

Russia-gate's Reach into Journalism

The investigation to somehow blame Russia for Donald Trump's election has now merged with another establishment goal of isolating and intimidating whistleblowers and other dissidents, as Dennis J Bernstein describes.

By Dennis J Bernstein

The Russia-gate investigation has reached into the ranks of journalism with the House Intelligence Committee's subpoena of Randy Credico, who produced a series about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange for Pacifica Radio and apparently is suspected of having passed on early word about leaked Democratic emails to Donald Trump's supporter Roger Stone.

The Credico subpoena, after he declined a request for a "voluntary" interview, underscores how the investigation is moving into areas of "guilt by association" and further isolating whistleblowers who defy the powers-that-be through unauthorized release of information to the public, a point made by National Security Agency whistleblower Thomas Drake in an interview.

Drake knows well what it means to blow the whistle on government misconduct and get prosecuted for it. A former senior NSA executive, Drake complained about a multi-billion-dollar fraud, waste, and widespread violation of the rights of civilians through secret mass surveillance programs. As a result, the Obama administration indicted Drake in 2010, "as the first whistleblower since Daniel Ellsberg charged with espionage," according to the Institute for Public Accuracy.

In 2011, the government's case against him, which carried a potential 35 years in prison, collapsed. Drake went free in a plea deal and was awarded the 2011 Ridenhour Truth Telling Prize.

I interviewed Drake about the significance of Credico's subpoena, which Credico believes resulted from his journalism about the persecution of Julian Assange for releasing information that powerful people would prefer kept hidden from the public. (I had a small role in Credico's 14-part radio series, *Julian Assange: Countdown to Freedom*. It was broadcast first as part of his Live on the Fly Series, over WBAI and later on KPFA and across the country on community radio.)

Credico got his start as a satirist and became a political candidate for mayor of New York City and later governor of New York, making mainstream politicians deal with issues they would rather not deal with.

I spoke to Thomas Drake by telephone on Nov. 30, 2017.

Dennis Bernstein: How do you look at Russiagate, based on what you know about what has already transpired in terms of the movement of information? How do you see Credico's role in this?

Thomas Drake: Information is the coin of the realm. It is the currency of power. Anyone who questions authority or is perceived as mocking authority—as hanging out with “State enemies”—had better be careful. But this latest development is quite troubling, I must say. This is the normalization of everything that has been going on since 9/11. Randy is a sort of 21st century Diogenes who is confronting authority and pointing out corruption. This subpoena sends a chilling message. It's a double whammy for Randy because, in the eyes of the US government, he is a media figure hanging out with the wrong media figure [Julian Assange].

Dennis Bernstein: Could you say a little bit about what your work was and what you tried to do with your expose?

Thomas Drake: My experience was quite telling, in terms of how far the government will go to try to destroy someone's life. The attempt by the government to silence me was extraordinary. They threw everything they had at me, all because I spoke the truth. I spoke up about abuse of power, I spoke up about the mass surveillance regime. My crime was that I made the choice to go to the media. And the government was not just coming after me, they were sending a really chilling message to the media: If you print this, you are also under the gun.

Dennis Bernstein: We have heard the charges again and again, that this was a Russian hack. What was the source? Let's trace it back as best we can.

Thomas Drake: In this hyper-inflated, politicized environment, it is extremely difficult to wade through the massive amount of disinformation on all sides. Hacking is something all modern nation-states engage in, including the United States, including Russia. The challenge here is trying to figure out who the players are, whose ox is being gored, and who is doing the goring.

From all accounts, Trump was duly elected. Now you have the Mueller investigation and the House investigation. Where is this all leading? The US intelligence agency hasn't done itself any favors. The ICA provides no proof either, in terms of allegations that the Russians “hacked” the election. We do have the evidence disclosed by Reality Winner that maybe there was some interference. But the hyper-politicization is making it extraordinarily difficult.

The advantage that intelligence has is that they can hide behind what they are

doing. They don't actually have to tell the truth, they can shade it, they can influence it and shape it. This is where information can be politicized and used as a weapon. Randy has found himself caught up in these investigations by virtue of being a media figure and hanging out with "the wrong people."

Dennis Bernstein: It looks like the Russiagateers in Congress are trying to corner Randy. All his life he has spoken truth to power. But what do you think the role of the press should be?

Thomas Drake: The press amplifies just about everything they focus on, especially with today's 24-hour, in-your-face social media. Even the mainstream media is publishing directly to their webpages. You have to get behind the cacophony of all that noise and ask, "Why?" What are the intentions here?

I believe there are still enough independent journalists who are looking further and deeper. But clearly there are those who are hell-bent on making life as difficult as possible for the current president and those who are going to defend him to the hilt. I was not surprised at all that Trump won. A significant percentage of the American electorate were looking for something different.

Dennis Bernstein: Well, if you consider the content of those emails....Certainly, the Clinton folks got rid of Bernie Sanders.

Thomas Drake: That would have been an interesting race, to have Bernie vs. Trump. Sanders was appealing, especially to young audiences. He was raising legitimate issues.

Dennis Bernstein: In Clinton, they had a known quantity who supported the national security state.

Thomas Drake: The national security establishment was far more comfortable having Clinton as president. Someone central to my own case, General Michael Hayden, just a couple days ago went apoplectic because of a tweet from Trump taking on the mainstream media. Hayden got over 100,000 likes on his response. Well, Hayden was central to what we did in deep secrecy at the highest levels of government after 9/11, engaging in widespread surveillance and then justifying it as "raw executive authority."

Now you have this interesting dynamic where the national security establishment is effectively undermining a duly elected president of the United States. I recognize that Trump is vulnerable, but these types of investigations often become highly politicized. I worry that what is really happening is being sacrificed on the altar of entertainment and the stage of political theater.

What is happening to Randy is symptomatic of a larger trend. If you dare speak truth to power, you are going to pay the price. Is Randy that much of a threat, just because he is questioning authority? Are we afraid of the press? Are we afraid of having the uncomfortable conversations, of dealing with the inconvenient truths about ourselves?

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Franken’s Opportunism on the Iraq War

Sen. (and former comedian) Al Franken was a rising Democratic Party star before sexual harassment allegations brought him down to earth, but was he really ever a progressive hero, asks William Blum at Anti-Empire Report.

By William Blum

Poor Al, who made us laugh for years on Saturday Night Live, is now disgraced as a woman molester – not one of the worst of the current pathetic crop, but he still looks bad. However, everything is relative, and it must be pointed out that the Senator is guilty of a worse moral transgression.

The erstwhile comedian would like you to believe that he was against the war in Iraq since it began. But he went to that sad country at least four times to entertain American troops. Does that make sense? Why does the Defense Department bring entertainers to military bases? To lift the soldiers’ spirits of course.

And why does the military want to lift the soldiers’ spirits? Because a happier soldier does his job better. And what is the soldier’s job? For example, all the charming war crimes and human-rights violations in Iraq that have been documented in great detail for many years. Didn’t Franken know what American soldiers do for a living?

Country singer Darryl Worley, who leans “a lot to the right,” as he puts it, said he was far from pleased that Franken was coming along on the tour to Iraq. “You know, I just don’t understand – why would somebody be on this tour if they’re not supportive of the war? If he decides to play politics, I’m not gonna put up with it.”

A year after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Franken criticized the Bush

administration because they “failed to send enough troops to do the job right.” What “job” did the man think the troops were sent to do that had not been performed to his standards because of lack of manpower? Did he want them to be more efficient at killing Iraqis who resisted the occupation? The volunteer American troops in Iraq did not even have the defense of having been drafted against their wishes.

Franken has been lifting soldiers’ spirits for a long time. In 2009, he was honored by the United Service Organization (USO) for his ten years of entertaining troops abroad. That includes Kosovo in 1999, as imperialist an occupation as you’ll ever want to see. He called his USO experience “one of the best things I’ve ever done.” Franken has also spoken at West Point (2005), encouraging the next generation of imperialist warriors. Is this a man to challenge the militarization of America at home and abroad?

Tom Hayden wrote this about Franken in 2005 when Franken had a regular program on the Air America radio network: “Is anyone else disappointed with Al Franken’s daily defense of the continued war in Iraq? Not Bush’s version of the war, because that would undermine Air America’s laudable purpose of rallying an anti-Bush audience. But, well, Kerry’s version of the war, one that can be better managed and won, somehow with better body armor and fewer torture cells.”

While in Iraq to entertain the troops, Franken declared that the Bush administration “blew the diplomacy so we didn’t have a real coalition,” then failed to send enough troops to do the job right. “Out of sheer hubris, they have put the lives of these guys in jeopardy.”

Franken was implying that if the United States had been more successful in bribing and threatening other countries to lend their name to the coalition fighting the war in Iraq the United States would have had a better chance of WINNING the war.

Is this the sentiment of someone opposed to the war? Or in support of it? It is actually the mind of an American liberal in all its depressing mushiness.

William Blum is an author, historian, and renowned critic of U.S. foreign policy. He is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* and *Rogue State: A Guide to the World’s Only Superpower*, among others. [This article originally appeared at the Anti-Empire Report, <https://williamblum.org/> .]

Roy Moore and the Triumph of Partisanship

Partisanship has reached such extremes in U.S. politics that Republicans are prepared to brush aside multiple allegations that Roy Moore preyed on teen-age girls to keep a Democrat from winning in Alabama, writes Michael Winship.

By Michael Winship

Amid all the craziness surrounding Roy Moore's race for the U.S. Senate and the seeming willingness of Alabama's likely voters to send a man of such dubious merit and morality to Capitol Hill (where, admittedly, the bar already is pretty damned low), I keep thinking of a line from the Randy Newman song "Rednecks."

It's the lead piece on his classic '70s album *Good Old Boys*, and begins with a Southern man lamenting how the north-of-the-Mason-Dixon-line media types make fun of former Georgia Gov. Lester Maddox, the arch-segregationist notorious for using an ax handle to threaten those who tried to integrate his fried chicken restaurant.

"Well, he may be a fool but he's our fool," Newman sings, and yep, there's the upcoming Alabama election in a nutshell. Outsiders are resented and tribalism reigns, no matter how irrational or destructive to self-interest.

"Thank God for Mississippi" is the old joke: No matter how bad things were in Alabama, there always was a state right next door where things were often worse. Alabama is the third "hungriest" state in the nation, with 18 percent of its population food insecure, behind Louisiana and, yes, Mississippi. It's the sixth-poorest state, with some 18.5 percent living in poverty, and the third-highest state when it comes both to murders and the number of citizens behind bars per 100,000 members of population. According to the Centers for Disease Control, opioids are prescribed in Alabama more than in any other state, and a Center for Health Statistics report notes that Alabama's rate of overdose deaths from opioids has doubled since 2011.

But no, instead of campaigning about how to get the federal government to help his state pull itself from the clutches of such poverty, hunger and addiction, Roy Moore acts like a crackpot false prophet, preaching Islamophobia, homophobia and the dominance of "God's law" over the Constitution; denying the allegations of the many women who say he assaulted or harassed or stalked them when they were teenagers (on Tuesday, a Moore spokesperson described the accusers as "criminals") and all the time hammering away at his Democratic opponent Doug Jones on abortion.

Moore wants all abortion to be illegal and supports the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. Jones has declared he is against “anything that is going to infringe on a woman’s right and her freedom to choose,” but also has said that he supports “current law” that restricts abortion after 20 weeks unless pregnancy threatens the health of the mother.

Moore’s wife has attacked Jones for supporting “full-term” abortion, which is wildly and deliberately misleading. What’s more, the website AL.com reports, “An examination of statistics compiled by the Alabama Department of Public Health shows that late-term procedures are almost nonexistent in the state. Three out of 6,642 abortions performed in Alabama in 2016 occurred after 20 weeks, according to the agency.”

Damn Yankee-ness

Admittedly, I write all this as one of those Northern media types, but also as one with a Southern mother and at least one great-grandfather from Alabama. Not that it grants me much immunity, if any, from my innate damn Yankee-ness, but I put it out there just to suggest that genetically at least I may not be a total hostage to Eastern seaboard prejudices and pointy-headed intellectualism.

