

“The Russians are Still Coming” “Without RussiaGate”: The “Fake News” Witch-hunt against the Independent Media

US Foreign Policy under Trump in the Wake of the Russia Probe

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)
Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

*From one day to the next, following the release of the **Mueller report**, the shaky RussiaGate consensus created by the corporate media has collapsed.*

What the Mueller investigation contends is that there is no proof that the Kremlin interfered in the 2016 presidential elections.

The demise of the RussiaGate narrative, however, does not mean that the Trump administration will renew its relations with the Kremlin. “The Russians are still coming”... without RussiaGate. Russia is still portrayed as a threat to America’s National Security.

In this regard, the objective of the Neocons has been achieved. The Trump administration, with its hawk team of advisers including Pompeo and Bolton, not to mention Gina Haspel at the CIA, is towing the line.

Corporate and Political Rivalries

The RussiaGate narrative was required to sustain the multibillion dollar contracts in favor of the military industrial complex including the 1.2 trillion dollar nuclear weapons program.

What was at stake in 2016 were fundamental rivalries within the US establishment marked by the clash between competing corporate (and political) factions, each of which was intent upon exerting control over the incoming US presidency.

In this regard, Trump was not entirely in the pocket of the lobby groups. He was not a groomed politician. As a member of the business establishment, he had his own corporate sponsors and fund raisers. His stated foreign policy agenda including his “commitment” to revise Washington’s relationship with Moscow did not fully conform with the interests of the defence contractors.

Prior to the elections, a smear campaign was launched by the media on behalf of the “Clinton faction”. At the height of the election campaign Trump was portrayed by the US media as “an agent” of the Kremlin, **a modern Manchurian candidate**. Barely a month before the November 8 2016 elections, former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director **Leo Panetta** intimated that Trump represented a threat to National Security. The Atlantic (October 8, 2016), described Trump is a “Modern Manchurian Candidate”.

Sleeping with the enemy



June 13, 2017 11:17 AM



Yes, sleeping with the enemy. Donald Trump and the Russians are in bed together as indicated by various, very reliable sources, although both these bed partners deny their torrid affair.



Belleville National Democrats, Jan 13, 2017

IS DONALD TRUMP A MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE?

A series of explosive reports provide new details about the Republican nominee's relationship with Russia.

Vanity Fair November 1 2016

Trump Time Capsule #133: Modern Manchurian Candidate



Angela Lansbury and Laurence Harvey in *The Manchurian Candidate*, in 1962. That movie, and the Richard Condon novel it was drawn from, imagined foreign attempts to direct the outcome of a U.S. presidential election. Yesterday the U.S. government said that Russian hackers have been deliberately trying to change the outcome of this year's race. (Wikimedia commons)

The Atlantic October 8 2016

This anti-Trump campaign continued unabated in the wake of the elections. Ironically, **Rod Rosenstein** who had been nominated for the position of Deputy Attorney General by president Trump in February 2017, acted against Trump almost immediately following his confirmation on April 27, 2017.

Rosenstein's mandate was to organize the so-called **Russia Probe** pertaining to alleged Kremlin interference in the November 2016 elections. Rosenstein's first step consisted in the firing of FBI Director **James Comey** and appointing **former FBI Director Robert Mueller** as Special Council to lead the Russia Probe.

Rod Rosenstein had prepared a three page memorandum, which criticized James Comey for his handling of the Clinton email investigation and the release of Comey's October 28, 2016 "Second Letter to Congress" 11 days before Election Day.

This action by Comey referred to as "October Surprise" (2016) was largely detrimental to

Clinton's candidacy. It certainly did not go against the interests of Donald Trump.

The Fake News Witch-hunt. Clamping Down on Independent Media

RussiaGate was not only a conspiracy against Trump, largely in response to his 2016 election campaign commitment to restore "normal" diplomatic relations with Russia, it also took the form of a **Witch-hunt directed against the independent online media**, which were casually tagged as "Russian trolls", "Russian bots", "political commentators acting on behalf of the Russian government." etc.

In chorus, the Western media was involved in accusing Moscow of election meddling without a shred of evidence.

In contrast, the lies and fabrications as well as the criminality underlying the Democrats' 2016 election campaign were the object of independent online media reports which were immediately branded as "fake news" on behalf of the Kremlin.

According to Reuters:

"Russian President Vladimir Putin supervised his intelligence agencies' hacking of the U.S. presidential election and turned it from a general attempt to discredit American democracy to an effort to help Donald Trump, three U.S. officials said on Thursday." (emphasis added)

The New York Times (December 15) focussed on Kremlin meddling. Donald Trump is tagged as "a Useful Idiot":

Kremlin meddling in the 2016 election warrants further investigation, with an eye toward preventive or retaliatory measures. President Obama has asked the nation's intelligence community to deliver a fuller report on its findings before he leaves office on Jan. 20, ...

Mr. Trump's reaction to the C.I.A.'s findings leaves him isolated, ... **There could be no more "useful idiot," to use Lenin's term of art, than an American president who doesn't know he's being played by a wily foreign power.** (emphasis added)

According to the Washington Post in a report published one month before the 2016 November elections:

The Obama administration on Friday [October 2016] **officially accused Russia of attempting to interfere in the 2016 elections**, including by hacking the computers of the Democratic National Committee and other political organizations.

