

US Election Meddling: Smoke and Mirrors

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For a magician, the greater the illusion attempted, the more showmanship that's required to distract audiences from that fact that it is indeed just an illusion. For US politics, something very similar applies, particularly regarding the latest, ongoing narrative surrounding alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential election.

Having concluded over half a year ago, had there been actual evidence of state-sponsored election interference by Russia, it would have surfaced and the necessity for a lengthy and dramatic public spectacle would not only be absent, it would obstruct real measures needed to protect America's political process from future foreign influence.

However, actual evidence has not surfaced.

Instead, complex conspiracy theories buttressed by the most tenuous documentation have been spun and promoted in the midst of public hearings, political rearrangements in the White House and other theatrics designed to keep the public engaged and convinced of the notion that Russia's government actually attempted to manipulate the results of America's presidential election.

However, the entire spectacle and the narrative driving it, is based entirely on the assumption that Russia's government believes the office of US President is of significant importance enough so as to risk meddling in it in the first place. It also means that Russia believed the office of US President was so important to influence, that the substantial political fallout and consequences if caught were worth the risk.

In reality, as US **President Donald Trump** has thoroughly demonstrated, the White House holds little to no sway regarding US foreign policy.

While President Trump promised during his campaign leading up to the 2016 election cooperation with Russia, a withdrawal from undermining and overthrowing the government in Damascus, Syria and a reversal of decades of US support for the government of Saudi Arabia, he now finds himself presiding over an administration continuing to build up military forces on Russia's borders in Eastern Europe, is currently and repeatedly killing Syrian soldiers in Syria and has sealed a record arms deal with Saudi Arabia amounting to over 110 billion US dollars.

It is clear that the foreign policy executed by US **President George Bush**, continued by **President Barack Obama** and set to continue under US presidential candidate **Hillary Clinton**, is instead being faithfully executed by President Trump.

Any and all efforts to skew the electoral process either through leaked e-mails or through hacking electronic voting machines would have carried a political risk that far outweighed what is clearly a negligible outcome.

Cui Bono?

For US foreign and domestic policy, however, the grand illusion of Russia meddling in America's political process helps in at least three fundamental ways.

First, it provides a distraction for the American public. While President Trump continues the policies of previous administrations in the service of the unelected special interests that actually determine and benefit from US foreign policy, the "US election meddling" narrative provides a diversion that prevents President Trump's backtracking and hypocrisy from taking precedence in public debates.

Second, creating hysteria over the possibility that a foreign nation might have interfered with America's political process helps reinforce the illusion that America's political process is legitimate and meaningful in the first place. It buttresses the notion that America's destiny is determined by the electorate and the representatives it puts in office, not the multi-billion dollar multi-national corporations and financial institutions that lobby America's legislative bodies and place their representatives within each presidential cabinet regardless of who the American public vote into office.

And third, accusing Russia of interfering in America's political process helps perpetuate the adversarial nature of US-Russian relations, justifying the continued existence and expansion of NATO and all of the conflicts it both fuels and feeds off of. In addition to geopolitical objectives, this process reaps billions in defense contracts and opens up new potential markets for US corporations and financial institutions.

Ultimately, the co-opting or elimination of Russian competitors across a multitude of industries globally would give existing US monopolies and even tighter grip on the planet, its resources and its people.

For Russia who already faces an all but openly declared policy of encirclement, containment and undermining by the US, including crippling economic sanctions and an array of politically subversive (not to mention ironic) activities sponsored openly by the US through fronts like the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), excuses like alleged Russian meddling in America's presidential election only gives Washington continued apparent justification for its incremental efforts toward taking apart Russia as a reemerging world power.

Accusations of foreign meddling amid the domestic political affairs of a sovereign nation are serious. However, evidence is required not only to level accusations against a nation for doing so, but are essential before undertaking subsequent measures against the accused nation. While the United States openly manipulates the political processes of nations worldwide through organizations like NED which literally creates and directs opposition parties globally, it has failed to produce convincing evidence or even assign a rational motive regarding its accusations against Russia.

Were Russia determined to challenge American hegemony worldwide, it would not do it by interfering in an already rigged and irrelevant US election, but by creating alternatives to

the industrial, military, financial and institutional monopolies the US uses globally to achieve, maintain and expand hegemony. Russia is already doing this, which is why the US seeks justification for confronting Moscow, revealing the true culprits and motive behind the “US election meddling” narrative.

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