Besides, these symptoms of self-righteous bigotry and callousness hardly are limited to Alabama. This knee-jerk tribal impulse that afflicts so much of the state’s politics is just a pure, concentrated and poisonous microcosm of the Republican Party’s Trumpism, right up to and including the race and gender prejudice, religious bias and sheer *chutzpah*, although that’s not a word one imagines in Moore’s Jesus-wants-me-for-a-sunbeam vocabulary.

And let’s not forget opportunism. National Republicans pay far more heed to poll numbers than Moore’s Ten Commandments. That’s why we’ve witnessed the appallingly cynical backflips on his behalf from Donald Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and the Republican National Committee (RNC) as Moore’s percentages seem to have bounced back from an initial drop after the first allegations of his unchristian-like behavior with teenagers.

And so you have a morally compromised president who now shouts “Go get ‘em, Roy,” to a fellow misogynist and birther, as well as an RNC that has resumed cash transfusions for the Moore campaign. You have a woman governor in Alabama, Kay Ivey, who says, “There’s never an excuse for or rationale for sexual misconduct or sexual abuse” but who will vote for Moore anyway because “we need to have a Republican in the United States Senate to... make major decisions.”

Then there’s Tully Borland, philosophy professor at a Baptist university in

Arkansas, convolutedly writing in *The Federalist* that relations between older men and teenage girls are “not without some merit if one wants to raise a large family,” but adding, “Moore was a dirtbag and is currently lying about his actions rather than confessing the truth and asking for forgiveness.” And then adding, “That being said, I don’t think it’s wrong to vote for Moore.” As they used to say on *Monty Python*, “There! I’ve run rings around you logically.”

No wonder my head hurts. Conservative columnist Jennifer Rubin recently wrote that the GOP contortions are “the final result of years of win-at-all-cost politics in which no evil (Child molestation? Murder?) compares to the ‘evil’ of electing a perfectly competent, patriotic member of the other party to office. ...

“Republicans will tell you they support Moore and Trump as vehicles to policy goals. That assumes (falsely) that their policy goals are noble when they are actually unrealistic, unpopular, inconsistent and unconservative... In truth, the goals these Republicans care about, if they ever did, have long ago been sublimated (they certainly changed them entirely) to the goal of holding power, of winning. When that is the highest calling they’ll vote for alleged child predators, racists and just about anyone else with an ‘R’ next to his or her name.”

According to Greg Sargent at *The Washington Post*, Democrats are planning to publicly hold Republicans responsible for supporting Moore. GOP Senate candidates will be asked if they agree with the decision and whether they’re willing to serve with Moore if he wins. Well-clad feet will be held to fires.

But it could be too late. Sargent suggests Trump’s behavior may already have degraded all of our politics beyond the point of no return. And he has given right-wing Republicans the chance they’ve sought for years: trying to gut every social policy achievement of the last eight decades while further enriching the oligarchs (including the Trump clan) as he distracts the rest of us with his unhinged, oafish behavior.

He may be a fool but he’s our fool. Trump and his many accomplices, including and especially Roy Moore, only succeed if we keep letting them.

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Sucking Liberals into a New Cold War

Out of fury against President Trump, many liberals have enlisted in the ranks of the New Cold War against Russia, seeming to have forgotten the costs to rationality and lives from the first Cold War, warns William Blum.

By William Blum

Cold War Number One: 70 years of daily national stupidity. Cold War Number Two: Still in its youth, but just as stupid.

“He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did.” – President Trump re Russian President Vladimir Putin after their meeting in Vietnam. [*Washington Post*, Nov. 12, 2017]

Putin later added that he knew “absolutely nothing” about Russian contacts with Trump campaign officials. “They can do what they want, looking for some sensation. But there are no sensations.”

Numerous U.S. intelligence agencies have said otherwise. Former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, responded to Trump’s remarks by declaring: “The president was given clear and indisputable evidence that Russia interfered in the election.”

As we’ll see below, there isn’t too much of the “clear and indisputable” stuff. And this of course is the same James Clapper who made an admittedly false statement to Congress in March 2013, when he responded, “No, sir” and “not wittingly” to a question about whether the National Security Agency was collecting “any type of data at all” on millions of Americans. Lies don’t usually come in any size larger than that.

Virtually every member of Congress who has publicly stated a position on the issue has criticized Russia for interfering in the 2016 American presidential election. And it would be very difficult to find a member of the mainstream media who has questioned this thesis.

What is the poor consumer of news to make of these gross contradictions? Here are some things to keep in mind:

How do we know that the tweets and advertisements “sent by Russians” -- those presented as attempts to sway the vote -- were actually sent by Russians? The Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), composed of National Security Agency and CIA veterans, recently declared that the CIA knows how to disguise the origin of emails and tweets. The *Washington Post* has as well

reported that Twitter “makes it easy for users to hide their true identities.” [Washington Post, Oct. 10, 2017]

Russians! Russians! Russians!

Even if these communications were actually sent from Russia, how do we know that they came from the Russian government, and not from any of the other 144.3 million residents of Russia?

Even if they were sent by the Russian government, we have to ask: Why would they do that? Do the Russians think the United States is a Third World, under-developed, backward Banana Republic easily influenced and moved by a bunch of simple condemnations of the plight of blacks in America and the Clinton “dynasty”? Or clichéd statements about other controversial issues, such as gun rights and immigration? If so, many Democratic and Republican officials would love to know the secret of the Russians’ method. Consider also that Facebook has stated that 90 percent of the alleged-Russian-bought content that ran on its network did not even mention Trump or Clinton. [Washington Post, Nov. 15, 2017]

On top of all this is the complete absence of even the charge, much less with any supporting evidence, of Russian interference in the actual voting or counting of votes.

After his remark suggesting he believed Putin’s assertion that there had been no Russian meddling in the election, Trump – of course, as usual – attempted to backtrack and distance himself from his words after drawing criticism at home; while James Clapper declared: “The fact the president of the United States would take Putin at his word over that of the intelligence community is quite simply unconscionable.” [Reuters, Nov. 12, 2017]

Given Clapper’s large-size lie referred to above, can Trump be faulted for being skeptical of the intelligence community’s Holy Writ? Purposeful lies of the intelligence community during the first Cold War were legendary, many hailed as brilliant tactics when later revealed. The CIA, for example, had phony articles and editorials planted in foreign newspapers (real Fake News), made sex films of target subjects caught *in flagrante delicto* who had been lured to Agency safe houses by female agents, had Communist embassy personnel expelled because of phony CIA documents, and much more.

The *Post* recently published an article entitled “How did Russian trolls get into your Facebook feed? Silicon Valley made it easy.” In the midst of this “exposé,” The *Post* stated: “There’s no way to tell if you personally saw a Russian post or tweet.” [Washington Post, Nov. 2, 2017]

A Case or Not?

So ... Do the Cold Warriors have a case to make or do they not? Or do they just want us to remember that the Russkis are bad? So it goes.

An organization in Czechoslovakia with the self-appointed name of European Values has produced a lengthy report entitled "The Kremlin's Platform for 'Useful Idiots' in the West: An Overview of RT's Editorial Strategy and Evidence of Impact." It includes a long list of people who have appeared on the Russian-owned TV station RT (formerly *Russia Today*), which can be seen in the U.S., the U.K. and other countries. Those who've been guests on RT are the "idiots" useful to Moscow. (The list is not complete. I've been on RT about five times, but I'm not listed. Where is my Idiot Badge?)

RT's YouTube channel has more than two million followers and claims to be the "most-watched news network" on the video site. Its Facebook page has more than 4 million likes and followers. Can this explain why the powers-that-be forget about a thing called freedom-of-speech and treat the station like an enemy? The U.S. government recently forced *RT America* to register as a foreign agent and has cut off the station's Congressional press credentials.

The Cold War strategist, George Kennan, wrote prophetically: "Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy."

Writer John Wight has described the new Cold War as being "in response to Russia's recovery from the demise of the Soviet Union and the failed attempt to turn the country into a wholly owned subsidiary of Washington via the imposition of free market economic shock treatment thereafter."

So let's see what other brilliance the New Cold War brings us. ... Ah yes, another headline in the *Post* (Nov. 18, 2017): "British alarm rising over possible Russian meddling in Brexit." Of course, why else would the British people have voted to leave the European Union? But wait a moment, again, one of the British researchers behind the report "said that the accounts they analyzed – which claimed Russian as their language when they were set up but tweeted in English – posted a mixture of pro-'leave' and pro-'remain' messages regarding Brexit. Commentators have said that the goal may simply have been to sow discord and division in society."

Was there ever a time when the *Post* would have been embarrassed to be so openly, amateurishly biased about Russia? Perhaps during the few years between the two Cold Wars.

In case you don't remember how stupid Cold War Number One was ...

- 1948: The *Pittsburgh Press* published the names, addresses, and places of employment of about 1,000 citizens who had signed presidential-nominating petitions for former Vice President Henry Wallace, running under the Progressive Party. This, and a number of other lists of "communists," published in the mainstream media, resulted in people losing their jobs, being expelled from unions, having their children abused, being denied state welfare benefits, and suffering various other punishments.
- Around 1950: The House Committee on Un-American Activities published a pamphlet, "100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A." This included information about what a communist takeover of the United States would mean: ?Q: What would happen to my insurance?? A: It would go to the Communists.? Q: Would communism give me something better than I have now?? A: Not unless you are in a penitentiary serving a life sentence at hard labor.
- 1950s: Mrs. Ada White, member of the Indiana State Textbook Commission, believed that Robin Hood was a Communist and urged that books that told the Robin Hood story be banned from Indiana schools.
- As evidence that anti-communist mania was not limited to the lunatic fringe or conservative newspaper publishers, here is Clark Kerr, president of the University of California at Berkeley in a 1959 speech: "Perhaps 2 or even 20 million people have been killed in China by the new [communist] regime." One person wrote to Kerr: "I am wondering how you would judge a person who estimates the age of a passerby on the street as being 'perhaps 2 or even 20 years old.' Or what would you think of a physician who tells you to take 'perhaps 2 or even twenty teaspoonsful of a remedy'?"
- Throughout the cold war, traffic in phony Lenin quotes was brisk, each one passed around from one publication or speaker to another for years. Here's *S. News and World Report* in 1958 demonstrating communist duplicity by quoting Lenin: "Promises are like pie crusts, made to be broken." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles used it in a speech shortly afterward, one of many to do so during the cold war. Lenin actually did use a very similar line, but he explicitly stated that he was quoting an English proverb (it comes from Jonathan Swift) and his purpose was to show the unreliability of the bourgeoisie, not of communists. ?"First we will take Eastern Europe, then the masses of Asia, then we will encircle the United States, which will be the last bastion of capitalism. We will not have to attack. It will fall like an overripe fruit into our hands." This Lenin "quotation" had the usual wide circulation, even winding up in the *Congressional Record* in 1962. This was not simply a careless attribution; this was an out-and-out fabrication; an extensive search, including by the Library of Congress and

the United States Information Agency failed to find its origin.

- A favorite theme of the anti-communists was that a principal force behind drug trafficking was a communist plot to demoralize the United States. Here's a small sample: Don Keller, District Attorney for San Diego County, California in 1953: "We know that more heroin is being produced south of the border than ever before and we are beginning to hear stories of financial backing by big shot Communists operating out of Mexico City." Henry Giordano, Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, 1964, interviewed in the *American Legion Magazine*: Interviewer: "I've been told that the communists are trying to flood our country with narcotics to weaken our moral and physical stamina. Is that true?" Giordano: "As far as the drugs are concerned, it's true. There's a terrific flow of drugs coming out of Yunnan Province of China. ... There's no question that in that particular area this is the aim of the Red Chinese. It should be apparent that if you could addict a population you would degrade a nation's moral fiber." Fulton Lewis, Jr., prominent conservative radio broadcaster and newspaper columnist, 1965: "Narcotics of Cuban origin – marijuana, cocaine, opium, and heroin – are now peddled in big cities and tiny hamlets throughout this country. Several Cubans arrested by the Los Angeles police have boasted they are communists." We were also told that along with drugs another tool of the commies to undermine America's spirit was fluoridation of the water.
- Mickey Spillane was one of the most successful writers of the 1950s, selling millions of his anti-communist thriller mysteries. Here is his hero, Mike Hammer, in "One Lonely Night," boasting of his delight in the grisly murders he commits, all in the name of destroying a communist plot to steal atomic secrets. After a night of carnage, the triumphant Hammer gloats, "I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it. I pumped slugs into the nastiest bunch of bastards you ever saw. ... They were Commies. ... Pretty soon what's left of Russia and the slime that breeds there won't be worth mentioning and I'm glad because I had a part in the killing. God, but it was fun!"
- 1952: A campaign against the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) because it was tainted with "atheism and communism," and was "subversive" because it preached internationalism. Any attempt to introduce an international point of view in the schools was seen as undermining patriotism and loyalty to the United States. A bill in the U.S. Senate, clearly aimed at UNESCO, called for a ban on the funding of "any international agency that directly or indirectly promoted one-world government or world citizenship." There was also opposition to UNESCO's association with the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights on the grounds that it was trying to replace the American Bill of Rights with a less liberty-

giving covenant of human rights.

