify each war, was an act of

provocation...

The shooting of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (regardless of the intentions of the 19-year-old Bosnian student who pulled the trigger) caused a massacre unprecedented in history that destroyed every empire except the British Empire. It is typical that representatives of Russia and Serbia were not invited to events in England to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the start of World War One, and it is also understandable: the West wants to shift responsibility for the instigation of a military conflict that claimed an unprecedented number of lives onto these two Slavic countries. Rewriting history is a favourite hobby of the Anglo-Saxons. Yet it was the UK that was the catalyst for the First World War. When, on 5 July, Kaiser Wilhelm II declared: «Do not delay action against Serbia!» (the elderly Franz Joseph doubted the need for Vienna to take decisive measures against Belgrade), London immediately hinted to the German Ambassador Prince Lichnowsky that England would not allow the destruction of France, but said absolutely nothing about Russia. On 9 July 1914, meanwhile, the same Prince Lichnowsky was told that Great Britain was not bound by any obligations to either Paris or St. Petersburg. Berlin understood this to mean that Great Britain would not get involved in a Balkan conflict and that the Germans had a free hand, so together with Vienna, Germany declared war on France and Russia. On 4 August, however, Great Britain sided with France, arousing the fury of Kaiser Wilhelm II: if he had known that Great Britain, with all her colonies and vast natural and human resources, was going to play tricks, he would not have taken the decision to move his army into Belgium and France. The provocative shooting in Sarajevo ignited a war in the Balkans in which it was unlikely that Austro-Hungary would be able to withstand a conflict with Russia, and the war was turned into a world war thanks to the provocative policy of British diplomacy.

Precedent plays an important role not just in Anglo-Saxon law, but in their policies as well: an act of provocation worked once, so it will work again. The situation that Kaiser Wilhelm II found himself in is similar to the one that Saddam Hussein ended up in three quarters of a century later. Before attacking Kuwait, the Iraqi president wanted to know how the United States would react. During an hour-long conversation with Hussein on 25 July 1990, US Ambassador April Glaspie hinted that the US would consider actions by Iraq to settle its territorial dispute with Kuwait as an internal Arab affair. On 2 August, the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait, and the mousetrap snapped shut. The US had developed a plan of operations codenamed 'Desert Storm' to defeat the Iraqi armed forces. The war in the Persian Gulf began on 17 January 1991 and lasted 41 days. In this war, amid the self-destruction of the Warsaw Pact, the US made a request for the exclusive right to use its own armed forces and those of its NATO allies anywhere in the world at its own discretion. A 'new order' was established in order for America to control the world's energy resources, and the Yalta-Potsdam system of world order that had been developed following the allied victory in World War II was destroyed.

World War II also began with an act of provocation. For several minutes on the evening of 31 August 1939, a group of SS-men carried out an operation codenamed 'Canned Goods'. Nazis forced their way into a German radio station in the German town of Gleiwitz near the Polish border, and, after seizing the radio station, one of those involved in the act of provocation stood in front of the microphone and read out a message in Polish saying that Polish soldiers had entered Germany and had taken control of the German radio station. After firing several shots so that they would be heard on air, those involved in the provocation left the building. The

operation lasted just several minutes. The roles of the Polish soldiers allegedly killed during the attack were assigned to concentration camp prisoners dressed in Polish uniforms who had been killed beforehand by lethal injection. Their bodies (the SS-men called them «canned goods», which is how the operation got its name) were taken to the radio station and laid out with German precision. The next day, on 1 September, Hitler declared war on Poland.

It should be said that by 1939, the Nazis had become skilled at large-scale acts of provocation. The first of these had been the burning of the Reichstag on 27 February 1933, which was blamed on communists. On 28 February, Hindenburg issued the emergency decree «On the Protection of People and State» abolishing all the democratic provisions of the Weimar Republic, including the privacy of correspondence and the inviolability of private property; the Communist Party was banned, and nearly 4,000 communists and a huge number of liberal and social-democratic party leaders, including deputies of the Reichstag, were arrested. Just like that, the Nazi Party eliminated its opponents, achieving an absolute parliamentary majority in the elections that were to take place five days later.

