

Fake News Versus No News

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The drama surrounding allegations that the internet is awash with “fake news” is being promoted by the so-called mainstream media which certainly has a lot to answer for when it comes to producing material that does not pass the smell test. Does the name Judith Miller ring any bells? And the squeaks of rage coming from the U.S. Congress over being lied to is also something to behold as the federal government has been acting in collusion with the media to dish up falsehoods designed to start wars since the time of the Spanish-American conflict in 1898, if not before.

The fake news saga is intended to discredit Donald Trump, whom the media hates mostly because they failed to understand either him or the Americans who voted for him in the recent election. You have to blame somebody when you are wrong so you invent “fake news” as the game changer that explains your failure to comprehend simple truths. To accomplish that, the clearly observable evidence that the media was piling on Donald Trump at every opportunity has somehow been deliberately morphed into a narrative that it is Trump who was [attacking the media](#), suggesting that it was all self-defense on the part of the Rachel Maddows of this world, but anyone who viewed even a small portion of the farrago surely will have noted that it was the Republican candidate who was continuously coming under attack from both the right and left of the political-media spectrum.

There are also some secondary narratives being promoted, including a pervasive argument that Hillary Clinton was somehow the victim of the news reporting due specifically to fake stories emanating largely from Moscow in an attempt to not only influence the election but also to subvert [America’s democratic institutions](#). I [have observed](#) that if such a truly ridiculous objective were President Vladimir Putin’s desired goal he might as well relax. Our own Democratic and Republican duopoly has already been doing a fine job at subverting democracy by assiduously separating the American people from the elite Establishment that theoretically represents and serves them.

Another side of the mainstream media lament that has been relatively unexplored is what the media chooses not to report. At the present moment, it is practically obligatory to slam Russia and Putin at every opportunity even though Moscow is too militarily weak and poor to fancy itself a global adversary of the U.S. Instead of seeking a new Cold War, Washington should instead focus on working with Russia to make sure that disagreements over policies in relatively unimportant parts of the world do not escalate into nuclear exchanges. Russian actions on its own doorstep in Eastern Europe do not in fact threaten the United States or any actual vital interest. Nor does Moscow threaten the U.S. through its intervention on behalf of the Syrian government in the Middle East. That Russia is described incessantly as a threat in those areas is largely a contrivance arranged by the media, the Democratic and Republican National Committees and by the White House. Candidate Donald Trump appeared to recognize that fact before he began listening to Michael Flynn, who has a rather

different view. Hopefully the old Trump will prevail.

Blaming Russia, which has good reasons to be suspicious of Washington's intentions, is particularly convenient for those many diverse inside the Beltway interests that require a significant enemy to keep the cash flowing out of the pockets of taxpayers and into the bank accounts of the useless grifters who inhabit K-Street and Capitol Hill. Neoconservatives are frequently described as ideologues, but the truth is that they are more interested in gaining increased access to money and power than they are in promulgating their own brand of global regime change.

There is, however, another country that has interfered in U.S. elections, has endangered Americans living or working overseas and has corrupted America's legislative and executive branches. It has exploited that corruption to initiate legislation favorable to itself, has promoted unnecessary and unwinnable wars and has stolen American technology and military secrets. Its ready access to the mainstream media to spread its own propaganda provides it with cover for its actions and it accomplishes all that and more through the agency of a powerful and well-funded domestic lobby that oddly is not subject to the accountability afforded by the Foreign Agents Registration Act ([FARA](#)) of 1938 even though it manifestly works on behalf of a foreign government. That country is, of course, Israel.

And that assessment of Israel and what damage it does regarding what most Americans would regard as genuine national interests is most definitely not reported, revealing once again that what is not written is every bit as important as what is. I would note how what has recently happened right in front of us relating to Israel is apparently not considered fit to print and will never appear on any disapproving editorial page. Just this week the Senate unanimously passed an [Anti-Semitism Awareness bill](#) and also by a 99 to zero vote [renewed and strengthened sanctions](#) against Iran, which could wreck the one year old anti-nuclear weapon proliferation agreement with that country.

The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act is intended to give the Department of Education investigatory authority over "anti-Jewish incidents" on America's college campuses. Such "incidents" are not limited to religious bigotry, with the examples cited in the bill's text including criticism of Israel and claiming that the holocaust was "exaggerated." It is a thinly disguised assault on the Boycott Divest and Sanction (BDS) movement, which is non-violent, does not criticize Jews as a religion or ethnicity, and is actually supported by many Jewish American who are concerned about Israel's apartheid regime.

The Anti-Semitism bill makes Jews and Jewish interests a legally protected class, immune from any criticism. "Free speech" means in practice that you can burn an American flag, sell pornography, attack Christianity in the vilest terms or castigate the government in Washington all you want but criticizing Israel is off limits if you want to avoid falling into the clutches of the legal system. The Act is a major step forward in effectively making any expressed opposition to Israeli actions a hate crime and is similar to punitive legislation that has been enacted in twenty-two states as well as in Canada. It is strongly supported by the Israel Lobby, which quite likely drafted it, and is seeking to use legal challenges to delegitimize and eliminate any opposition to the policies of the state of Israel.

