

Trump, Russiagate and the deep state

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I have avoided getting caught up in what can only be described as the insanity gripping the US media and political elite since even before Trump's astounding victory in 2016 -- the claim that poor, weak Russia somehow orchestrated the defeat of Hillary Clinton and the election of the clownish, loose cannon Donald Trump. 'Ridiculous,' I laughed. As the drumbeat continued into the fourth year, out of curiosity, I decided I should have a look.

The biggest noise was the indictment of a Russophobe anti-Trumper (Trump "a soulless ginger orangutan") whistleblower [Reality Winner](#), in 2018, whose claim of Trump-Russia conspiracy was bogus but who was imprisoned for her 'courageous' blowhardiness anyway. (US justice is as weird as American names like 'Reality Winner'. She exposed ... nothing, and was sentenced to five years and three months in prison as part of that marvel of US 'justice' a plea bargain.)

I watched a [video](#) interviewing black activist Andrew (unintelligible) on MSNBC in April 2019, with the accompanying article, "Russian documents reveal desire to sow racial discord — and violence — in the U.S.", about a Facebook troll who supposedly originated in the now legendary Internet Research Agency, "the St. Petersburg-based troll farm that played a key role in the 2016 Russian meddling campaign."

Naughty, naughty.

Why would Russians do this (if the story is legit)? And does it matter? The answer to the second question is 'no'. The first requires remembering just what role the US has played in Russian politics. The role is outsized and Russia barely survived.

US-Russian relations in a nutshell: Yeltsin good, Putin bad

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The interference, of course, goes back a century, with the US intervention in the Russia of 1917, as part of an alliance of the imperial powers to destroy the revolution and put in place a nice, subservient puppet government that would end any thought of communism, the new enemy of the imperialists.

But this conspiracy did not end with the communist collapse in 1991 (which also was very much brought about by US efforts). The most [outrageous interference](#) was propping up the addled, drunken Yeltsin and his “Democratic Russia”, both in his destruction of the first 'democratic' parliament in 1993, and ensuring his reelection in 1996. Yeltsin spent from \$700 million to \$2.5 billion. Guess who filled his coffers (and helped at the ballot boxes)?

This, despite overwhelming opposition by the Russian people. It's very hard to buck the imperial hegemon (just ask the Venezuelans and Iranians). Perhaps Russia never had a chance, but the interference did not stop there.

Yelstin handed power to the only credible person in his entourage, Vladimir Putin, who survived the wreckage that Yelstin bequeathed him, and after two terms, relinquished his hold on power according to the constitution. The US did not like this tsar-like figure, fuming at what was seen as a betrayal of Russia's 'new' democracy. Which, remember, Yelstin reduced to rubble in 1993 and put the finishing touch on in 1996.

Putin left office, finishing his two terms. True, Putin had stuck by the constitution, and power devolved in a real show of democracy, into a more palatable Medvedev. But he was still smart, patriotic Putin, now acting as prime minister. Not what the US ordered. Still, the arrival of the friendly, meek Dmitri Medvedev as president was a good sign. US democracy-promoting NGOs proliferated. (National Democratic Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, Soros's Open Society, USAID, etc.)

As National Security Council adviser on Russia, Michael McFaul advised Obama to mark the transition from Putin to Medvedev with a metaphorical 'reset' button in 2009, hoping to lure Medvedev into breaking from Putin and bringing Russia back into the US fold as a NATO groupie. As a Russia expert, McFaul provided the translation for the word 'reset' as *peregruzka*.

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When secretary of state Clinton presented an *actual button* marked 'reset/*peregruzka*' to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, he pointed out that *peregruzka* did not mean reset, but rather overload, referring to putting too much power through an electrical system, leading to blown fuses, or even a fire. Clinton tittered but failed to see the irony that this was precisely what the US intend.

When Putin came back in 2012 to begin another two terms, McFaul cried, 'Not fair!' Despite his dubious command of the subtleties of the Russian language, he was chosen by Obama as his ambassador to Russia (2012--14), to continue his conspiring in the heart of the beast.

The 'reset' 'overload' fell flat. Medvedev had not betrayed Russia. There was indeed a series of blown fuses under McFaul's watch, but thankfully no conflagration. Putin has kept a modest check on US belligerence ever since. Like a spoiled child, McFaul kept/ keeps screaming 'foul!'.

