

Why the “Russia Report” tells us more about Britain’s BREXIT than anything else

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The long-awaited UK ‘Russia Report’, whose publication was delayed by 10 months by Boris Johnson, was finally released this week by the Westminster Intelligence and Security Committee, much to the excitement of those keen to demonstrate alleged ‘Russian interference’ in the 2016 EU referendum. However Britain’s ‘Russiagate’ has been something of a damp squib compared to the detailed, long-drawn Muller report across the Atlantic. In fact, anyone who was expecting any detail regarding the allegations of Russian interference would be sorely disappointed.

The reality is that the report contains nothing in addition to what has long been printed in the mainstream press about so-called Russian ‘support’ of the Brexit campaign. No evidence is provided in the [report](#), other than references to ‘open source’ material – in other words, what we ourselves have read online and in print. For example, ‘40. Open source studies have pointed to the preponderance of pro-Brexit or anti-EU stories on RT and Sputnik, and the use of ‘bots’ or ‘trolls’, as evidence of Russian attempts to influence the process.’

So we have an allegation that a media organisation may have a particular editorial line? Shocking! Yes, a glance at the RT and Sputnik websites would confirm that they seem to adopt a position close to that of British newspapers such as The Daily Telegraph or Daily Mail, and that would be correct. RT and Sputnik have a broadly right-wing, conservative editorial line, more in keeping with Russia’s conservative values. Hardly surprising – it’s Russian media after all. Every media outlet has its editorial line. Every. Single. One.

But having worked at Sputnik over the time of the EU referendum, I cannot in any way support the allegation that it was promoting a pro-Brexit position. One of the shows I produced – ‘Brexit or Fixit’ – invited each week a guest from opposite sides of the debate – both Leave and Remain – in order to ensure balance. In no way was I – or anyone else for that matter – encouraged to promote an anti-EU stance. The same cannot be said for the mainstream media unfortunately. It was apparent in the run-up to the election, that the media was firmly in the Remain camp. The balance on the BBC, Sky News and Channel Four, for instance was weighted towards remaining in the EU, in my opinion, and I can say that as a supporter of Remain, not Brexit. Even after the result, Sky News openly ran a campaign for a second referendum to be held – the ‘People’s Vote’ as it would be called. Opponents of the Leave campaign and the Brexit result which followed have been desperate ever since to prove some kind of anomaly took place. It just couldn’t be that the British people voted to leave the EU. And this is where the idea of Russian interference came along, and conveniently fitted the narrative.

Just as in the US, the establishment and liberal elite is completely out of touch with the general population, and has been for years – hence the election of Trump and the bid by Democrats to oust him. Populist governments and their messages have resounded with people, and the media, politicians and expert class have yet to catch up. Russia, in this way has become a useful scapegoat for those who aren't willing to accept the social evolution which is taking place. It's Democracy in action, but the establishment can't hack it. After all, look at the Mueller report – what evidence did that provide of Trump's supposed links to Putin? Nothing. Zilch. Nichevo. Evidence isn't really important here. Because the accused has already been found guilty, long ago. Russia hasn't had a fair trial, and isn't going to get one – it has been painted as evil incarnate for years now to the extent that even the word 'Russia' or 'Russian' seems to have taken on negative connotations in the public domain.

It's sad because it stinks of injustice.

The idea that Russia is out to subvert the West really is a hypothesis which has yet to bear fruit. Indeed, a recent fascinating [paper](#) by renowned Russia expert and historian Richard Sakwa debunks the idea that Russia seeks to undermine the West. He does admit that it would like to influence it, however. The US and Britain should know something about this, given the desire both countries have had over the generations to spread 'democracy and human rights' across the globe, from the Christian missionaries of the 19th century to the modern day Voice of America news agency.

Fundamentally, the Russia report highlights two rather pessimistic facts about British society today:

- i) our intelligence services are inadequate and need an overhaul but more importantly
- ii) the British public is so used to being spoon-fed information that it cannot be relied upon by politicians to think for itself when it comes to deciding on how to vote in an election. What on earth does it say about the general public if it is the case that it could be completely manipulated by a particular media campaign, paid for or not by a foreign power? Do our politicians really think we are that stupid? Or do they think we require all our information to be censored, as if we are children? Unfortunately I fear by the time we will have this conversation, it will be too late.

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