The systematic extermination of Jews in the Third Reich was also initiated by an act of provocation. On 7 November 1939, a 17-year-old Jewish refugee from Poland, Herschel Grynszpan, fatally wounded Ernst vom Rath, the secretary of the Germany Embassy, in Paris. (Ernst vom Rath, incidentally, was far from anti-Semitic.) By murdering the diplomat, the teenager had allegedly wanted to draw attention to the desperate situation of 18,000 Jews (including his father and sister) who had been transported to the Polish border by Germans following the Anschluss of Austria. In addition, Poland was refusing to take them.

Ernst vom Rath died on 9 November. In the evening of the same day, at a gathering in Munich in honour of the anniversary of the 'Beer Hall Putsch', Goebbels gave an inflammatory speech on the global Jewish conspiracy against the Germans and, a few hours later, a pre-planned and appalling Jewish pogrom began throughout the whole of Germany. In just one night, between 9 and 10 November, nearly 200 synagogues were burned down, numerous Jewish cemeteries were desecrated, and thousands of Jewish homes were destroyed. The tinkling sound of Jewish-owned shop windows being smashed gave the carnage the 'romantic' name of 'Kristallnacht'. (In Gestapo documents, it was given the more prosaic name of 'The Red Rooster'.) Ninety-one people were killed and 30,000 Jews around the country were arrested.

Goebbels should also be regarded as the creator of another appalling act of provocation – the Katyn massacre. On 13 April 1943, Germany's Reich Minister of Propaganda announced that the bodies of 20,000 Polish officers had been found outside Smolensk. Why exactly then? After all, the Nazis had captured the town in July 1941. The fact is that after the Battle of Stalingrad, the Red Army had begun to liberate Nazi-occupied areas, and Berlin realised that as the Red Army advanced to the West, all the atrocities that the Nazis had committed would be discovered. This would not only increase the Soviet people's hatred towards them, but would also cause Germany's allies in countries fighting on Hitler's side to reject them, as a result of which they would start to avoid taking part in military actions and surrender. It was therefore necessary to set the people of Europe against the Russians: if you give yourselves up, then the commissars will shoot you on the spot, just like they shot the Poles. Is it not the same as what is happening at the moment, when the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 with 298 passengers on board was brought

down over Donetsk with the clear provocative aim of blaming Russia for the deaths? The Western media is doing everything it can to unleash a powerful anti-Russian campaign around the world. We will return to the downed Boeing 777 later, but for now will observe that the provocation skills of Anglo-Saxons are in no way inferior to those of German fascists during the era of Nazi Germany, and these skills are being taught to a new wave of fascists taken under their wing in Ukraine. Let us remind ourselves of another serious act of provocation during World War II:

7 December 1941, Hawaii. Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu. The location of a US naval base. Early morning. Japanese planes appear on the horizon. A roar of engines and they are already covering the whole sky. The attack by 183 fighter planes, bombers and torpedo planes lasts approximately an hour. Ten minutes later, the US base is covered by a second wave of 171 Japanese planes. Their raid also lasts nearly an hour. The result: four battleships, three light cruisers, two destroyers and two auxiliary vessels are sunk; four battleships, three light cruisers, a destroyer and two auxiliary vessels are damaged; 188 aircraft are destroyed; and more than 3,000 people are killed (while the Japanese lost 40 times fewer people).

The bombing of Pearl Harbor came across as a huge blow to America's military might, while at the same time leaving a trail of questions in its wake. Was it just coincidence that all three aircraft carriers stationed there – the main goal of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour – had already left the base a few days earlier? Was it just coincidence that ships by no means the last word in military technology were gathered in the harbour? Was it just coincidence that US intelligence services, which had already cracked the so-called 'Purple Code' of the Japanese and were monitoring all communication from the Japanese General Staff, did not send warning of the impending attack? It is also a mystery why Great Britain, which had access to secret information about the Japanese navy, did not share this information with its allies. That the US government knew about the impending attack on Pearl Harbor was indicated by Secretary of War Henry Stimson: he wrote in his diary that Roosevelt had talked about a possible attack in the next few days, and had asked «how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves. In spite of the risk involved, we will allow the Japanese to fire the first shot.» This was the price for the White House to overcome the resistance of those opposing a military conflict with Japan and force America into the Second World War.

There is almost a mystical coincidence in the number of victims: in order to convince America of the need for a war in Afghanistan, it was necessary to kill nearly 3,000 Americans who were working in the towers of the World Trade Center and who became the victims of the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001. Almost as many as America lost on 7 December 1941. The precedent, gentlemen...