



Facts vs Manipulation

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**How Russian state media borrowed a Reuters interview
and left out the context**

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The Claim

On 30 June 2026, AfD co-chair Alice Weidel told [Reuters](#) that "cheap energy from Russia was the secret of the success of 'Made in Germany'. We need it back." She called for lifting sanctions on Russian oil and gas.

The same day, Russian state outlets carried the story. [TASS](#) ran it as "'Alternative for Germany' leader urges resumption of oil, gas supplies from Russia". [RT](#) headlined it "Leader of Germany's most popular party wants to restore ties with Russia". Both cited Reuters. To a reader, each looked like a faithful summary of a respected Western news agency's report.

The Fact

The quote is genuine and accurately reported. Nothing was fabricated. Even the most pointed line in the TASS version, that Weidel's comments "highlight the potential fragility of the Western alliance underpinning support for Ukraine", is Reuters' own analysis, and TASS credits it to Reuters.

What changed is what was left out. The Reuters report placed Weidel's call inside its context: why the sanctions exist, who opposes her, how German authorities have assessed her party, and the AfD's own recent contacts with Gazprom. TASS and RT kept the quotes and the figures that supported her argument, and dropped most of that context. The result reads as a German politician making a straightforward economic case, with Reuters' name attached.

Same interview, three versions

Set the three texts side by side, and the pattern is plain: every element that supports Weidel's argument travels; most elements that qualify it do not.

In the Reuters report	Reuters TASS		RT
Weidel: cheap Russian energy was the secret of "Made in Germany"	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weidel: lost jobs, dependence on costlier US energy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russia's pre-2022 share of German oil and gas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sanctions imposed after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine	Yes	Sanctions named, invasion not	No

Analysis: "potential fragility of the Western alliance underpinning support for Ukraine"	Yes	Yes, credited to Reuters	No
Nord Stream explosions, September 2022	Yes	Yes	No
Eastern state elections and AfD's chancellery ambitions	Yes	Yes	Replaced by a national poll (INSA, 29%)
Senior AfD lawmaker's meeting with Gazprom on reopening Nord Stream	Yes	No	No
A critical response from CDU MP Roderich Kiesewetter	Yes	No	No
Domestic intelligence classification of AfD as extremist	Yes	No	No
Not in Reuters: 2023–24 contraction, bankruptcies, 96% of 2025 LNG from the US	—	No	Added

TASS trimmed. RT trimmed and then added its own supporting data, under a headline calling the AfD "Germany's most popular party".

Not a one-off

The June pickup fits a longer pattern of Russian state media giving the AfD a platform.

- **Favourable coverage.** In 2017, researcher Maria Snegovaya [documented](#) positive AfD coverage on Rossiya-1, which she reported even carried AfD campaign material.
- **Airtime on Kremlin talk shows.** State TV hosts Vladimir Solovyov and Olga Skabeyeva have repeatedly given AfD politicians airtime, using German voices to carry messages against German media and arms deliveries to Ukraine ([overview](#)).
- **Russian-language networks.** Groups on Odnoklassniki and VKontakte aimed at Russian-speaking Germans have carried pro-AfD and pro-Kremlin content.
- **RT DE.** RT's German-language service has promoted AfD politicians and positions since 2014.

RT's headline turns Weidel into the voice of "Germany's most popular party". The effect is consistent across these channels: a Kremlin preference is presented as a mainstream view from inside Germany.

Why this is harder to spot

Conventional fact-checking tests statements one by one. Here every statement passes: the quote is real, the figures are real, the source is Reuters. The manipulation lies in the selection.

Borrowing a trusted Western source adds a second layer. A reader who sees "Reuters reports" assumes the full story has been told. Removing the war, the critics and the security concerns turns a contested political demand into an apparently neutral news item, and Reuters' name lends it credibility it was never meant to carry.

This piece makes no judgement on whether Weidel's economic argument is right. That is a domestic political debate. The subject here is how state-controlled foreign outlets edited a Western report to serve their own narrative.

Think before you trust

- **Check who is citing whom.** "According to Reuters" on a state-controlled outlet is not the same as reading Reuters.
- **Go to the original.** Compare length and content. Ask what is missing, not only whether what remains is true.
- **Look for removed context.** Why sanctions exist, who disagrees, and what authorities have said often go first.
- **Notice what was added.** Supporting statistics or a new headline can change the meaning of an accurate quote.
- **True is not the same as complete.** A story built entirely from real facts can still mislead.

Sources

- Reuters (John O'Donnell), ["AfD leader vows to restore German-Russian ties as she eyes chancellorship"](#), 30 June 2026 (syndicated copy)
- TASS, ["'Alternative for Germany' leader urges resumption of oil, gas supplies from Russia"](#), 30 June 2026
- RT, ["Leader of Germany's most popular party wants to restore ties with Russia"](#), 30 June 2026
- Maria Snegovaya, ["Russian Propaganda in Germany: More Effective Than You Think"](#), *The American Interest*, 17 October 2017
- [AfD pro-Russia movement](#), Wikipedia (replace with its primary sources before publishing)