A moment full of irony building up to the 'reset' fiasco was Obama's 2008 Nobel Peace Prize, the *selection committee* hoping to influence US politics for the better, by giving Obama a boost against his warmongers. The first 'black' president would deliver his people (and the world) from the military industrial complex, end the US illegal wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, support the UN, etc. We all know how that ended. How about a Nobel Prize for the most civilians killed by drones?

Of course, all these 'international' organs (UN, Nobel not to mention NGOs) despise Putin, though his unflinching approach to Russian-US relations has been the key factor in holding Russia together and maintaining world order. If anyone deserves the Nobel prize, it is Putin (which he'll get only when Hell freezes over).

Not waiting for Hell to freeze over, Russia put the brakes on US interference, and expelled the various US-backed subversive organs. The Cold War came back with a vengeance, as US machinations in Russia's near abroad continued, notably in Ukraine.

Since the Ukrainian coup in 2014, Russia has been in US sights, but all the US can do is try to undermine the Russian economy, continue to expand NATO on Russia's border, play war games in Estonia, Crimea, etc. All this is painful for Russia, but better than becoming a US

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satrap.

Just how 'democratic' Russia is, is debatable but US meddling in Russian elections has been clipped. It reached its apogee in 2011, when McFaul encouraged Clinton to speak out in support of the Russian opposition and meet high profile dissidents. "We are supportive of the rights and aspirations of the Russian people to be able to make progress and realize a better future for themselves." And when McFaul came to Moscow as the US ambassador in 2011, one of his first actions was to invite the leaders of the various Russian opposition groups to the US embassy to meet with him.

Surprise! Putin and the Russian government responded by accusing Clinton of interfering in the domestic political affairs of Russia.

Did Putin or Lavrov ever meet with US dissidents during US presidential elections and tell them that 'we are supportive etc'? Now that would have constituted 'interference', not the lame charges of playing schoolboy pranks on the internet, as the post-2016 charges amount to.

Any Russian mischief there may have been can be chalked up to taking a bit of revenge for the countless real slights that Russia has had to endure, slights that not only led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but to the consolidation of the ownership of almost all of Russia by a handful of oligarchs (facilitated by guess who?), and the transfer of Russia's wealth to western banks. There are enough angry, computer-savvy Russian patriots to blanket the entire US with trolls, without any orders 'from the Kremlin'.

America's one-party 'democracy'

So what accounts for the US hysteria? Could it have anything to do with the US deep state? Trump's hopes to deal honestly with Russia to solve the world's problems? His vow to bring the troops home from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria? For Americans tired of warmongering, arguably the real reason for Trump's astounding victory in 2016?

Yes. Trump was undermined in his plans right from before the word 'go', from September 2016,

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as soon as he won. The deep state was so terrified, there was even the threat of a coup against Trump the moment he was sworn in, with rumours of using Section 4 of the 25th Amendment of the US constitution, in case of a president who was deemed 'unwell'. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein discussed just that possibility in 2017, in the days after Trump fired FBI director James Comey.

More recently, in April 2019, Trump described the investigation by former FBI director Robert Mueller as "an attempted coup". And all this time, attempts have been made to impeach Trump, even as his [popularity remains](#) at a solid 42%, despite all the noise and name-calling. At the same pre-reelection moment, Nixon's approval rating was 50%, Carter's 35%, Reagan's 44%. Even though Trump's only success has been a tax cut for the rich, he appears set for reelection. Unless he's impeached, assassinated, whatever.

He's the closest thing the US has had to an antiwar president in over 80 years, since Hoover—but the entrenched interests have proven too strong. The [War Party is officially in control](#) in both pseudo-democratic parties, as Republicans and Democrats vote for economic war (and not only) against Russia, Venezuela, Iran, and anyone else foolhardy enough to buck US world hegemony. Democrats looking for evidence of conspiracy and collusion ought to turn their attention there.

Just where democracy is in all this, and where the conspiracy is, is not in the sights of US commentators and warmongers. Trump's many downsides have catapulted into office a few genuine reformers, unapologetic socialists, most notably Muslim congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez. And there appears to be a shift in Democrats in the race for the presidency, with at least Tulsi Gabbard calling for a real 'reset' with Russia. Is there democracy in the US? Maybe, but don't hold your breath.