- 1955: A U.S. Army 6-page pamphlet, "How to Spot a Communist," informed us that a communist could be spotted by his predisposition to discuss civil rights, racial and religious discrimination, the immigration laws, anti-subversive legislation, curbs on unions, and peace. Good Americans were advised to keep their ears stretched for such give-away terms as "chauvinism," "book-burning," "colonialism," "demagogy," "witch hunt," "reactionary," "progressive," and "exploitation." Another "distinguishing mark" of "Communist language" was a "preference for long sentences." After some ridicule, the Army rescinded the pamphlet.
- 1958: The noted sportscaster Bill Stern (one of the heroes of my innocent youth) observed on the radio that the lack of interest in "big time" football at New York University, City College of New York, Chicago, and Harvard "is due to the widespread acceptance of Communism at the universities."
- 1960: U.S. General Thomas Power speaking about nuclear war or a first strike by the U.S.: "The whole idea is to *kill* the bastards! At the end of the war, if there are two Americans and one Russian, we win!" The response from one of those present was: "Well, you'd better make sure that they're a man and a woman."
- 1966: The Boys Club of America is of course wholesome and patriotic. Imagine their horror when they were confused with the DuBois Clubs. (W.E.B. Du Bois had been a very prominent civil rights activist.) When the Justice Department required the DuBois Clubs to register as a Communist front group, good loyal Americans knew what to do. They called up the Boys Club to announce that they would no longer contribute any money, or to threaten violence against them; and sure enough an explosion damaged the national headquarters of the youth group in San Francisco. Then former Vice President Richard Nixon, who was national board chairman of the Boys Club, declared: "This is an almost classic example of Communist deception and duplicity. The 'DuBois Clubs' are not unaware of the confusion they are causing among our supporters and among many other good citizens."
- 1966: "Rhythm, Riots and Revolution: An Analysis of the Communist Use of Music, The Communist Master Music Plan," by David A. Noebel, published by Christian Crusade Publications, (expanded version of 1965 pamphlet: "Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles"). Some chapters: Communist Use of Mind Warfare ... Nature of Red Record Companies ... Destructive Nature of Beatle Music ... Communist Subversion of Folk Music ... Folk Music and the Negro Revolution ... Folk Music and the College Revolution
- 1968: William Calley, U.S. Army Lieutenant, charged with overseeing the massacre of more than 100 Vietnamese civilians in My Lai in 1968, said some years later: "In all my years in the Army I was never taught that

communists were human beings. We were there to kill ideology carried by – I don't know – pawns, blobs, pieces of flesh. I was there to destroy communism. We never conceived of old people, men, women, children, babies.”

- 1977: Scientists theorized that the earth's protective ozone layer was being damaged by synthetic chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons. The manufacturers and users of CFCs were not happy. They made life difficult for the lead scientist. The president of one aerosol manufacturing firm suggested that criticism of CFCs was “orchestrated by the Ministry of Disinformation of the KGB.”
- 1978: Life inside a California youth camp of the ultra anti-communist John Birch Society: Five hours each day of lectures on communism, Americanism and “The Conspiracy”; campers learned that the Soviet government had created a famine and spread a virus to kill a large number of citizens and make the rest of them more manageable; the famine led starving adults to eat their children; communist guerrillas in Southeast Asia jammed chopsticks into children's ears, piercing their eardrums; American movies are all under the control of the Communists; the theme is always that capitalism is no better than communism; you can't find a dictionary now that isn't under communist influence; the communists are also taking over the Bibles.
- The Reagan administration declared that the Russians were spraying toxic chemicals over Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan – the so-called “yellow rain” – and had caused more than ten thousand deaths by 1982 alone, (including, in Afghanistan, 3,042 deaths attributed to 47 separate incidents between the summer of 1979 and the summer of 1981, so precise was the information). Secretary of State Alexander Haig was a prime dispenser of such stories, and President Reagan himself denounced the Soviet Union thusly more than 15 times in documents and speeches. The “yellow rain,” it turned out, was pollen-laden feces dropped by huge swarms of honeybees flying far overhead.
- 1982: In commenting about sexual harassment in the Army, General John Crosby stated that the Army doesn't care about soldiers' social lives – “The basic purpose of the United States Army is to kill Russians,” he said.
- 1983: The U.S. invasion of Grenada, the home of the Cuban ambassador is damaged and looted by American soldiers; on one wall is written “AA,” symbol of the 82nd Airborne Division; beside it the message: “Eat shit, commie faggot.” ... “I want to fuck communism out of this little island,” says a marine, “and fuck it right back to Moscow.”
- 1984: During a sound check just before his weekly broadcast, President Reagan spoke these words into the microphone: “My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you I have signed legislation to outlaw Russia, forever. We begin bombing in five minutes.” His words were picked up by at least two radio networks.

- 1985: October 29 BBC interview with Ronald Reagan: asked about the differences he saw between the U.S. and Russia, the President replied: "I'm no linguist, but I've been told that in the Russian language there isn't even a word for freedom." (The word is "svoboda.")
- 1986: Soviet artists and cultural officials criticized Rambo-like American films as an expression of "anti-Russian phobia even more pathological than in the days of McCarthyism." Russian filmmaker Stanislav Rostofsky claimed that on one visit to an American school "a young girl trembled with fury when she heard I was from the Soviet Union, and said she hated Russians."
- 1986: Roy Cohn, who achieved considerable fame and notoriety in the 1950s as an assistant to the communist-witch-hunting Sen. Joseph McCarthy, died, reportedly of AIDS. Cohn, though homosexual, had denied that he was and had denounced such rumors as communist smears.
- 1986: After American journalist Nicholas Daniloff was arrested in Moscow for "spying" and held in custody for two weeks, New York Mayor Edward Koch sent a group of 10 visiting Soviet students storming out of City Hall in fury. "The Soviet government is the pits," said Koch, visibly shocking the students, ranging in age from 10 to 18 years. One 14-year-old student was so outraged he declared: "I don't want to stay in this house. I want to go to the bus and go far away from this place. The mayor is very rude. We never had a worse welcome anywhere." As matters turned out, it appeared that Daniloff had not been completely pure when it came to his newsgathering.
- 1989: After the infamous Chinese crackdown on dissenters in Tiananmen Square in June, the U.S. news media was replete with reports that the governments of Nicaragua, Vietnam and Cuba had expressed their support of the Chinese leadership. Said the *Wall Street Journal*: "Nicaragua, with Cuba and Vietnam, constituted the only countries in the world to approve the Chinese Communists' slaughter of the students in Tiananmen Square." But it was all someone's fabrication; no such support had been expressed by any of the three governments. At that time, as now, there were few, if any, organizations other than the CIA which could manipulate major Western media in such a manner. [Sources for almost all of this section can be found in William Blum, *Freeing the World to Death: Essays on the American Empire* (2005), chapter 12; or the author can be queried at bblum6@aol.com]

NOTE: It should be remembered that the worst consequences of anti-communism were not those discussed above. The worst consequences, the ultra-criminal consequences, were the abominable death, destruction, and violation of human rights that we know under various names: Vietnam, Chile, Korea, Guatemala, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brazil, Greece, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and many others.

William Blum is an author, historian, and renowned critic of U.S. foreign

policy. He is the author of *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* and *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, among others. [This article originally appeared at the Anti-Empire Report, <https://williamblum.org/> .]

Apparent Election Theft in Honduras

In 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton excused a coup in Honduras to stop a possible second term by a progressive president, but the U.S. now sits by as a right-wing president steals a second term, says Rick Sterling.

By Rick Sterling

Honduras is in crisis, again. The national election took place on Nov. 26 with results posted that night showing the challenger Salvador Nasralla with a 5 percentage-point lead with 57 percent of the votes tallied. Then strange things began to happen.

After midnight on election night, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) stopped posting updates and effectively shut down for the next 36 hours. The TSE's president, David Matamoros Batson, said the TSE had received 13,000 tally sheets but was missing 6,000 from the total. With just over 18,000 total, this does not quite add up. Then two hours later, Matamoros increased the number of missing tally sheets to 7,500. When updates resumed, mid-day last Tuesday, the results consistently favored the incumbent right-wing President Juan Orlando Hernandez. The opposition lead steadily diminished then disappeared.

The leader of the Opposition Coalition against the Dictatorship, Salvador Nasralla, denounced the apparent malfeasance and protests commenced across the country. Police and military have sometimes responded violently. Numerous unarmed Hondurans have been killed over the past five days.

On Monday, more than a week after the election, the TSE announced results giving a narrow victory to the incumbent National Party President Juan Orlando Hernandez. As mass protests continue, the opposition has demanded a recount of all the tally sheets received after the TSE shutdown.

The current National Party government derives from the 2009 military coup, which overthrew the moderately progressive President Manuel Zelaya supposedly because he simply considered the possibility of seeking a second term. When Zelaya was kidnapped in the 2009 coup, he was flown directly from Tegucigalpa to the U.S.

government's Palmerola Air Base just 48 miles from the capital.

After time on the ground there, with the coup leaders presumably consulting with Washington, the kidnapped president was taken to Costa Rica. Five months later an election was held to replace Zelaya. The election was widely boycotted within Honduras but given the seal of approval by Washington. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the election made the coup a "moot point."

Four years later, in 2013, there was another presidential election, which included a new party: the Liberation and Refoundation Party known as LIBRE. This party represented popular forces, which supported Zelaya and his progressive policies – and emerged from the popular resistance to the coup. The party quickly surpassed the traditional Liberal Party and presented a serious challenge to Hernandez's National Party even as international observers documented voter intimidation and other irregularities. Hernandez assumed the presidency on Jan. 27, 2014.

(Ironically, despite the justification for ousting Zelaya – because he allegedly considered seeking a second term in defiance of the constitution – Hernandez's path for reelection was cleared away by a contentious 2016 court ruling.

Ahead of the 2017 election, LIBRE forged a broader coalition with two smaller parties to support Salvador Nasralla as their candidate. This political alliance took the name the Coalition Against the Dictatorship and former President Zelaya was head coordinator.

Days before the recent Honduras election The Economist published a blockbuster article titled "Is Honduras Ruling Party Planning to Rig an Election?" reporting: "The Economist has obtained a recording that, if authentic, suggests the ruling party has plans to distort results in the upcoming election." The two-hour recording is from a National Party training session. It details five tactics used to influence election results: buy the credentials of small party delegates who supervise the local polling place, surreptitiously allow National Party voters to vote more than once, spoil the votes for other candidates, damage the tally sheet which favors the opponent so it cannot be transmitted electronically to election headquarters – and expedite tally sheets favoring their party.

Thumb on the Scales

Besides the reported rigging schemes in the field, the election referees were far from neutral. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) is led by president David Matamoros Batson, who was previously Secretary General and a member of Congress for the National Party.

Following is evidence of TSE misconduct and bias:

1 – TSE delayed posting results that favored the opposition candidate.

In the 2013 election, TSE started posting the election results at 6:13 p.m. when just 24 percent of the total votes had been received. Those returns gave the National Party candidate Juan Orlando Hernandez a 5 percentage point lead.

This election, TSE acted differently. At 7:55 p.m., TSE President Matamoros tweeted “We have received 40% of the results.” But they did not post this. They delayed posting the data until near midnight. Then they reported that with 57.2 % of total votes counted the results were:

- Salvador Nasralla (Opposition Coalition Against the Dictatorship) with 855,847 votes = 45.17% of total.
- Juan Orlando Hernandez (National Party) with 761,892 votes = 40.22%
- Luis Zelaya (Liberal Party, no relation to ousted Manuel Zelaya) with 260,994 votes = 13.77% of total.
- Several other candidates had less than 1%.

