

Forevergate: The Pernicious Persistence of the Russian Collusion Delusion. The Trump-Putin Fairy Tale

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The official investigation into Russian collusion is over, after three harrowing, nerve-racking years. I kid, of course. After endless news cycles, and various non-stories and wild-goose chases disseminated by mainstream media, one would think the country could move on. Yet this hasn't been the case. It seems pretty straightforward: delusions about Russia continue because they serve empire.

Most serious people who have not had their brains parasitized by the ridiculous hand-wringing and caterwauling of mainstream media pundits understood Russiagate for what it was: a bunch of half-baked allegations against obviously corrupt yet incompetent stooges of the Trump campaign and administration, cobbled together to appear as some sinister, shadowy plot against America. That does not mean that Donald Trump is not a repugnant, amoral, serial liar who would do anything within his power to engage in damage control in regards to the behavior of his corrupt and incompetent lackeys, as well as himself. It simply means, in regards to collusion, there is no there, there.

Examine nearly any foundational element of the alleged Trump-Putin collusion fairy tale and it falls apart immediately. When Donald Trump acts illegally, as he has in the past with various real estate scams, he does it out in the open, in full view. He does not seem to have the mental capacities to collude and conspire, he is simply a billionaire: he gives orders, even if often he does not have to state them openly, as Michael Cohen told us, and he gets what he wants. Partially this is why liberals vilify him so much, obviously: he has removed the curtains of empire to show how things are really run, how white supremacy and unchecked greed and corruption has always been at the core of US hegemony.

Moreover, I do not see anyone even in alternative media circles asking about Russia's side of the equation. Would Vladimir Putin look at the pro-con, cost-benefit analysis of conspiring with a clown such as Trump and determine, let's do this? I would say probably not. What would the endgame be? Would Trump pull out of NATO, would Trump give his tacit approval of the transfer of Crimea, or even attempt to thaw relations concerning Ukraine? Hell no. These are liberal fantasies: demented, fevered nightmares of the national security state falling apart at the hands of an ignoramus. US imperial rule does not allow for any significant aberrations in foreign policy, regardless of who is president.

To some degree, US imperial policy is *on rails*, and who is in charge simply doesn't matter. Presidents are puppets, figureheads. Putin must understand this on some level. Although to an extent post-Soviet Russia has been seeking approval from the West, and forming tacit alignments with such basket cases as Orban's Hungary, as well as becoming more engaged

with other xenophobic nationalist-populists in Europe, the Kremlin simply does not vitally need US approval. It may, however, broach certain topics in specific policy areas where overlapping interests are well-established.

The costs of Russia getting caught by actually concretely, materially, and intellectually conspiring with any incoming US administration (by setting the entire US on wild Neo-McCarthyite witch-hunts and restarting a New Cold War, which is essentially what has happened anyways without any collusion) would vastly outweigh the benefits.

I mean, come on, the Steele document, Wikileaks being pawns of the Russians, a handful of Facebook ads having any significant effect on election results? It's frankly ridiculous that these fabricated fairy tales could send any rational group of people into an investigative furor. It's even more absurd considering, frankly, that probably lots of corporate leaders, Democratic "elite" consultants, spooks at Langley, national security "experts", and political operatives were taking a look at this 3rd-rate paperback fiction before any investigation was launched, and deciding, yes, let's go with *this*.

What it does seem to mean, and what hardly anyone wants to admit, is that this steaming pile of horseshit was in fact concocted by our intelligence agencies (and possibly at the behest of the Clintons' networks within the national security state to avert eyes from the Clinton Foundation scandal) to help to distract, divide, and hypnotize the public. This is what is called a disinformation campaign/psychological operation, a "psy-op".

Every media story devoted to the Russiagate hoax takes away from any and all of the failed policies and spinelessness of the Democrats. It also benefits conservatives and elite corporate interests as well, because there is less time to cover things like global warming, militarism, increasing income inequality, Trump's deregulations which have gutted federal agencies, etc.

The hypocrisy is astounding, and the analysis is completely ahistorical, considering the nefarious meddling, subterfuge, coups, and death the US has doled out for decades by interfering in overseas elections. Not to mention the assassinations, funding death squads, the massacres and genocides committed in the wake of US covert foreign policy. There is no existent US democracy to interfere in.

If you're biting on the "Russian hackers" and "Russian spies" nonsense, well, there's not much hope for you either. It is well within the possibilities of many intelligence agencies to fake an attack or make digital signatures appear to be coming from other countries. As for whether any of these so-called Russian "agents" actually has any significant influence in the Kremlin hierarchy, it is pure speculation. From an examination of the Mueller report, which is all we can do with all the redacted evidence, it appears many of these shadowy Russian figures are marginal figures, and/or are simply sponges and spivs vying for a wee bit of influence in Moscow, rather than member of some deep-cover GRU operation.

The vast majority of citizens understand that Hillary Clinton lost because of her hubris, her frigid personality, and, most obviously, her stupidity as she failed to campaign in key battleground states.

Further, if we are asking questions as to what countries influence our elections, the obvious answers would have to be NATO allies and Israel. Even Bill Clinton faced charges of election

subterfuge due to his supposed backing from Chinese money.

Hands down, you can pretty much guarantee that Cambridge Analytica, Facebook's and Youtube's own algorithms which favor sensationalist and hateful content, and probably a host of other unknown shady corporations influenced the election far more than Russia could have. I can guarantee that Russiagate has been the biggest boon for cybersecurity, surveillance, and counter-terror corporations since 9/11.