The denunciation, made by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security, came as pressure was growing from within the administration and some lawmakers **to publicly name Moscow and hold it accountable for actions apparently aimed at sowing discord around the election.**

"The U.S. Intelligence Community is confident that the Russian Government directed the recent compromises of e-mails from U.S.

persons and institutions, including from U.S. political organizations,” said a joint statement from the two agencies. “. . . These thefts and disclosures are intended to interfere with the U.S. election process.” (WP, October 7, 2016)

While the Washington Post (supported by the Deep State?) was spreading rumors on Russia’s alleged election meddling, **it was also involved in engineering the Blacklisting of the independent media** which was questioning the RussiaGate consensus.

In an “authoritative” Washington Post [article](#), (published 6 days after the November 2016 election) reporter **Craig Timberg** reviewed an anonymous website called [“PropOrNot,”](#) which had blacklisted several hundred independent online news sources intimating that these websites and social media accounts were part of a Kremlin propaganda network. Timberg had no evidence in support of his allegations. The objective was to trigger the crackdown against the online independent media:

“Two teams of independent researchers found that the Russians exploited American-made technology platforms to attack U.S. democracy at a particularly vulnerable moment, as an insurgent candidate harnessed a wide range of grievances to claim the White House. **The sophistication of the Russian tactics may complicate efforts by Facebook and Google to crack down on “fake news,”** as they have vowed to do after widespread complaints about the problem. (Washington Post, November 14, 2016, emphasis added)

Business

Russian propaganda effort helped spread ‘fake news’ during election, experts say

The flood of [“fake news”](#) this election season got support from a sophisticated Russian propaganda campaign that created and spread misleading articles online with the goal of punishing Democrat Hillary Clinton, helping Republican Donald Trump and undermining faith in American democracy, say independent researchers who tracked the operation.

Russia’s increasingly sophisticated propaganda machinery — including thousands of botnets, teams of paid human “trolls,” and networks of websites and social-media accounts — echoed and amplified right-wing sites across the Internet as they portrayed Clinton as a criminal hiding potentially fatal health problems and preparing to hand control of the nation to a shadowy cabal of global financiers. The effort also sought to heighten the appearance of international tensions and promote fear of looming hostilities with nuclear-armed Russia.

Screenshot of WP article, November 24, 2016

Russia is Manipulating US Public Opinion through Online Propaganda

📅 March 24, 2017 💬 0 Comments

We're trying to stop it.

Welcome to PropOrNot! This site is a resource for people who want to understand Russian influence operations targeted at US audiences, distinguish between propaganda and commercial "clickbait", and help identify propaganda and push back.

The Washington Post is "Fake News" at its Best. The report served as an endorsement of the Blacklisting campaign. Sustained by the RussiaGate narrative, a smear campaign was launched. Several hundred online media sites including Global Research were tagged as "fake news" by Facebook and Google.

The Washington based Atlantic Council and NATO's Centre of Excellency (COE), a "Research Centre" based in Latvia have published several "authoritative reports" which identify the independent online media "with links" to the Kremlin. Much of this "analysis" is fabricated.

The objective was to use the RussiaGate narrative (which had become a broadly accepted public consensus), as a means to suppress critical analysis of neoliberal economic policies, US foreign policy, US-NATO war plans, etc.

What happens now?

While the Mueller report confirms that the corporate media were spreading "fake news" in support of RussiaGate, it is highly unlikely that the mainstream media will indulge in a *mea culpa*. Moreover, it is also unlikely that social media and search engine censorship against the independent online media will be removed.

What is of course significant is that **the broader public is now fully aware that they have been lied to. The public has been deliberately misled** by the mainstream media from the very outset of the RussiaGate saga. The corporate media has endorsed war propaganda, it has granted legitimacy to acts of war and military aggression, through lies and fabrications. Under Nuremberg, war propaganda constitutes the ultimate crime: "the Crime against Peace".

The Skripal Affair

The RussiaGate saga was not limited to the United States, it extended into Britain and the European Union. The unspoken objective was to jeopardize diplomatic as well as economic relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation. The Kremlin was also accused of political meddling in relation to America's closest allies including Britain, France and Canada (where the issue of election interference was raised).

The Skripal affair -which hit Britain's tabloids- was an integral part of the RussiaGate Op. It was based on fake intelligence and media disinformation directed against Moscow.

Launched by the UK government of Theresa May, a political consensus had unfolded. Moscow was casually accused of conducting a mysterious covert nerve gas attack against a former Russian intelligence operative and his daughter.



While the story was refuted, the objective of the Skripal affair ultimately succeeded. It consisted in pressuring EU member states to jeopardize their diplomatic relations with Russia.

Meanwhile, the RussiaGate saga also provided legitimacy to NATO threats against Russia, resulting in massive military deployments at Russia's doorstep.

US Foreign Policy

The Mueller report does not restore sanity in US foreign policy. Quite the opposite.

What it confirms is that there is no evidence of Russian support of Trump's candidacy in the 2016 presidential elections.

Since Trump's inauguration, however, the objective of normalizing diplomatic relations with Russia has largely been scrapped.

With Bolton and Pompeo, the NeoCons control Trump's foreign policy.

War scenarios with Russia and China are contemplated.

Nuclear war is on the drawing board of the Pentagon.

The RussiaGate narrative against Trump is no longer required.

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