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The New Iraq WMD: Russian Interference in US Elections

The *Washington Post* has a regular “fact checker”, Glenn Kessler, who checks the accuracy of statements made by politicians and other public figures. On September 3 he announced that President Trump’s first 592 days in office had produced 4,713 false or misleading claims; that’s about 8 per day.

The article included a list of the types of claims, including the investigation into “Russian interference in the 2016 election” and whether people in the Trump campaign were in any way connected to it. Kessler believes they were. “All told, more than 200 times the president has made claims suggesting the Russia probe is made up, a hoax or a fraud.”

The “fact checker” needs to be fact-checked. He takes it as gospel that Russia consciously and purposefully interfered in the election, but like all the many other commentators offers no evidence. It’s conceivable that evidence of such has actually been presented and I was in a coma that day. (Would I remember that I was in a coma? Probably only if someone told me. So far no one has told me that I was in a coma.)

Keep in mind that a statement from the CIA that Russia interfered in the election does not count as evidence. It’s merely a statement.

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Keep in mind that a statement from a dozen other US intelligence agencies that Russia interfered in the election does not count as evidence. It's merely a statement.

Here's James Clapper, former Director of National Intelligence: "To me it stretches credulity to think that the Russians didn't have profound impact" on the outcome of the election. Clearly if the man had any evidence to substantiate his statement he would have provided it at the time. He did not provide any. So all we get is another statement.

There are not many government bureaucrats who would publicly contradict the CIA, the FBI and the NSA on an important intelligence matter. How impressed would you be if a dozen Russian intelligence agencies all declared that Russia did not interfere in any way in the US 2016 election?

Moreover, keep in mind that numerous notices and advertisements posted to Facebook and other social media calling for the election of Trump and/or the defeat of Clinton do not count as evidence of Russian interference in the election even if some or most of the postings were seemingly made by Russians. Countless other notices and advertisements called for the election of Clinton and/or the defeat of Trump.

Moreover, many of these social-media postings (which members of Congress and the media like to make so much of) were posted well before the candidates were chosen, or even after the election took place.

So what do we make of all this? Well, it's been pointed out that most of these postings were to so-called "click-bait" Internet sites that earn payments based on their volume of traffic. I have not come across any other explanation of the huge number of electoral postings during 2014-2017.

And forget about Trump aides like Paul Manafort and his partner Rick Gates, who've been charged with various financial crimes such as money laundering, tax and bank fraud, failure to register as a lobbyist, and more; in part the charges involve Ukraine – But NOTHING to do with Russian interference in the 2016 US election, although their cases have undoubtedly fed that story.

The idea of Russian interference in the US election has been repeated so many times in so many places that it's now taken as unquestioned history. *Guardian* reporter Luke Harding has a book out called "Collusion: Secret meetings, dirty money, and how Russia helped Donald Trump win", which reinforces this myth, and wouldn't be worth mentioning except that Harding was interviewed by that rare breed, a skeptical journalist, Aaron Maté. Harding repeats one anti-Russian cliché after another, but Maté refuses to allow him to get away with any of it. It's indeed refreshing. [Have a look.](#)

Even if you assumed that all the charges made about “Russian interfering in the elections” were true, and put them all together, they still wouldn’t have a fraction of the impact on the 2016 elections as did Republicans in several states by disenfranchising likely Democratic voters (blacks, poor, students, people in largely Democratic districts), by purging state voting lists.

Noam Chomsky has pointed out that Israeli intervention in US elections “vastly overwhelms” anything Russia has done. Israeli leader Netanyahu goes directly to speak to Congress without even consulting the president.

The United States joined a grand alliance with the forces of the communist Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin in World War II, but Washington can’t even talk civilly now with capitalist Russia. When your goal is world domination any country that stands in the way of that is an enemy. American conservatives in particular have a most difficult time shaking this mind-set. Here’s the prominent conservative host of *National Public Radio* (NPR), Cokie Roberts, bemoaning Trump’s supposed desire to develop friendly relations with Russia, saying: “This country has had a consistent policy for 70 years towards the Soviet Union and Russia, and Trump is trying to undo that.”

If Trump were to establish good relations with Russia the lack of a European enemy would also leave NATO (= the US) even more obviously unnecessary.

Then we have the Skripal poisoning case allegedly carried out by Russia in the UK: There are just two things missing to support this allegation: 1) any verifiable evidence, AT ALL, and 2) any plausible motive for the Russian government to have carried out such a crime. But stay tuned, the Brits may yet find Vladimir Putin’s passport at the scene of the crime.