

The Real Purpose of the U.S. National Intelligence Report on Alleged Hacking by Russia

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*Some thoughts on “Russia’s Influence Campaign Targeting the 2016 US Presidential Election,” the newly released **declassified report** from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.*

1. The primary purpose of the declassified report, which offers no evidence to support its assertions that Russia hacked the U.S. presidential election campaign, is to discredit Donald Trump. I am not saying there was no Russian hack of **John Podesta’s emails**. I am saying we have yet to see any tangible proof to back up the accusation. This charge—Sen. John McCain has likened the alleged effort by Russia to **an act of war**—is the first salvo in what will be a relentless campaign by the Republican and Democratic establishment, along with its corporatist allies and the mass media, to destroy the credibility of the president-elect and prepare the way for impeachment.



A detail of a page in the declassified report. ([Jon Elswick / AP](#))

The allegations in the report, amplified in breathtaking pronouncements by a compliant corporate media that operates in a non-fact-based universe every bit as pernicious as that inhabited by Trump, are designed to make Trump look like Vladimir Putin’s useful idiot. An orchestrated and sustained campaign of innuendo and character assassination will be directed against Trump. When impeachment is finally proposed, Trump will have little public support and few allies and will have become a figure of open ridicule in the corporate media.

2. The second task of the report is to bolster the McCarthyist smear campaign against independent media, including Truthdig, as witting or unwitting agents of the Russian government. The demise of the English programming of Al-Jazeera and TeleSur, along with the collapse of the nation’s public broadcasting, designed to give a voice to those not beholden to corporate or party interests, leaves RT America and Amy Goodman’s Democracy Now! as the only two electronic outlets with a national reach that are willing to give a platform to critics of corporate power and imperialism such as Julian Assange, Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, Ralph Nader, Medea Benjamin, Cornel West, Kshama Sawant, myself and others.

Seven pages of the report were dedicated to RT America, on which I have a show called “On Contact.” The report vastly inflated the cable network’s reach and influence. It also included a few glaring errors, including the statement that “RT introduced two new shows—‘Breaking the Set’ on 4 September and ‘Truthseeker’ on 2 November—both overwhelmingly focused

on criticism of the US and Western governments as well as the promotion of radical discontent.” “Breaking the Set,” with Abby Martin, was taken off the air two years ago. It could hardly be tarred with costing Hillary Clinton the election.

The barely contained rage of Director of National Intelligence James Clapper at the recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on foreign cyber threats was visible when he spat out that RT was “promoting a particular point of view, disparaging our system, our alleged hypocrisy about human rights, et cetera.” His anger was a glimpse into how the establishment seethes with hatred for dissidents. Clapper has lied in the past. He perjured himself in March 2013 when, three months before the revelations of wholesale state surveillance leaked by Snowden, he assured Congress that the National Security Agency was not collecting “any type of data” on the American public. After the corporate state shuts down RT, it will go after Democracy Now! and the handful of progressive sites, including this one, that give these dissidents space. The goal is censorship.

3. The third task of the report is to justify the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization beyond Germany, a violation of the promise Ronald Reagan made to the Soviet Union’s Mikhail Gorbachev after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Expanding NATO in Eastern Europe opened up an arms market for the war industry. It made those businesses billions of dollars. New NATO members must buy Western arms that can be integrated into the NATO arsenal. These sales, which are bleeding the strained budgets of countries such as Poland, are predicated on potential hostilities with Russia. If Russia is not a threat, the arms sales plummet. War is a racket.

4. The final task of the report is to give the Democratic Party plausible cover for the catastrophic election defeat it suffered. Clinton initially **blamed FBI Director James Comey** for her loss before switching to the more easily demonized Putin. The charge of Russian interference essentially boils down to the absurd premise that perhaps hundreds of thousands of Clinton supporters suddenly decided to switch their votes to Trump when they read the leaked emails of Podesta. Either that or they tuned in to RT America and decided to vote for the Green Party.

The Democratic Party leadership cannot face, and certainly cannot publicly admit, that its callous betrayal of the working and middle class triggered a nationwide revolt that resulted in the election of Trump. It has been pounded since President Barack Obama took office, losing 68 seats in the House, 12 seats in the Senate and 10 governorships. It lost more than 1,000 elected positions between 2008 and 2012 nationwide. Since 2010, Republicans have replaced 900 Democratic state legislators. If this was a real party, the entire leadership would be sacked. But it is not a real party. It is the shell of a party propped up by corporate money and hyperventilating media.

The Democratic Party must maintain the fiction of liberalism just as the Republican Party must maintain the fiction of conservatism. These two parties, however, belong to one party—the corporate party. They will work in concert, as seen by the alliance between Republican leaders such as McCain and Democratic leaders such as Sen. Chuck Schumer, to get rid of Trump, silence all dissent, enrich the war industry and promote the farce they call democracy.

Welcome to our *annus horribilis*.

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