Prior to the election, TSE expected to post the results from 70 percent of the electorate on election night, raising the question of whether the TSE was holding back more results.

2 – TSE changed the election procedure.

Honduras’ election procedure is to count and tally the paper ballots at each of the voting stations around the country. The tally sheet (‘acta’) is signed off by representatives from each party, then scanned and transmitted electronically to TSE headquarters where they are added to national totals and posted.

Following the posting of results showing the opposition candidate with a significant lead, at about midnight on election day, the TSE changed the procedure and stopped posting results for the next 36 hours. TSE President Matamoros arbitrarily changed the procedures.

The explanation was given by Matamoros at 1:39 p.m. on Nov. 27: “Today we are going to start opening the ballot boxes coming in from across the country to understand the ballots and results.” Five minutes later, at 1:44 p.m., he added “We cannot give results until all the missing tally sheets come in.”

The situation was questioned by Spanish election observer Ramon Jauregui who noted “There is no technical reason that explains the delay, because the tallies

from all 18000 polling places were transmitted electronically to the [@tsehonduras](#) on the day of the election.”

3 – TSE falsely reported the number of missing tally sheets.

At 1:56 p.m., Matamoros announced that the TSE had received 13,000 of the total but are still missing 6,000 tally sheets (“actas”). “We have received 13,000 tallies from across the country we are missing 6,000”. With a total of 18,100 tallies, the actual number missing should have been about 5,100.

At 4:17 p.m., the number of missing tally sheets mysteriously increased by 25 percent to 7,500. TSE’s Matamoros announced “We are missing 7500 actas.”

4 – TSE officials gave contradictory results.

While Matamoros was issuing conflicting information about the number of missing “actas,” another election official was saying something very different. As reported in [this Reuters](#) story:

“Election official Marcos Ramiro Lobo told Reuters on Monday afternoon that Nasralla was leading by a margin of five points, with about 70 percent of ballots counted. Lobo said Nasralla appeared certain to win, signaling that experts at the electoral body regarded his lead as irreversible.”

The third-place Liberal Party candidate also [recognized](#) Nasralla as the winner and urged the National Party leader to concede defeat.

About noon on Nov. 28, the TSE resumed posting election results after the 36-hour interruption. The new data showed Nasralla’s lead steadily declining and soon the National Party candidate and current President Juan Orlando Hernandez was [edging ahead](#). The Center for Economic and Policy Research has [analyzed](#) the data and determined the abrupt swing in elections results was “next to impossible.”

Where Things Stand

TSE has announced results showing Juan Orlando Hernandez winning the election. The Opposition Coalition candidate Nasralla has called for a [new election](#) under international observation and control. The Opposition Coordinator and former president, Manuel Zelaya, has issued a statement calling for the investigation and verification of the election procedures and results.

Honduras is important to U.S. foreign policy and the White House is closely following events. In mid-November Foreign Policy magazine ran an article titled [The United States has a lot Riding on the Honduras Election](#)” The article says “losing Hernandez would be a real setback.”

Clearly the Honduran people have even more riding on the Honduras election. The coup of 2009 led to increased crime and violence along with massive repression of landless campesinos, environmental and indigenous communities. From the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean, the domestic policies of Honduras have been skewed to benefit foreign corporations, plantations, the local oligarchy and neighbor to the north.

The current situation calls into question the objectivity of the U.S. and Organization of American States (OAS). Will the U.S. and OAS issue token criticisms but ultimately rubber stamp this Honduras election despite the glaring problems? If so, it will highlight the double-standard as the U.S. and OAS have aggressively criticized Venezuelan elections and refused to acknowledge the results even after full recounts and verification.

The Honduras election process offers the potential of verification but only if the data from each and every polling place is compared with the data recorded at the TSE headquarters. The secret National Party training described by The Economist specifically called for disruption of the transmission of unfavorable “actas” (tally sheets) to the headquarters.

If opposition demands for a thorough examination of election procedures and voting tallies are not met, protests and repression may explode in Honduras. The majority of the Honduran people evidently want new leadership and voted for it. It appears that the voters’ desires were thwarted through a manipulated election process and transparent theft.

Rick Sterling is an investigative journalist who was an official election observer in the 2013 Honduras election. He can be contacted at rsterling1@gmail.com .

How Russia-gate Rationalizes Censorship

Special Report: The Russia-gate hysteria has spread beyond simply a strategy for neutralizing Donald Trump or even removing him from office into an excuse for stifling U.S. dissent that challenges the New Cold War, reports Joe Lauria.

By Joe Lauria

At the end of October, I wrote an article for *Consortiumnews* about the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton’s campaign paying for unvetted opposition research that became the basis for much of the disputed

story about Russia allegedly interfering in the 2016 presidential election on the orders of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The piece showed that the Democrats' two paid-for sources that have engendered belief in Russia-gate are at best shaky. First was former British spy Christopher Steele's largely unverified dossier of second- and third-hand opposition research portraying Donald Trump as something of a Russian Manchurian candidate.

And the second was CrowdStrike, an anti-Putin private company, examining the DNC's computer server to dubiously claim discovery of a Russian "hack." In a similar examination of an alleged hack of a Ukrainian artillery app, CrowdStrike also blamed Russia but used faulty data for its report that it was later forced to rewrite. CrowdStrike was hired after the DNC refused to allow the FBI to look at the server.

My piece also described the dangerous consequences of partisan Democratic faith in Russia-gate: a sharp increase in geopolitical tensions between nuclear-armed Russia and the U.S., and a New McCarthyism that is spreading fear – especially in academia, journalism and civil rights organizations – about questioning the enforced orthodoxy of Russia's alleged guilt.

After the article appeared at *Consortiumnews*, I tried to penetrate the mainstream by then publishing a version of the article on the *HuffPost*, which was rebranded from the *Huffington Post* in April this year by new management. As a contributor to the site since February 2006, I am trusted by *HuffPost* editors to post my stories directly online. However, within 24 hours of publication on Nov. 4, HuffPost editors retracted the article without any explanation.

This behavior breaks with the earlier principles of journalism that the Web site claimed to uphold. For instance, in 2008, Arianna Huffington told radio host Don Debar that, "We welcome all opinions, except conspiracy theories." She said: "Facts are sacred. That's part of our philosophy of journalism."

But Huffington stepped down as editor in August 2016 and has nothing to do with the site now. It is run by Lydia Polgreen, a former *New York Times* reporter and editor, who evidently has very different ideas. In April, she completely redesigned the site and renamed it *HuffPost*.

Before the management change, I had published several articles on the *Huffington Post* about Russia without controversy. For instance, *The Huffington Post* published my piece on Nov. 5, 2016, that predicted three days *before* the election that if Clinton lost she'd blame Russia. My point was reaffirmed by the campaign-insider book *Shattered*, which revealed that immediately after Clinton's

loss, senior campaign advisers decided to blame Russia for her defeat.

On Dec. 12, 2016, I published another piece, which the *Huffington Post* editors promoted, called, “Blaming Russia To Overturn The Election Goes Into Overdrive.” I argued that “Russia has been blamed in the U.S. for many things and though proof never seems to be supplied, it is widely believed anyway.”

After I posted an updated version of the *Consortiumnews* piece – renamed “On the Origins of Russia-gate” – I was informed 23 hours later by a Facebook friend that the piece had been retracted by *HuffPost* editors. As a reporter for mainstream media for more than a quarter century, I know that a newsroom rule is that before the serious decision is made to retract an article the writer is contacted to be allowed to defend the piece. This never happened. There was no due process. A *HuffPost* editor ignored my email asking why it was taken down.

Support from Independent Media

Like the word “fascism,” “censorship” is an over-used and mis-used accusation, and I usually avoid using it. But without any explanation, I could only conclude that the decision to retract was political, not editorial.

I am non-partisan as I oppose both major parties for failing to represent millions of Americans’ interests. I follow facts where they lead. In this case, the facts led to an understanding that the Jan. 6 FBI/NSA/CIA intelligence “assessment” on alleged Russian election interference, prepared by what then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper called “hand-picked” analysts, was based substantially on unvetted opposition research and speculation, not serious intelligence work.

The assessment even made the point that the analysts were not asserting that the alleged Russian interference was a fact. The report contained the disclaimer: “Judgments are not intended to imply that we have proof that shows something to be a fact. Assessments are based on collected information, which is often incomplete or fragmentary, as well as logic, argumentation, and precedents.”

Under deadline pressure on Jan. 6, Scott Shane of *The New York Times* instinctively wrote what many readers of the report must have been thinking: “What is missing from the public report is what many Americans most eagerly anticipated: hard evidence to back up the agencies’ claims that the Russian government engineered the election attack. ... Instead, the message from the agencies essentially amounts to ‘trust us.’”

Yet, after the Jan. 6 report was published, leading Democrats asserted falsely that the “assessment” represented the consensus judgment of all 17 U.S. intelligence agencies – not just the views of “hand-picked” analysts from three

– and much of the U.S. mainstream media began treating the allegations of Russian “hacking” as flat fact, not as an uncertain conclusion denied by both the Russian government and WikiLeaks, which insists that it did not get the two batches of Democratic emails from Russia.

(There is also dissent inside the broader U.S. intelligence community about whether an alleged “hack” over the Internet was even possible based on the download speeds of one known data extraction, which matched what was possible from direct USB access to a computer, i.e., a download onto a thumb drive presumably by a Democratic insider,)

However, because of the oft-repeated “17 intelligence agencies” canard and the mainstream media’s careless reporting, the public impression has built up that the accusations against Russia are indisputable. If you ask a Russia-gate believer today what their faith is based on, they will invariably point to the Jan. 6 assessment and mock anyone who still expresses any doubt.

For instance, an unnamed former CIA officer told *The Intercept* last month, “You’ve got all these intelligence agencies saying the Russians did the hack. To deny that is like coming out with the theory that the Japanese didn’t bomb Pearl Harbor.”

That the supposedly dissident *Intercept* would use this quote is instructive about how imbalanced the media’s reporting on Russia-gate has been. We have actual film of Japanese planes attacking Pearl Harbor and American ships burning – and we have the eyewitness accounts of thousands of U.S. soldiers and sailors. Yet, on Russia-gate, we only have the opinions of some “hand-picked” intelligence officials who themselves say that they are not claiming that their opinions are fact. No serious editor would allow a self-interested and unnamed source to equate the two in print.

In this groupthink atmosphere, it was probably easy for *HuffPost* editors to hear some complaints from a few readers and blithely decide to ban my story. However, before it was pulled, 125 people had shared it. Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst and frequent contributor to *Consortiumnews*, then took up my cause, being the first to write about the *HuffPost* censorship on his blog. McGovern included a link to a .pdf file that I captured of the censored HuffPost story. It has since been republished on numerous other websites.

Journalist Max Blumenthal tweeted about it. British filmmaker and writer Tariq Ali posted it on his Facebook page. Ron Paul and Daniel McAdams interviewed me at length about the censorship on their TV program. *ZeroHedge* wrote a widely shared piece and someone actually took the time, 27 minutes and 13 seconds to be exact, to read the entire article on YouTube. I began a petition to *HuffPost*’s

Polgreen to either explain the retraction or restore the article. It has gained more than 1,900 signatures so far. If a serious fact-check analysis was made of my article, it must exist and can and should be produced.

Watchdogs & Media Defending Censorship

Despite this support from independent media, a senior official at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, I learned, declined to take up my cause because he believes in the Russia-gate story. I also learned that a senior officer at the American Civil Liberties Union rejected my case because he too believes in Russia-gate. Both of these serious organizations were set up precisely to defend individuals in such situations on principle, not preference.

In terms of their responsibilities for defending journalism and protecting civil liberties, their personal opinions about whether Russia-gate is real or not should be irrelevant. The point is whether journalists should be permitted to show skepticism toward this latest dubiously based groupthink. I fear that – amid the frenzy about Russia and the animosity toward Trump – concerns about careers and funding are driving these decisions, with principles brushed aside.