Another point is the issue of "back-channels" from the Trump campaign and transition teams to the Putin administration. As if nearly every leader of a sovereign nation does not establish back-channels with other allies and enemies (see: Nixon to China, among many examples), simply because national leaders have enemies within their own government who will leak or sabotage any efforts at dialogue, whether they are corrupt or not.

How naïve does one have to be to recoil in shock at the notion that the most powerful governments in the world establish diplomatic back-channels with shady, corrupt officials and spies?

If you want to open the book on political corruption, you will probably find every member of Congress, every high-level member in State and Defense, every Cabinet member and their top-tier underlings, every senior financial person at Treasury and the Fed have conflicts of interests if they are not openly taking bribes, stock buybacks, or whizzing in and out of corporate positions (the "revolving door" phenomenon) to deregulate and consult for the industries which stand to benefit from the wanton dismemberment of our regulatory agencies.

The elites are not honest in public, but I'd assume most of them are self-aware enough to realize what they are doing occurs in a legal gray area, if not being outright criminal. The liberal and some "never Trump" and "principled" conservative media, however, cannot even be bothered to reflect on whose interests are being served by pandering to the national security state. These mainstream journalists have managed to rehabilitate the image of our abhorrent domestic and foreign security and intelligence agencies.

When your beliefs align with those who support US Empire, you might want to critically question them. There was absolutely no "objective" reporting (an abstract fantasy these hacks hang their hats on) regarding alleged election interference in mainstream sources. What almost certainly happened was that key figures in DC, whether politicians, technocrats, or intelligence assets or agents fed running lies to their puppet mouthpieces such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, etc.

Elite interests threw chum in the water and watched as the mainstream journalist feeding frenzy ensued. Not only did they take the bait hook, line, and sinker; there were no internal checks among news agencies about the origins of the hogwash theories they disseminated.

If one hazards to take a best guess as to where this all originated, it's as simple as three letters: C-I-A. US intelligence involvement in concocting the collusion yarn is conspicuously absent in media analysis, a telling omission.

The psychology of this nonsense is interesting insofar as it reveals deep-rooted liberal tendencies: rather than engaging in self-reflection as to the reasons of Clinton's loss, Trump's victory can only be an aberration. In this dream-world impeachment is always on

the horizon, and America can undergo a return to normalcy by replacing Trump with a “rational”, neoliberal democratic centrist.

The denialism of mainstream liberals knows no bounds and we should not be hesitant to laugh at the ridiculousness of allegations of Russian hacking and collusion. What might also be helpful is to remind the chattering classes that their thoughts are not their own. By examining the historical and material forces at play, one is forced to confront the facts that only very elite interests in the military-industrial complex could be responsible for stringing along our compliant media for so long.

Again, every multinational corporation, every authoritarian government agency, every arms dealer, fossil fuel emitter, financial speculator, agribusiness corporation, medical and insurance company, as well as the FBI, CIA, and our vast imperial apparatus stood to benefit as mainstream media devoted so much time, energy, and bandwidth towards such a ridiculous, divisive, and painfully obvious intelligence disinformation ploy.

That, in fact, may have been the point, and the initial culprits in the US security state may never be found. Nor does the Russiagate hoax require any specific people directing the media. The deviousness of our system is that it does not need individual conspirators. To paraphrase Gore Vidal: “There is no need for the elite to conspire. They all think the same.” The system vomits forth new idiotic post-truth narratives on both liberal and conservative sides to sooth frayed nerves by offering palliatives to those frightened by resurgent racist and nationalist tendencies, and to satiate a public beholden to spectacle. Rather than trying to untangle the contradictions and travesties inherent to capitalism and empire, any fairy tale will do. No one can seem to figure out who is responsible for our nation’s slow collapse, and there can’t be a public reckoning for whoever was disseminating this collusion nonsense either, because the national security state is cowardly and faceless. Empire and capitalism cannot bear to have their true faces unmasked.

The faceless people behind the scenes are not heroic American spy-warriors or clever, righteous assassins we see portrayed in popular TV, movies, video games, etc. Nor does any real power reside in the “Russian hacker”, a classic case of US projection (Stuxnet anyone?). What the stereotype does play into is a racist and absurd caricature of seedy Slavic programmers deviously plotting to destroy democracy in America from troll-farms in St. Petersburg.

The real faceless people of today are khaki-wearing doofuses overseeing server farms in Northern Virginia, the uniformed killers wandering the corridors of the Pentagon E-ring whose schemes lead to genocide abroad, free market-worshipping chauvinist tech-bros in Silicon Valley constructing our ever-surveilled digital hellscape who mine the need for human connection and community for profit, diplomat dilettantes plotting coups in US embassies which increasingly resemble bunkers, the stuffed-suit lawyers and financial parasites who plunder whole continents and construct tax havens for the super-rich, and the anonymous shareholders, CEOs, and owners of nesting-doll conglomerates which oversee trillions of dollars stolen from workers and direct trillions more from public treasuries.

Russiagate will continue on to provide cover for ruling class criminality. It functions in US political discourse to evade the examination of capital’s true nature, to lead down blind alleyways in the long tradition of America’s “paranoid style”. As the climate crisis intensifies, as the rising tides of authoritarianism destroy lives and sap energy from ordinary workers and citizens, the simulation of democracy must be maintained at all costs. What better way

than for the elites to distract and confuse the public, remain in the shadows, and feign responsibility for their crimes against the planet and humanity than to foment unrest between the two leading nuclear powers, simultaneously enrage and anesthetize the public with a feel-good story about a former FBI director taking down a President, and shift away public attention from the imperial paroxysms of violence erupting all over the globe?

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