

What the 'Sore Losers' Want

Disappointed Democrats are blaming Hillary Clinton's defeat on Russian hackers, an establishment-promoted conspiracy theory that serves the interests of America's "war party," says Diana Johnstone.

By Diana Johnstone

If the 2016 presidential campaign was a national disgrace, the reaction of the losers is an even more disgraceful spectacle. It seems that the political machine backing Hillary Clinton can't stand losing an election. And why is that? Because they are determined to impose "exceptional" America's hegemony on the entire world, using military-backed regime changes.

Donald Trump seems poised to spoil their plans. The entire Western establishment – roughly composed of neoconservative ideologues, liberal interventionists, financial powers, NATO, mainstream media and politicians in both the United States and Western Europe committed to remaking the Middle East to suit Israel and Saudi Arabia and to shattering impertinent Russia – has been thrown into an hysterical panic at the prospect of their joint globalization project being sabotaged by an ignorant intruder.

Donald Trump's expressed desire to improve relations with Russia throws a monkey wrench into the plans endorsed by Hillary Clinton to "make Russia pay" for its bad attitude in the Middle East and elsewhere. If he should do what he has promised, this could be a serious blow to the aggressive NATO buildup on Russia's European borders, not to mention serious losses to the U.S. arms industry planning to sell billions of dollars worth of superfluous weapons to NATO allies on the pretext of the "Russian threat."

The war party's fears may be exaggerated, inasmuch as Trump's appointments indicate that the United States' claim to be the "exceptional," indispensable nation will probably survive the changes in top personnel. But the emphasis may be different. And those accustomed to absolute rule cannot tolerate the challenge.

Bad Losers On the Top

Members of the U.S. Congress, the mainstream media, the CIA and even President Obama have made fools of themselves and the nation by claiming that the Clintonite cabal lost because of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Insofar as the rest of the world takes this whining seriously, it should further increase Putin's already considerable prestige.

If true, the notion that Moscovite hacking could defeat the favorite candidate of the entire U.S. power establishment can only mean that the United States' political structure is so fragile that a few disclosed emails can cause its collapse. A government notorious for snooping into everybody's private communication, as well as for overthrowing one government after another by less subtle means, and whose agents boasted of scaring the Russians into re-electing the abysmally unpopular Boris Yeltsin in 1996, now seems to be crying pathetically, "Mommy, Vlady is playing with my hacking toys!"

Of course, Russians would quite naturally prefer a U.S. president who openly shies away from the possibility of starting a nuclear war with Russia. That doesn't make Russia "an enemy"; it is just a sign of good sense. Nor does it mean that Putin is so naïve as to imagine that Moscow could throw the election by a few dirty tricks. The current Russian leaders, unlike their Washington counterparts, tend to take a longer view, rather than imagining that the course of history can be changed by a banana peel.

This whole miserable spectacle is nothing but a continuation of the Russophobia exploited by Hillary Clinton to distract from her own multiple scandals. Now, she must blame Russia rather than recognize that there were multiple reasons to vote against her.

The propaganda machine has found a response to unwelcome news: it must be fake. The Washington conspiracy theorists are outdoing themselves this time. The Russian geeks supposedly knew that by revealing a few Democratic National Committee internal messages, they could ensure the election of Donald Trump. What tremendous prescience!

Obama promises retaliation against Russia for treating the United States the way the United States treats, well, Honduras (and even Russia itself until blocked by Putin). Putin retorted that, so far as he knew, the United States was not a banana republic, but a great power able to protect its elections. Washington is loudly denying that. The same mainstream media that brought you Saddam's "weapons of mass destruction" are now bringing you this preposterous "Russia-did-it" conspiracy theory with straight faces.

When intelligence agencies become aware of the activities of rival intelligence agencies, they usually keep the knowledge to themselves, as part of the mutual spook game. Going public with this wild tale shows that the whole point is to persuade the American public that Trump's election is illegitimate, in the now-lost hope of defeating him in the Electoral College or of crippling his presidency by labeling him a "Putin stooge".

Bad Losers On the Bottom

At least the bad losers on the top know what they are doing and have a purpose. The bad losers on the bottom are expressing emotions without clear objectives. It is false self-dramatization to call for "Resistance" as if the country had been invaded by extraterrestrials. The U.S. electoral system is outmoded and bizarre, but Trump played the game by the rules. He campaigned to win swing States, not a popular majority, and that's what he got. The problem isn't Trump but a political system which reduces the people's choice to two hated candidates, backed by big bucks.

Whatever they think or feel, the largely youthful anti-Trump protesters in the streets create an image of hedonistic consumer society's spoiled brats who throw tantrums when they don't get what they want. Of course, some are genuinely concerned about friends who are illegal immigrants and fear deportation. It is quite possible to organize in their defense.

The protesters may be mostly disappointed Bernie Sanders supporters, but whether they like it or not, their protests amount to a continuation of the dominant themes in Hillary Clinton's negative campaign. She ran on fear. In the absence of any economic program to respond to the needs of millions of voters who showed their preference for Sanders, and of those who turned to Trump simply because of his vague promise to create jobs, her campaign exaggerated the portent of Trump's most politically incorrect statements, creating the illusion that Trump was a violent racist whose only program was to arouse hatred.

Still worse, Hillary stigmatized millions of voters as "a basket of deplorables, racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic – you name it." These remarks were made to an LGBT rally, as part of her identity politics campaign to win over a clientele of minorities by stigmatizing the dwindling white majority.