One online publication decidedly took the *HuffPost's* side. Steven Perlberg, a media reporter for *BuzzFeed*, asked the *HuffPost* why they retracted my article. While ignoring me, the editors issued a statement to *BuzzFeed* saying that “Mr. Lauria’s self-published” piece was “later flagged by readers, and after deciding that the post contained multiple factually inaccurate or misleading claims, our editors removed the post per our contributor terms of use.” Those terms include retraction for “any reason,” including, apparently, censorship.

Perlberg posted the *HuffPost* statement on Twitter. I asked him if he inquired of the editors what those “multiple” errors and “misleading claims” were. I asked him to contact me to get my side of the story. Perlberg totally ignored me. He wrote nothing about the matter. He apparently believed the *HuffPost* and that was that. In this way, he acquiesced with the censorship.

BuzzFeed, of course, is the sensationalist outlet that irresponsibly published the Steele dossier in full, even though the accusations – not just about Donald Trump but also many other individuals – weren’t verified. Then on Nov. 14, *BuzzFeed* reporter Jason Leopold wrote one of the most ludicrous of a long line of fantastic Russia-gate stories, reporting that the Russian foreign ministry had sent money to Russian consulates in the U.S. “to finance the election campaign of 2016.” The scoop generated some screaming headlines before it became clear that the money was to pay for Russian citizens in the U.S. to vote in the 2016 Duma election.

That Russia-gate has reached this point, based on faith and not fact, was further illustrated by a Facebook exchange I had with Gary Sick, an academic who served on the Ford and Carter national security staffs. When I pressed Sick for evidence of Russian interference, he eventually replied: "If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck..." When I told him that was a very low-bar for such serious accusations, he angrily cut off debate.

Part of this Russia-gate groupthink stems from the outrage – and even shame – that many Americans feel about Trump's election. They want to find an explanation that doesn't lay the blame on the U.S. citizenry or America's current dysfunctional political/media process. It's much more reassuring, in a way, to blame some foreign adversary while also discrediting Trump's legitimacy as the elected president. That leaves open some hope that his election might somehow be negated.

And, so many important people and organizations seem to be verifying the Russia-gate suspicions that the theory must be true. Which is an important point. When belief in a story becomes faith-based or is driven by an intense self-interest, honest skeptics are pushed aside and trampled. That is the way groupthink works, as we saw in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq when any doubts about Iraq possessing WMD made you a "Saddam apologist."

As the groupthink grows, the true-believers become disdainful of facts that force them to think about what they already believe. They won't waste time making a painstaking examination of the facts or engage in a detailed debate even on something as important and dangerous as a new Cold War with Russia.

This is the most likely explanation for the *HuffPost*'s censorship: a visceral reaction to having their Russia-gate faith challenged.

Why Critical News is Suppressed

But the *HuffPost*'s action is hardly isolated. It is part of a rapidly growing landscape of censorship of news critical of American corporate and political leaders who are trying to defend themselves from an increasingly angry population. It's a story as old as civilization: a wealthy and powerful elite fending off popular unrest by trying to contain knowledge of how the insiders gain at the others' expense, at home and abroad.

A lesson of the 2016 campaign was that growing numbers of Americans are fed up with three decades of neoliberal policies that have fabulously enriched the top tier of Americans and debased a huge majority of the citizenry. The population has likewise grown tired of the elite's senseless wars to expand their own

interests, which these insiders try to conflate with the entire country's interests.

America's bipartisan rulers are threatened by popular discontent from both left and right. They were alarmed by the Bernie Sanders insurgency and by Donald Trump's victory, even if Trump is now betraying the discontented masses who voted for him by advancing tax and health insurance plans designed to further crush them and benefit the wealthy.

Trump's false campaign promises will only make the rulers' problem of a restless population worse. Americans are subjected to economic inequality greater than in the first Gilded Age. They are also subjected today to more war than in the first Gilded Age. American rulers today are engaged in multiple conflicts following decades of post-World War II invasions and coups to expand their global interests.

People with wealth and power always seem to be nervous about losing both. So plutocrats use the concentrated media they own to suppress news critical of their wars and domestic repression. For example, almost nothing was reported about militarized police forces until the story broke out into the open in the Ferguson protests and much of that discontent has been brushed aside more recently.

Careerist journalists readily acquiesce in this suppression of news to maintain their jobs, their status and their lifestyles. Meanwhile, a growing body of poorly paid freelancers compete for the few remaining decent-paying gigs for which they must report from the viewpoint of the mainstream news organizations and their wealthy owners.

To operate in this media structure, most journalists know to excise out the historical context of America's wars of domination. They know to uncritically accept American officials' bromides about spreading democracy, while hiding the real war aims.

Examples abound: America's role in the Ukraine coup was denied or downplayed; a British parliamentary report exposing American lies that led to the destruction of Libya was suppressed; and most infamously, the media promoted the WMD hoax and the fable of "bringing democracy" to Iraq, leading to the illegal invasion and devastation of that country. A recent example from November is a 60 Minutes report on the Saudi destruction of Yemen, conspicuously failing to mention America's crucial role in the carnage.

I've pitched numerous news stories critical of U.S. foreign policy to a major American newspaper that were rejected or changed in the editorial process. One

example is the declassified Defense Intelligence Agency document of August 2012 that accurately predicted the rise of the Islamic State two years later.

The document, which I confirmed with a Pentagon spokesman, said the U.S. and its Turkish, European and Gulf Arab allies, were supporting the establishment of a Salafist principality in eastern Syria to put pressure on the Syrian government, but the document warned that this Salafist base could turn into an “Islamic State.”

But such a story would undermine the U.S. government’s “war on terrorism” narrative by revealing that the U.S.-backed strategy actually was risking the expansion of the jihadists’ foothold in Syria. The story was twice rejected by my editors and has received attention almost entirely – if not exclusively – on much-smaller independent news Web sites.

Another story I pitched in June 2012, just a year into the Syrian war, about Russia’s motives in Syria being guided by a desire to defeat the growing jihadist threat there, was also rejected. Corporate media wanted to keep the myth of Russia’s “imperial” aims in Syria alive. I had to publish the article outside the U.S., in a South African daily newspaper.

In September 2015 at the U.N. General Assembly, Russian President Vladimir Putin confirmed my story about Russia’s motives in Syria to stop jihadists from taking over. Putin invited the U.S. to join this effort as Moscow was about to launch its military intervention at the invitation of the Syrian government. The Obama administration, still insisting on “regime change” in Syria, refused. And the U.S. corporate media continued promoting the myth that Russia intervened to recapture its “imperial glory.”

It was much easier to promote the “imperial” narrative and to ignore Putin’s clear explanation to French TV channel TF1, which was not picked up by American media.

“Remember what Libya or Iraq looked like before these countries and their organizations were destroyed as states by our Western partners’ forces?” Putin said. “These states showed no signs of terrorism. They were not a threat for Paris, for the Cote d’Azur, for Belgium, for Russia, or for the United States. Now, they are the source of terrorist threats. Our goal is to prevent the same from happening in Syria.”

Why Russia Is Targeted

So, where are independent-minded Western journalists to turn if their stories critical of the U.S. government and corporations are suppressed?

The imperative is to get these stories out – and Russian media has provided an opening for some. This has presented a new problem for the plutocracy. The suppression of critical news in their corporate-owned media is no longer working if it's seeping out in Russian media (and through some dissident Western news sites on the Internet).

The solution has been to brand the content of the Russian television network, RT, as “propaganda” since it presents facts and viewpoints that most Americans have been kept from hearing. But just because these views – many coming from Americans and other Westerners – are not what you commonly hear on the U.S. mainstream media doesn't make them “propaganda” that must be stigmatized and silenced.

As a Russian-government-financed English-language news channel, RT also gives a Russian perspective on the news, the way CNN and *The New York Times* give an American perspective and the BBC a British one. American mainstream journalists, from my experience, arrogantly deny suppressing news and believe they present a universal perspective, rather than a narrow American view of the world.

The viewpoints of Iranians, Palestinians, Russians, North Koreans and others are never fully reported in the Western media although the supposed mission of journalism is to help citizens understand a frighteningly complex world from multiple points of view. It's impossible to do so without those voices included. Routinely or systematically shutting them out also dehumanizes people in those countries, making it easier to gain popular support to go to war against them.

Russia is scapegoated by charging that RT or *Sputnik* are sowing divisions in the U.S. by focusing on issues like homelessness, racism, or out-of-control militarized police forces, as if these divisive issues didn't already exist. The U.S. mainstream media also seems to forget that the U.S. government has engaged in at least 70 years of interference in other countries' elections, foreign invasions, coups, planting stories in foreign media and cyber-warfare.

Now, these American transgressions are projected onto Moscow. There's also a measure of self-reverence in this for “successful” people with a stake in an establishment that underpins the elite, demonstrating how wonderfully democratic they are compared to those ogres in Russia.

The overriding point about the “Russian propaganda” complaint is that when America's democratic institutions, including the press and the electoral process, are crumbling under the weight of corruption that the American elites have created or maintained, someone else needs to be blamed. Russia is both an old and a new scapegoat.

The Jan. 6 intelligence assessment on alleged Russian election meddling is a good example of how this works. A third of its content is an attack on RT for “undermining American democracy” by reporting on Occupy Wall Street, the protest over the Dakota pipeline and, of all things, holding a “third party candidate debates.”

According to the Jan. 6 assessment, RT’s offenses include reporting that “the US two-party system does not represent the views of at least one-third of the population and is a ‘sham.’” RT also “highlights criticism of alleged US shortcomings in democracy and civil liberties.” In other words, reporting on newsworthy events and allowing third-party candidates to express their opinions undermine democracy.

The report also says all this amounts to “a Kremlin-directed campaign to undermine faith in the US Government and fuel political protest,” but it should be noted those protests by dissatisfied Americans are against privileges of the wealthy and the well-connected, a status quo that the intelligence agencies routinely protect.

There are also deeper reasons why Russia is being targeted. The Russia-gate story fits neatly into a geopolitical strategy that long predates the 2016 election. Since Wall Street and the U.S. government lost the dominant position in Russia that existed under the pliable President Boris Yeltsin, the strategy has been to put pressure on getting rid of Putin to restore a U.S. friendly leader in Moscow. There is substance to Russia’s concerns about American designs for “regime change” in the Kremlin.

Moscow sees an aggressive America expanding NATO and putting 30,000 NATO troops on its borders; trying to overthrow a secular ally in Syria with terrorists who threaten Russia itself; backing a coup in Ukraine as a possible prelude to moves against Russia; and using American NGOs to foment unrest inside Russia before they were forced to register as foreign agents. Russia wants Americans to see this perspective.

Accelerated Censorship in the Private Sector

The Constitution prohibits government from prior-restraint, or censorship, though such tactics were imposed, largely unchallenged, during the two world wars. American newspapers voluntarily agreed to censor themselves in the Second World War before the government dictated it.

In the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur said he didn’t “desire to reestablish wartime censorship” and instead asked the press for self-censorship. He largely got it until the papers began reporting American battlefield losses.

On July 25, 1950, “the army ordered that reporters were not allowed to publish ‘unwarranted’ criticism of command decisions, and that the army would be ‘the sole judge and jury’ on what ‘unwarranted’ criticism entailed,” according to a Yale University study on military censorship.

After excellent on-the-ground reporting from Vietnam brought the war home to America, the military reacted by instituting, initially in the first Gulf War, serious control of the press by “embedding” reporters from private media companies which accepted the arrangement, much as World War II newspapers censored themselves.

It is important to realize that the First Amendment does not apply to private companies, including the media. It is not illegal for them to practice censorship. I never made a First Amendment argument against the *HuffPost*, for instance. However, under pressure from Washington, even in peacetime, media companies can do the government’s dirty work to censor or limit free speech for the government.

In the past few weeks, we’ve seen an acceleration of attempts by corporations to inhibit Russian media in the U.S. Both Google and Facebook, which dominate the Web with more than 50 percent of ad revenue, were at first resistant to government pressure to censor “Russian propaganda.” But they are coming around.

Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Alphabet, Google’s parent company, said on Nov. 18 that Google would “derank” articles from RT and Sputnik in the Google searches, making the stories harder for readers to find. The billionaire Schmidt claimed Russian information can be “repetitive, exploitative, false, [or] likely to have been weaponized,” he said. That is how factual news critical of U.S. corporate and political leadership is seen, as a weapon.