As the Act is clearly intended to restrict First Amendment rights if they are perceived as impacting on broadly defined Jewish sensitivities, it should be opposed on that basis alone, but it is very popular in Congress, which is *de facto* owned by the Israel Lobby. That the

legislation is not being condemned or even discussed in the generally liberal media tells you everything you need to know about the amazing power of one particular unelected and unaccountable lobby in the U.S.

And there is always Iran to worry about. If the United States can successfully avoid a war with Russia, a conflict with the Mullahs could have major consequences even if the all-powerful U.S. military successfully rolls over its Iranian counterpart in less than a week. Iran is physically and in terms of population much larger than Iraq and it has a strong national identity. An attack by Washington would produce a powerful reaction, unleashing terrorist resources and destabilizing an economically and politically important region of the world for years to come. Currently, the nuclear agreement with Iran provides some measure of stability and also pushes backwards any possible program by Tehran to build a weapon. Iran does not threaten the United States, so why walk away from the agreement as some of Trump's advisors urge? Or violate the agreement's terms as the U.S. Congress seems to be doing by extending and tightening the sanctions regime with its just passed Iran Sanctions Extension Act? Look no further than the Israel Lobby. Hobbling Iran, a regional competitor, is a possible Israeli interest that should have nothing to do with the United States but yet again the United States government carries the water for the extreme right wing Netanyahu regime.

Israel for its part has welcomed the Trump election by building [500 new](#) and completely illegal settler homes in what was once Arab East Jerusalem. Trump has surrounded himself with advocates for Israel and Prime Minister Netanyahu's expectation that he will have a free hand in dealing with those pesky Palestinians is probably correct. I would like to think that Donald Trump will unpleasantly surprise him based on actual American rather than Israeli interests but am not optimistic.

Indeed, deference to perceived Israeli interests enforced by the Israel Lobby and media permeates the entire American foreign policy and national security structure. Congressman Keith Ellison who is seeking to become Democratic National Committee Chairman [is being called](#) an anti-Semite for "implying U.S. policy in the region [the Middle East] favored Israel at the expense of Muslim-majority countries, remarks ADL's CEO Jonathan Greenblatt described as '[deeply disturbing and disqualifying.](#)'" Donald Trump and his senior counselor Steve Bannon have also both been called anti-Semites and several other potential GOP appointees have been subjected to the media's fidelity-to-Israel litmus test.

The recently nominated Secretary of Defense James Mattis, who can hardly be called a moderate when it comes to Iran, has also been labeled an anti-Semite by the usual players. Why? Because in 2013 [he told Wolf Blitzer](#)

"So we've got to work on [peace talks] with a sense of urgency. I paid a military security price every day as a commander of CENTCOM because the Americans were seen as biased in support of Israel, and [because of this] moderate Arabs couldn't be with us because they couldn't publicly support those who don't show respect for Arab Palestinians."

Mattis continued, referring directly to Israeli apartheid:

"I'll tell you, the current situation is unsustainable ... We've got to find a way to make work the two-state solution that both Democrat and Republican

administrations have supported, and the chances are starting to ebb because of the settlements. For example, if I'm Jerusalem and I put 500 Jewish settlers to the east and there's ten-thousand Arabs already there, and if we draw the border to include them, either [Israel] ceases to be a Jewish state or you say the Arabs don't get to vote — apartheid. That didn't work too well the last time I saw that practiced in a country."

Mattis will no doubt be reminded of his remarks when he is up for Senate confirmation. A predecessor Chuck Hagel was [mercilessly grilled](#) by Senators over his reported comment that the "Jewish lobby" intimidates congressmen. But ironically nearly everyone who is not an Israel-firster who is involved in U.S. foreign and security policy knows that aggressive Israeli colonization of the Palestinian West Bank and its siege of Gaza contribute greatly to terrorism against the United States, since Washington is regularly blamed for enabling Netanyahu. When General David Petraeus said pretty much [the same thing](#) as Mattis back in 2010 he was forced to "explain" his comments, retract them and then grovel before he was eventually given a pass by the Lobby.

And there is considerable self-censorship related to the alleged sensitivity of "Jewish issues," not only in the media. I recently attended a conference on the Iraq invasion of 2003 at which the role of Israel manifested through its controlled gaggle of American legislators and bureaucrats as a factor in going to war was not even mentioned. It was as if it would be impolite or, dare I say, anti-Semitic, to do so even though the Israeli role was hardly hidden. Former Bush administration senior official Philip Zelikow [has admitted](#) that protecting Israel was the principal reason why the U.S. invaded Iraq and others have speculated that without the persistent neocons' and Israel's prodding Washington might not have gone to war at all. That [is apparently](#) what then Secretary of State Colin Powell also eventually came around to believe.

So let's stop talking about what Russia is doing to the United States, which is relatively speaking very little, and start admitting that the lopsided and completely deferential relationship with Israel is the actual central problem in America's foreign policy. Will the media do that? Not a chance. They would rather obsess about fake news and blame Putin.

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