The identity politics premise is that ethnic and sexual minorities are oppressed and thus morally superior to the white majority, which is the implied oppressor. It is this tendency to sort people into morally distinct categories that divides Americans against each other, every bit as much – or more – than Trump's hyperbole about Mexican or Islamic immigrants. It has served to convince many devotees of political correctness to regard white working-class Americans in the "fly-over" regions as enemy invaders.

Terrified of what Trump may do, his opponents tend to ignore what the lame ducks are actually doing. The last gasp Clintonite campaign to blame Hillary's defeat on "fake news," supposedly inspired by The Enemy, Russia, is a facet of the growing drive to censor the Internet – previously for child pornography, or for anti-Semitism, and next on the pretext of combating "fake news," meaning whatever goes contrary to the official line. This threat to freedom of expression is more sinister than 11-year-old locker-room macho boasts by Trump.

There will and should be strong political opposition to whatever reactionary domestic policies are adopted by the Trump administration. But such opposition should define the issues and work for specific goals, instead of expressing a global rejection that is non-functional.

The hysterical anti-Trump reaction is unable to grasp the implications of the campaign to blame Hillary's defeat on Putin. Do the kids in the street really want war with Russia? I doubt it. But they do not perceive that for all its glaring faults, the Trump presidency provides an opportunity to avoid war with Russia.

This is a window of opportunity that will be slammed shut if the Clintonite establishment and the War Party get their way. Whether they realize it or not, the street protesters are helping that establishment delegitimatize Trump and sabotage the one positive element in his program: peace with Russia.

Adjustments in the Enemy List

By its fatally flawed choices in the Middle East and in Ukraine, the United States foreign policy establishment has driven itself into a collision course with Russia. Unable to admit that the United States backed the wrong horse in Syria, the War Party sees no choice but to demonize and "punish" Russia, with the risk of dipping into the Pentagon's vast arsenal of argument-winning nuclear weapons.

Anti-Russian propaganda has reached extremes exceeding those of the Cold War. What can put an end to this madness? What can serve to create normal attitudes and relations concerning that proud nation which aspires primarily simply to be respected and to promote old-fashioned international law based on national sovereignty? How can the United States make peace with Russia?

It is clear that in capitalist, chauvinist America there is no prospect of shifting to a peace policy by putting anti-war activist David Swanson in charge of U.S. foreign relations, however desirable that might be. Realistically, the only way that capitalist America can make peace with Russia is through capitalist business. And that is what Trump proposes to do.

A bit of realism helps when dealing with reality. The choice of Exxon-Mobil CEO Rex W. Tillerson as Secretary of State is the best step toward ending the current race toward war with Russia. "Make money not war" is the pragmatic American slogan for peace at this stage.

But the anti-Trump "resistance" to Trump is not likely to show support for this pragmatic peace policy. It is already encountering opposition in the war-loving Congress. Instead, by shouting "Trump is not my President!" the disoriented

leftists are inadvertently strengthening that opposition, which is worse than Trump.

Avoiding war with Russia will not transform Washington into a haven of sweetness and light. Trump is an aggressive personality, and the opportunistic aggressive personalities of the establishment, notably his pro-Israel friends, will help him turn U.S. aggression in other directions. Trump's attachment to Israel is nothing new, but appears to be particularly uncompromising. In that context, Trump's extremely harsh words for Iran are ominous, and one must hope that his stated rejection of "regime change" war applies in that case as well as others.

Trump's anti-China rhetoric also sounds bad, but in the long run there is little he or the United States can do to prevent China from becoming once again the "indispensable nation" it used to be during most of its long history. Tougher trade deals will not lead to the Apocalypse.

Failure of the Intellectual Establishment

The sad image today of Americans as bad losers, unable to face reality, must be attributed in part to the ethical failure of the so-called "1968 generation" of intellectuals. In a democratic society, the first duty of men and women with the time, inclination and capacity to study reality seriously is to share their knowledge and understanding with people who lack those privileges.

The generation of academics whose political consciousness was temporarily raised by the tragedy of the Vietnam War should have realized that their duty was to use their position to educate the American people, notably about the world that Washington proposed to redesign and its history. But the new phase of hedonistic capitalism offered the greatest opportunities for intellectuals in manipulating the masses rather than educating them.

The consumer society marketing even invented a new phase of identity politics, with the youth market, the gay market, and so on. In the universities, a critical mass of "progressive" academics retreated into the abstract world of post-modernism, and have ended up focusing the attention of youth on how to react to other people's sex lives or "gender identification." Such esoteric stuff feeds the publish or perish syndrome and prevents academics in the humanities from having to teach anything that might be deemed critical of U.S. military spending or its failing efforts to assert its eternal domination of the globalized world. The worst controversy coming out of academia concerns who should use which toilet.

If the intellectual snobs on the coasts can sneer with such self-satisfaction at the poor "deplorables" in flyover land, it is because they themselves have

ignored their primary social duty of seeking truth and sharing it. Scolding people for their “wrong” attitudes while setting the social example of unrestrained personal promotion can only produce the anti-elite reaction called “populism.”

Trump is the revenge of people who feel manipulated, forgotten and despised. However flawed, he is the only choice they had to express their revolt in a rotten election.

The United States is deeply divided ideologically, as well as economically. The United States is threatened, not by Russia, but by its own internal divisions and the inability of Americans not only to understand the world, but even to understand each other.

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