“My own view is that these patterns can be detected, and that they can be taken down or deprioritized,” Schmidt said.

Though Google would effectively be hiding news produced by RT and *Sputnik*, Schmidt is sensitive to the charge of censorship, even though there’s nothing legally to stop him.

“We don’t want to ban the sites. That’s not how we operate,” Schmidt said cynically. “I am strongly not in favor of censorship. I am very strongly in favor of ranking. It’s what we do.”

But the “deranking” isn’t only aimed at Russian sites; Google algorithms also are taking aim at independent news sites that don’t follow the mainstream herd – and thus are accused of spreading Russian or other “propaganda” if they question the dominant Western narratives on, say, the Ukraine crisis or the war in Syria.

A number of alternative websites have begun reporting a sharp fall-off of traffic directed to their sites from Google's search engines.

Responding to a deadline from Congress to act, Facebook on Nov. 22 announced that it would inform users if they have been "targeted" by Russian "propaganda." Facebook's help center will tell users if they liked or shared ads allegedly from the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, which supposedly bought \$100,000 in ads over a two-year period, with more than half these ads coming after the 2016 U.S. election and many not related to politics.

(The \$100,000 sum over two years compares to Facebook's \$27 billion in annual revenue. Plus, Facebook only says it "believes" or it's "likely" that the ads came from that firm, whose links to the Kremlin also have yet to be proved.)

Facebook described the move as "part of our ongoing effort to protect our platforms and the people who use them from bad actors who try to undermine our democracy." Congress wants more from Facebook, so it will not be surprising if users will eventually be told when they've liked or shared an RT report in the future.

While the government can't openly shut down a news site, the Federal Communications Commission's upcoming vote on whether to deregulate the Internet by ending net neutrality will free private Internet companies in the U.S. to further marginalize Russian and dissident websites by slowing them down and thus discouraging readers from viewing them.

Likewise, as the U.S. government doesn't want to be openly seen shutting down RT operations, it is working around the edges to accomplish that.

After the Department of Justice forced, under threat of arrest, RT to register its employees as foreign agents under the *Foreign Agents Registration Act*, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said last Tuesday that "FARA does not police the content of information disseminated, does not limit the publication of information or advocacy materials, and does not restrict an organization's ability to operate." She'd earlier said that registering would not "impact or affect the ability of them to report news and information. We just have them register. It's as simple as that."

Then on Wednesday the Congressional press office stripped RT correspondents of their Capitol Hill press passes, citing the FARA registration. "The rules of the Galleries state clearly that news credentials may not be issued to any applicant employed 'by any foreign government or representative thereof.' Upon its registration as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), RT Network became ineligible to hold news credentials," read the letter

to RT.

Even so, Russia-gate faithful ignore these aggressive moves and issue calls for even harsher action. After forcing RT to register, Keir Giles, a Chatham House senior consulting fellow, acted as though it never happened. He said in a Council on Foreign Relations Cyber Brief on Nov. 27: "Although the Trump administration seems unlikely to pursue action against Russian information operations, there are steps the U.S. Congress and other governments should consider."

I commented on this development on RT America. It would also have been good to have the State Department's Nuaert answer for this discrepancy about the claim that forced FARA registrations would not affect news gathering when it already has. My criticism of RT is that they should be interviewing U.S. decision-makers to hold them accountable, rather than mostly guests outside the power structure. The decision-makers could be called out on air if they refuse to appear.

Growing McCarthyite Attacks

Western rulers' wariness about popular unrest also can be seen in the extraordinary and scurrilous attack on the Canadian website globalresearch.ca. The attack started with a chilling study by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into the relatively obscure website, followed by a vicious hit piece on Nov. 18 by the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's largest newspaper. The headline was: "How a Canadian website is being used to amplify the Kremlin's view of the world."

"What once appeared to be a relatively harmless online refuge for conspiracy theorists is now seen by NATO's information warfare specialists as a link in a concerted effort to undermine the credibility of mainstream Western media – as well as the North American and European public's trust in government and public institutions," the *Globe and Mail* reported. "Global Research is viewed by NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence – or StratCom – as playing a key accelerant role in helping popularize articles with little basis in fact that also happen to fit the narratives being pushed by the Kremlin, in particular, and the Assad regime."

I've not agreed with everything I've read on the site. But it is a useful clearinghouse for alternative media. Numerous *Consortiumnews* articles are republished there, including a handful of mine. But the site's typical sharing and reposting on the Internet is seen by NATO as a plot to undermine the Free World.

Drawing from the NATO report, *The Globe and Mail's* denunciation of this website

continued: "It uses that reach to push not only its own opinion pieces, but 'news' reports from little-known websites that regularly carry dubious or false information. At times, the site's regular variety of international-affairs stories is replaced with a flurry of items that bolster dubious reportage with a series of opinion pieces, promoted on social media and retweeted and shared by active bots."

The newspaper continued, "'That way, they increase the Google ranking of the story and create the illusion of multi-source verification,' said Donara Barojan, who does digital forensic research for [StratCom]. But she said she did not yet have proof that Global Research is connected to any government."

This sort of smear is nothing more than a blatant attack on free speech by the most powerful military alliance in the world, based on the unfounded conviction that Russia is a fundamental force for evil and that anyone who has contacts with Russia or shares even a part of its multilateral world view is suspect.

High-profile individuals are now also in the crosshairs of the neo-McCarthyite witchhunt. On Nov. 25 *The Washington Post* ran a nasty hit piece on Washington Capitals' hockey player Alex Ovechkin, one of the most revered sports figures in the Washington area, simply because he, like 86 percent of other Russians, supports his president.

"Alex Ovechkin is one of Putin's biggest fans. The question is, why?" ran the headline. The story insidiously implied that Ovechkin was a dupe of his own president, being used to set up a media campaign to support Putin, who is under fierce and relentless attack in the United States where Ovechkin plays professional ice hockey.

"He has given an unwavering endorsement to a man who U.S. intelligence agencies say sanctioned Russian meddling in last year's presidential election," write the Post reporters, once again showing their gullibility to U.S. intelligence agencies that have provided no proof for their assertions (and even admit that they are not asserting their opinion as fact).

Less prominent figures are targeted too. John Kiriakou, a former CIA agent who blew the whistle on torture and was jailed for it, was kicked off a panel in Europe on Nov. 10 by a Bernie Sanders supporter who refused to appear with Kiriakou because he co-hosts a show on *Radio Sputnik*.

Then last week, Reporters Without Borders, an organization supposedly devoted to press freedom, tried to kick journalist Vanessa Beeley off a panel in Geneva to prevent her from presenting evidence that the White Helmets, a group that sells itself as a rescue organization inside rebel-controlled territory in

Syria, has ties to Al Qaeda. The Swiss Press Club, which hosted the event, resisted the pressure and let Beeley speak.

Russia-gate's Hurdles

Much of this spreading global hysteria and intensifying censorship traces back to Russia-gate. Yet, it remains remarkable that the corporate media has failed so far to prove any significant Russian interference in the U.S. election at all. Nor have the intelligence agencies, Congressional investigations and special prosecutor Robert Mueller. His criminal charges so far have been for financial crimes and lying to federal authorities on topics unrelated to any "collusion" between the Trump campaign and Russians to "hack" Democratic emails.

There may well be more indictments from Mueller, even perhaps a complaint about Trump committing obstruction of justice because he said on TV that he fired Comey, in part, because of the "Russia thing." But Trump's clumsy reaction to the "scandal," which he calls "fake news" and a "witch hunt," still is not proof that Putin and the Russians interfered in the U.S. election to achieve the unlikely outcome of Trump's victory.

The Russia-gate faithful assured us to wait for the indictment of retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, briefly Trump's national security adviser. But again there was nothing about pre-election "collusion," only charges that Flynn had lied to the FBI or omitted details about two conversations with the Russian ambassador regarding policy matters during the presidential transition, i.e., *after* the election.

And, one of those conversations related to trying unsuccessfully to comply with an Israeli request to get Russia to block a United Nations resolution censuring Israel's settlements on Palestinian land.

As journalist Yasha Levine tweeted: "So the country that influenced US policy through Michael Flynn is Israel, not Russia. But Flynn did try to influence Russia, not the other way around. Ha-ha. This is the smoking gun? What a farce."

There remain a number of key hurdles to prove the Russia-gate story. First, convincing evidence is needed that the Russian government indeed did "hack" the Democratic emails, both those of the DNC and Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta – and gave them to WikiLeaks. And, further that somehow the Trump campaign was involved in aiding and abetting this operation, i.e., collusion.

There's also the question of how significant the release of those emails was anyway. They did provide evidence that the DNC tilted the primary campaign in favor of Clinton over Sanders; they exposed the contents of Clinton's paid speeches to Wall Street, which she was trying to hide from the voters; and they

revealed some pay-to-play features of the Clinton Foundation and its foreign donations.

But – even if the Russians were involved in providing that information to the American people – those issues were not considered decisive in the campaign. Clinton principally pinned her loss on FBI Director James Comey for closing and then reopening the investigation into her improper use of a private email server while Secretary of State. She also spread the blame to Russia (repeating the canard about “seventeen [U.S. intelligence] agencies, all in agreement”), Bernie Sanders, the inept DNC and other factors.

As for the vaguer concerns about some Russian group “probably” buying \$100,000 in ads, mostly after Americans had voted, as a factor in swaying a \$6 billion election, is too silly to contemplate. That *RT* and *Sputnik* ran pieces critical of Hillary Clinton was their right, and they were hardly alone. *RT* and *Sputnik*’s reach in the U.S. is minuscule compared to *Fox News*, which slammed Clinton throughout the campaign, or for that matter, MSNBC, CNN and other mainstream news outlets, which often expressed open disdain for Republican Donald Trump but also gave extensive coverage to issues such as the security concerns about Clinton’s private email server.

Another vague Russia-gate suspicion stemming largely from Steele’s opposition research is that somehow Russia is bribing or blackmailing Trump because Trump has done some past business with Russians. But there are evidentiary and logical problems with these theories, since some lucrative deals fell through (and presumably wouldn’t have if Trump was being paid off) – and no one, including the Russians, foresaw Trump’s highly improbable election as U.S. President years earlier.

Some have questioned how Trump could have supported detente with Russia without being beholden to Moscow in some way. But Jeffery Sommers, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin, wrote a convincing essay explaining adviser Steve Bannon’s influence on Trump’s thinking about Russia and the need for cooperation between the two powers to solve international problems.

Without convincing evidence, I remain a Russia-gate skeptic. I am not defending Russia. Russia can defend itself. However, amid the growing censorship and this dangerous new McCarthyism, I am trying to defend America – from itself.

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Edward R. Murrow's Timeless Warnings

As the Russia-gate hysteria expands, it is coming to resemble the McCarthyism of the 1950s, except this time liberals and progressives are promoting the insidious "guilt by association," as Michael Milillo describes.

By Michael Milillo

Does the American government requiring "RT America" – a Russian news organization – to register as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) constitute censorship by the government?

If registration in this context is NOT censorship as many latter-day "liberal" McCarthyites contend, then Americans should NOT be afraid to appear on "RT America" as commentators presenting their opinions which may be different from the current narratives that are being propagated by the mainstream media across the United States.

But Americans will be afraid to appear due to "Guilt by Association," which in its current form is being used to suggest that any Russian who happens to be attending the same social event as President Trump is therefore proof that Trump is a Russian collaborator. Thus, by extrapolation, "Guilt by Association" will be used to denounce any American who appears on "RT America" and presents a narrative that conflicts with the narrative being broadcast by the mainstream media.

The mainstream media will immediately indict that American commentator as a "Russian agent" – or at least that will be the reasonable fear – and thus other Americans will be prevented from listening to and/or reading these alternative opinions – and that amounts to censorship.

Some mainstream media outlets have already censored stories when the analyses conflict with the current liberal narrative for what caused Hillary Clinton to lose to Donald Trump in the November 2016 elections. That narrative is that Hillary Clinton was defeated due to the Russian government hacking into the computer servers at the Democratic National Committee, i.e., "Russia-gate."

Some liberal web sites now are censoring material that conflicts with this Russia-gate narrative. Case in point is an article written by HuffPost's contributor Joe Lauria entitled "[On The Origins of Russia-gate.](#)"

One day after Lauria posted his article on the "HuffPost" web site, the "HuffPost" editorial staff deleted – censored – the article, citing supposed

factual errors. However, the editors did not attempt to contact Lauria before the deletion or to discuss with Lauria what facts he used in his article that were deemed false or misleading. His real offense appears to have been that the story raised doubts about the current narrative accepting the certainty of Russian “meddling” in the 2016 election.

Although some have argued that “HuffPost” has the right to censor material published on its web site, the “HuffPost” readers should NOT be involved in that determination (without at least the author getting a chance to provide a defense). That is censorship by “Mob Rule.”

McCarthyite Blacklists

To further explain what censorship looks like, watch the [“70th Year Commemoration of the Hollywood Blacklist”](#) on C-Span. The commemoration cites the statements or the testimonies of the “Blacklisted” entertainers who appeared before the “House Un-American Activities Committee” [HUAC] in 1947.

If today’s liberals are infuriated by the 1947 proceedings of HUAC and the McCarthyism that challenged the patriotism of Americans, then these liberals should NOT be in favor of today’s censorship either. What HUAC and McCarthyism did was to make Americans fearful of being called “Un-American” just because their opinions or politics were different from what either HUAC or Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy said they should be.

Beyond that, Americans came to shun neighbors, fellow workers, and acquaintances – in order to protect themselves from ending up on the “Blacklist” – because you didn’t know who might be accused or might be pressured to make accusations, such as the case of director [Elia Kazan](#).

As “RT America” has been accused by the American government to “speak in the U.S. on behalf of a foreign government” – Russia, therefore “RT America” must register under FARA. But the BBC “speaks in the U.S. on behalf of a foreign government” – the United Kingdom. Then why hasn’t the American government requested that the BBC register as well under NARA as “RT America” was forced to do under protest?

Is it because the BBC has accepted without question the dominant narratives of the U.S. mainstream media in the BBC’s reporting of the news? Unlike the BBC, “RT America” has allowed alternative opinions to be heard by its audience rather than stringently following the mainstream media’s narratives.

There are some liberals who argue that “RT America” is a tool used by the Russian government to disseminate Russian propaganda. But Americans who have appeared on “RT America” present their own alternative opinions, NOT the

opinions of the Russian government.

If you think the U.S. government requiring "RT America" to register as a foreign agent is NOT censorship, then you have NOT heard of "The Case of Milo Radulovich." When Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy was looking for communists employed by the U.S. government, he supposedly found one such person in Milo Radulovich, a Lieutenant in the Air Force Reserve.

In 1953, Air Force regulation 35-62 stated, "A man may be regarded as a security risk if he has close and continuing associations with communists or people believed to have communist sympathies."

When Lieutenant Radulovich refused to resign from the Air Force as he did nothing wrong, a special Board "recommended that Radulovich be severed from the Air Force" despite the fact that the board never questioned the loyalty of Lieutenant Radulovich.

Radulovich was an easy target because his father "subscribed to several Serbian newspapers, one of which was classified as Communist by the US government." And as his sister supported liberal causes, she was declared to be a communist sympathizer.

With this "Guilt By Association" in mind, CBS correspondent Edward R. Murrow said, "We believe that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, even though that iniquity be proved, and in this case it was not."

As an archive of Edward R. Murrow's work noted, "Not only were the witch hunts affecting the military, Hollywood, government, and academia, this case proved that the average guy can be targeted."

Murrow's Lament

During the broadcast of "See It Now" on March 9, 1954 by CBS TV, Edward R. Murrow said: "We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason, if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine, and remember that we are not descended from fearful men – not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes that were, for the moment, unpopular.

"We can deny our heritage and our history, but we cannot escape responsibility for the result. There is no way for a citizen of a republic to abdicate his responsibilities. As a nation we have come into our full inheritance at a tender age. We proclaim ourselves, as indeed we are, the defenders of freedom, wherever

it continues to exist in the world, but we cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home.”

Putting what Murrow said into perspective as it relates to “RT America,” both the U.S. government and many liberals are now using the same tactic of “Guilt By Association” by insinuating that “RT America” is a Russian news organization and thus must be a puppet of the Russian government without providing any proof to support that accusation.

Murrow’s comment is just as relevant today as it was back in 1954. Perhaps even more so because liberals are supposed to be the good guys.

[For more on this topic, see Consortiumnews.com’s [“Russia-gate Breeds Establishment McCarthyism.”](#)]

Michael Milillo, who lives in Pennsylvania, is a retiree with a background in accounting and finance.

Honduras Again in the Balance

The initial Honduran election returns looked promising for the progressive challenger but the vote count has since stalled and the authoritarian incumbent sent troops into the streets to stop protests, as Dennis J Bernstein reports.

By Dennis J Bernstein

The future of Honduras hangs in the balance as the vote count from presidential election drags on. The challenger, Salvador Nasralla, a former sportscaster running at the head of a progressive left-leaning alliance, initially held the lead over incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernández but that was reversed amid allegations of ballot manipulation and [the imposition of a military curfew](#) to prevent protests.

A win by Nasralla would represent an across-the-board rejection of Hernández’s iron-fisted rule.

Dana Frank, professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz, said, “The Honduran elections, especially President Juan Orlando Hernández’s criminal candidacy in violation of the Honduran Constitution, continue to underscore the utter breakdown of the rule of law in Honduras since the 2009

coup – with the blessing of the U.S. government, which continues to celebrate a regime thoroughly marked by corruption and the vicious repression of basic civil liberties. Reports from the Honduran government claiming that the crime rate is down or that the police have been cleaned up should not be believed for a minute.”

I spoke to Assistant Professor Suyapa Portillo of Pitzer College on Nov. 27. Portillo and her students were international observers in San Pedro Sula in Honduras and visited over 13 voting centers throughout the most marginalized sectors of the city.

Dennis Bernstein: Could you just remind us who the candidates are in this latest election in Honduras? There does seem to be a big difference between them.

Suyapa Portillo: The candidates are Salvador Nasralla, who is running for the Opposition Alliance, and Juan Orlando Hernández, the current president.

Actually, it is illegal for Hernández to run for reelection in Honduras. After the coup d’etat, bipartisanship was partly broken and there were actually ten parties running in the north where I was an observer.

It was a very heated race but the electoral college reported around 1:40 am that about 45% of the electorate had voted for Nasralla and 40% for Hernández. But because the current president controls the entire system, including the electoral college, he hasn’t conceded the election to Nasralla, which would be typical by this point. It still is not clear whether Hernández is going to respect the constitution.

Dennis Bernstein: Talk a little about the stark differences between the candidates. We have heard a lot about the violence in Honduras after the coup, which was supported by the United States government.

Suyapa Portillo: The National Alliance has been in power since the coup d’etat in 2009. Since then, the crime rate has risen to an extreme degree. Over 200 environmental activists have been killed and about that many LGBT activists.

Journalists and human rights defenders are facing threats if they stand up against the government. A lot of the improvements in Honduras after the peace accords in the 1980’s are being rolled back by the National Alliance. People in Honduras consider Hernández a dictator. Even though he claims that crime has been reduced, what has really happened is that it is less reported on.

Hernández’s brother is one of the first high profile people to be linked to narco-trafficking.

Dennis Bernstein: We know that the US government, led by Hillary Clinton [as Secretary of State], sustained the coup that drove [former President] Zelaya out

of the country [in 2009]. Clinton bragged about this in the first edition of her autobiography.

Suyapa Portillo: In Honduras narcotraffickers and gangs are taking over. The levels of violence are through the roof. We are seeing attacks against human rights defenders, organizers, feminists. Honduras deserves a different form of government. When Hillary Clinton bragged about the coup d'état and when the Obama administration refused to call this a coup d'état, they really set in motion all these murders.

Dennis Bernstein: Was this an important election? Did people really want to get out and vote? You take a risk when you vote in Honduras, particularly if you are a grassroots activist, a teacher, etc.

Suyapa Portillo: The entire country was militarized, particularly the city centers. We visited thirteen voting centers in San Pedro Sula, in some of the most marginalized sections of the city where people expected the most violence. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm despite all the militarization. People voted early, went home and then came back for the vote count. This participation by the citizenry is new, emerging after the coup d'état. Every ballot box had its own count.

We did see quite a few discrepancies: people showing up to learn that they had already voted, people coming to vote to find that their pictures were not available. We saw a lot of tension between the ballot box people and the electoral college controlled by the government and the citizens. Some of the neighborhoods we visited are controlled by gangs, but the people still came out. In almost all of the thirteen voting centers we visited, Nasralla clearly had the lead.

Dennis Bernstein: How do you account for this enthusiasm? You talked a little about the violence in the country which ensued after the coup. But talk about some of the grassroots struggles that have gotten people out in numbers to vote.

Suyapa Portillo: 2014 saw the formation of the military police, a body that had not existed since the eighties. This puts military-grade weapons in the urban centers. When Hernández came into power, he granted 300 mining concessions to local elites and foreign companies and people felt he was giving away the country. These land concessions came into direct conflict with indigenous communities. You started to see incredible numbers of murders of human rights defenders and land rights defenders.

Dennis Bernstein: Some feel he is trying to turn the country into a free trade zone.

Suyapa Portillo: The Nationalist Party vision is just to get rich off of the people. There are no increases in minimum wage, there is no way out for people. In fact, in 2014 we saw an exodus of unaccompanied minors. There is really no future for young people in Honduras. Education is impossible to access without money. The military police have attacked university students organizing for reform.

And Hernández has put his entire family in office. All the ministers are his brothers, sisters, cousins—which is again something that hadn't happened since the 1980's in Honduras. Most importantly, there are no jobs. The economy is not growing.

Dennis Bernstein: The US government would know about the trafficking in Honduras because the United States has an extensive presence there. So there is nothing that would be a secret to the US.

Suyapa Portillo: The United States knows that there is impunity, that no human rights charges will ever see the light of day. Oftentimes, plaintiffs are either killed or leave before cases are resolved. Remember that Honduras was under military rule from 1963 to 1980. For most Hondurans this is recent history and they don't want to return to that.

The young people want a president who will represent them and the issues that they care about. Libre and the New Alliance have a proposal that makes sense to them. The activists we saw were remarkably young people.

Dennis Bernstein: This disastrous policy initiated by Obama and Clinton and intensified under Trump has led to a surge of people leaving the country. It is sort of a cynical policy because you have got various politicians in the US lecturing mothers in Honduras and El Salvador how dangerous it is to send their kids up north and yet we are creating the circumstances for extreme suffering and very little choice.

Suyapa Portillo: If people cannot make ends meet, they will migrate. We have to also remember the history of corporations in Honduras. The United Fruit Company and Dole used to provide jobs for people along the north coast and then when the hurricanes hit factories were closed and unions were lost.

New, non-union, exploitative corporations are now coming in, which is also pushing people out. Along the north coast, just about every family has someone living in the United States. The government has to have a plan for dealing with immigration. What kind of policies will make people want to stay, rather than risk the very dangerous journey through Mexico?

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The Scalp-Taking of Gen. Flynn

Exclusive: The Russia-gate prosecutors have taken the scalp of ex- National Security Adviser (and retired Lt. Gen.) Flynn for lying to the FBI. But this case shows how dangerously far afield this “scandal” has gone, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

Russia-gate enthusiasts are thrilled over the guilty plea of President Trump’s former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn for lying to the FBI about pre-inauguration conversations with the Russian ambassador, but the case should alarm true civil libertarians.

What is arguably most disturbing about this case is that then-National Security Adviser Flynn was pushed into a perjury trap by Obama administration holdovers at the Justice Department who concocted an unorthodox legal rationale for subjecting Flynn to an FBI interrogation four days after he took office, testing Flynn’s recollection of the conversations while the FBI agents had transcripts of the calls intercepted by the National Security Agency.

In other words, the Justice Department wasn’t seeking information about what Flynn said to Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak – the intelligence agencies already had that information. Instead, Flynn was being quizzed on his precise recollection of the conversations and nailed for lying when his recollections deviated from the transcripts.

For Americans who worry about how the pervasive surveillance powers of the U.S. government could be put to use criminalizing otherwise constitutionally protected speech and political associations, Flynn’s prosecution represents a troubling precedent.

Though Flynn clearly can be faulted for his judgment, he was, in a sense, a marked man the moment he accepted the job of national security adviser. In summer 2016, Democrats seethed over Flynn’s participation in chants at the Republican National Convention to “lock her [Hillary Clinton] up!”

Then, just four days into the Trump presidency, an Obama holdover, then-acting

Attorney General Sally Yates, primed the Flynn perjury trap by coming up with a novel legal theory that Flynn – although the national security adviser-designate at the time of his late December phone calls with Kislyak – was violating the 1799 Logan Act, which prohibits private citizens from interfering with U.S. foreign policy.

But that law – passed during President John Adams’s administration in the era of the Alien and Sedition Acts – was never intended to apply to incoming officials in the transition period between elected presidential administrations and – in the past 218 years – the law has resulted in no successful prosecution at all and thus its dubious constitutionality has never been adjudicated.

Stretching Logic

But Yates extrapolated from her unusual Logan Act theory to speculate that since Flynn’s publicly known explanation of the conversation with Kislyak deviated somewhat from the transcript of the intercepts, Flynn might be vulnerable to Russian blackmail.

Yet, that bizarre speculation would require that the Russians first would have detected the discrepancies; secondly, they would have naively assumed that the U.S. intelligence agencies had not intercepted the conversations, which would have negated any blackmail potential; and thirdly, the Russians would have to do something so ridiculously heavy-handed – trying to blackmail Flynn – that it would poison relations with the new Trump administration.

Yates’s legal theorizing was so elastic and speculative that it could be used to justify subjecting almost anyone to FBI interrogation with the knowledge that their imperfect memories would guarantee the grounds for prosecution based on NSA intercepts of their communications.

Basically, the Obama holdovers concocted a preposterous legal theory to do whatever they could to sabotage the Trump administration, which they held in fulsome disdain.

At the time of Flynn’s interrogation, the Justice Department was under the control of Yates and the FBI was still under President Obama’s FBI Director James Comey, another official hostile to the Trump administration who later was fired by Trump.

The Yates-FBI perjury trap also was sprung on Flynn in the first days of the Trump presidency amid reverberations of the massive anti-Trump protests that had arisen across the country in support of demands for a “#Resistance” to Trump’s rule.

Flynn also had infuriated Democrats when he joined in chants at the Republican National Convention of “lock her up” over Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server and other alleged offenses. So, in targeting Flynn, there was a mix of personal payback and sabotage against the Trump administration.

The Legal Construct

The two-page complaint against Flynn, made public on Friday, references false statements to the FBI regarding two conversations with Kisylak, one on Dec. 22, 2016, and the other on Dec. 29, 2016.

The first item in the complaint alleges that Flynn did not disclose that he had asked the Russian ambassador to help delay or defeat a United Nations Security Council vote censuring Israel for building settlements on Palestinian territory.

The New York Times reported on Friday that Russia-gate investigators “learned through witnesses and documents that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked the Trump transition team to lobby other countries to help Israel, according to two people briefed on the inquiry.

“Investigators have learned that Mr. Flynn and Mr. Trump’s son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, took the lead in those efforts. Mr. Mueller’s team has emails that show Mr. Flynn saying he would work to kill the vote, the people briefed on the matter said,” according to the Times.

Breaking with past U.S. precedents, President Obama had decided not to veto the resolution criticizing Israel, choosing instead to abstain. However, the censure resolution carried with Russian support, meaning that whatever lobbying Flynn and Kushner undertook was unsuccessful.

But the inclusion of this Israeli element shows how far afield the criminal Russia-gate investigation, headed by former FBI Director Robert Mueller, has gone. Though the original point of the inquiry was whether the Trump team colluded with Russians to use “hacked” emails to defeat Hillary Clinton’s campaign, the criminal charge against Flynn has nothing to do with election “collusion” but rather President-elect Trump’s aides weighing in on foreign policy controversies during the transition. And, the first initiative was undertaken at the request of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, not Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The second item, cited by Mueller’s prosecutors, referenced a Dec. 29 Flynn-Kisylak conversation, which received public attention at the time of Flynn’s Feb. 13 resignation after only 24 days on the job. That phone call touched on Russia’s response to President Obama’s decision to issue new sanctions against

the Kremlin for the alleged election interference.

The complaint alleges that Flynn didn't mention to the FBI that he had urged Kislyak "to refrain from escalating the situation" and that Kislyak had subsequently told him that "Russia had chosen to moderate its response to those sanctions as a result of his request."

The Dec. 29 phone call occurred while Flynn was vacationing in the Dominican Republic and thus he would have been without the usual support staff for memorializing or transcribing official conversations. So, the FBI agents, with the NSA's transcripts, would have had a clearer account of what was said than Flynn likely had from memory. The content of Flynn's request to Kislyak also appears rather uncontroversial, asking the Russians not to overreact to a punitive policy from the outgoing Obama administration.

In other words, both of the Flynn-Kislyak conversations appear rather unsurprising, if not inconsequential. One was taken at the behest of Israel (which proved ineffective) and the other urged the Kremlin to show restraint in its response to a last-minute slap from President Obama (which simply delayed Russian retaliation by several months).

Double Standards

While Flynn's humiliation has brought some palpable joy to the anti-Trump "Resistance" – one more Trump aide being taken down amid renewed hope that this investigation will somehow lead to Trump's resignation or impeachment – many of the same people would be howling about trampled civil liberties if a Republican bureaucracy were playing this game on a Democratic president and his staff.

Indeed, in the turnabout-is-fair-play department, there is some equivalence in what is happening over Russia-gate to what the Republicans did in the 1990s exploiting their control of the special-prosecutor apparatus in the first years of Bill Clinton's presidency when interminable investigations into such side issues as his Whitewater real-estate deal and the firing of the White House travel office staff plagued the Clinton administration.

Similarly, Republicans seized on the deaths of four U.S. diplomatic personnel on Sept. 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya, to conduct a series of lengthy investigations to tarnish Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's tenure and raise questions about her judgment. Democrats understandably called these attacks partisan warfare in legal or investigative garb.

What I have heard from many Hillary Clinton supporters in recent months is that they don't care about the unfairness of the Russia-gate process or the dangerous precedents that such politicized prosecutions might set. They simply view Trump

as such a danger that he must be destroyed at whatever the cost.

Yet, besides the collateral damage inflicted on mid-level government officials such as retired Lt. Gen. Flynn facing personal destruction at the hands of federal prosecutors with unlimited budgets, there is this deepening pattern of using criminal law to settle political differences, a process more common in authoritarian states.

As much as the Russia-gate enthusiasts talk about how they are upholding “the rule of law,” there is the troubling appearance that the law is simply being used to collect the scalps of political enemies.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America’s Stolen Narrative*, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)).

What’s Wrong with Talking to North Korea?

Exclusive: President Trump fancies himself a crafty, zigzagging negotiator, but his pride in his bellicose unpredictability has brought the North Korean crisis to the edge of a horrific calamity, as Jonathan Marshall explains.

By Jonathan Marshall

Anyone who says talk is cheap hasn’t tried getting President Trump to talk with his North Korean counterpart, Kim Jong Un. Not even the specter of a war that could kill millions of people on the Korean peninsula, Japan and now even the continental United States seems sufficient to push the two leaders into negotiations. Both sides insist on unacceptable preconditions before they will even consider holding formal talks to reach a peaceful settlement.

Successful negotiations might end Washington’s economic sanctions and military preparations against North Korea, but Pyongyang demands that outcome before it even starts talks. Two weeks ago, North Korea’s ambassador to the United Nations, Han Tae Song, [said](#), “As long as there is continuous hostile policy against my country by the U.S. and as long as there are continued war games at our doorstep, then there will not be negotiations.”

On the other hand, the [fact](#) that South Korea sent seven warships in mid-November

to join three U.S. aircraft carriers for war games off the coast of the Korean Peninsula almost seemed calculated to keep Pyongyang away from the bargaining table. U.S. and South Korean plans to start a massive five-day air force exercise on Dec. 4 will doubtless do the same. And the Trump administration's recent designation of North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism only reinforced Pyongyang's suspicion that "the United States is not serious about negotiations," in the words of one former Korea expert at the State Department.

As for U.S. demands, Defense Secretary James Mattis said recently of North Korea, "So long as they stop testing, stop developing, they don't export their weapons, there would be opportunity for talks." In other words, if they capitulate first, we will be happy to negotiate the terms of their surrender. Needless to say, North Korea's latest test launch of its Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile gave the middle finger to Mattis's demands.

Trump's About-Face

Last year, the man who prides himself as the world's greatest deal maker raised hopes of peace by saying he would "absolutely" speak to Kim, even if there were only a "10 percent or a 20 percent chance that I can talk him out of those damn nukes." Trump told a campaign rally in Atlanta, "What the hell is wrong with speaking? . . . We should be eating a hamburger on a conference table."

A year later the President was no longer in the mood for a hamburger, well done or otherwise. "Presidents and their administrations have been talking to North Korea for 25 years, agreements made and massive amounts of money paid," Trump tweeted. "Hasn't worked, agreements violated before the ink was dry, making fools of U.S. negotiators. Sorry, but only one thing will work!"

No one in their right mind believes what his tweet implied – that war could solve the security issues raised by North Korea's nuclear program.

Even before that country demonstrated the potential ability to hit the continental United States with a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile, it had the capacity to wipe out major U.S. coastal cities like New York, Houston, or Los Angeles with ship-borne nuclear bombs. North Korea's massed artillery, chemical weapons, and nuclear bombs could also wreak havoc on South Korea and Japan, including U.S. civilians and military forces stationed there.

The result would be "tragic on an unbelievable scale," in the words of Defense Secretary Mattis.

Under these circumstances, setting unacceptable preconditions for talks between the United States and North Korea is as self-defeating as the refusal of North Vietnam and the United States to hold peace talks until 1968 – after which they

spent eight months arguing over the shape of the conference table. According to one researcher, nearly 1,600 U.S. soldiers lost their lives over those eight months of pointless maneuvering. Orders of magnitude more Americans could die if talks don't begin soon to reduce the growing danger of preemptive or accidental war with North Korea.

Negotiations Can Work

Contrary to Trump's tweet – if anyone in Washington will take the time to study some history – past negotiations with North Korea did succeed dramatically in slowing down its nuclear program.

Thanks to citizen diplomacy by former President Jimmy Carter, and President Bill Clinton's realization that preemptive war was not an option, Washington and Pyongyang negotiated a "landmark deal" in 1994. North Korea agreed to shut down its plutonium production in return for promises of help with its civilian nuclear energy infrastructure.

Over the next several years, the United States was able to inspect some of North Korea's nuclear facilities – an unheard-of concession – and also negotiate a freeze on its missile-testing program.

Although North Korea shared in the blame, the deal eventually unraveled in no small part because a Republican-dominated Congress refused to allow the Clinton administration to keep its commitments. The incoming George W. Bush administration then canceled all further talks and condemned North Korea as part of the "axis of evil." Said Vice President Dick Cheney, "We don't negotiate with evil. We defeat it."

Eventually, multi-party talks resumed and North Korea pledged to abandon "all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs." This time, a blatantly hostile move by Bush's Treasury Department to freeze North Korean assets prompted Pyongyang to resume missile tests and trigger its first underground nuclear explosion.

The Obama administration, for its part, foolishly abandoned any hope of negotiations in favor of a policy of "strategic patience" – assuming that steady application of economic sanctions would bring Pyongyang to heel. If North Korea has proved anything, it's that it will accept any level of suffering to achieve security.

All those failed opportunities leave the United States and South Korea only one real option with North Korea: to live with mutual nuclear deterrence, as we do with China and Russia, two far stronger nuclear powers that were once deeply hostile to the United States. It's time – really, long past time – for both

sides to drop their preconditions and start talking about how our countries can learn to live rather than die with each other.

Jonathan Marshall is author or co-author of five books on international relations and history. His recent contributions to Consortiumnews.com on Korea include ["Trump's North Korea Delusions,"](#) ["Hurtling Toward Fire and Fury,"](#) ["Risk to US from War on North Korea,"](#) ["North Korea Fears 'Regime Change' Strike,"](#) ["The Negotiation Option With North Korea,"](#) and ["Behind the North Korean Nuke Crisis."](#)
