

The Guardian uses anti-Russian hacking claims to proselytise for CIA and war

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In Britain, the *Guardian* newspaper is at the forefront of the McCarthyite witch-hunt against Russia.

Utilising unsubstantiated claims of Russian hacking of the Democratic Party the paper has allied with the most hysterical warmongers in the political and military-intelligence apparatus in the United States and Britain.

The *Guardian's* hostility to Russia is not new. It supported the western-backed coup in Ukraine in 2014, employing allegations of Russian aggression to press for punitive sanctions against Moscow. The debacle of US and British imperialism in Syria, and the crisis in US foreign policy exemplified by the accession of Donald Trump to the presidency, has seen its sabre rattling become ever more frantic.

A January 8 editorial, "Trump and Russia: playing Putin's game—again," treats as good coin the allegations of Russian interference in the US election. Aware of widespread scepticism over the claims, the comment consists of a barely concealed polemic against its own readership.

The *Guardian* asserts that there is a long history of the US and the Soviet Union trying, "mostly surreptitiously, occasionally bloodily, sometimes successfully, to shape elections in many parts of the world."

"So, whatever else there is to say about Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 US election, do not make the mistake of saying that such a thing is unprecedented—because it is not."

This sleight of hand is typical of the *Guardian's* dishonest approach. Based on the allegation that Russia has interfered in elections in the past, it insists that the same must be true today and that, "However you slice and dice it, Russia's apparent involvement in America's 2016 election is indefensible."

The editorial naturally says nothing about the content of the material that was leaked, which showed that the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee conspired against her challenger in the primaries, Bernie Sanders. This evidence of a deliberate intervention into the electoral processes with the aim of rigging the outcome is ignored by the *Guardian*.

Moreover, the newspaper knows full well that the CIA intelligence report has produced no evidence to back up its claims. Even the *New York Times*, the main purveyor of the anti-Russian campaign in the US, has stated that the report "provides no new evidence" to support its assertions, and does not "include evidence on the sources and methods used to collect the information" on supposed Russian activities.

The editorial insists that its readers proceed from an acceptance that Moscow's alleged interference is not more of the same, "merely... propaganda" or the "sort of thing that all governments always do..."

The "charges, if true, would confirm not just a state-on-state threat but a system-on-system one. They would show that the Russian state is systematically trying to subvert democratic systems, and people's faith in them."

The editorial admits that it cannot "pretend that the published intelligence assessment proves its case." So it claims this is because the CIA was unable to do so without "compromising its sources and methods", and because "trust in the agencies has been so shaken by events from the Iraq war to the Snowden revelations. Unfortunately, this means it leaves a space for legitimate and illegitimate scepticism alike."

The references to the criminal invasion and occupation of Iraq and the hounding into exile of whistle-blower Edward Snowden for revealing the American state's illegal mass spying network exposes the *Guardian's* pretensions that what is involved in this "system-on-system" conflict is an existential Russian threat to an otherwise democratic paradise.

This is, after all, the newspaper that was raided in 2013 so that GCHQ security experts could smash memory chips containing encrypted files leaked by Snowden with drills and grinders in the basement.

The truth, let alone the experiences of its own journalists and sources, is of no consequence. The *Guardian* demands that readers abandon their critical faculties—or what the newspaper would undoubtedly deem their "illegitimate scepticism"—to line up behind the war aims of the CIA and the Democratic Party.

With Moscow out to "weaken the democratic nations and to break public trust within them," it asserts, "These systems and that faith must be defended. The evidence that they are under threat should not be disregarded."

In other words, the evisceration of democratic norms from within, including the resort to police-state methods, must be set to one side as a matter of "faith" in Western democracy. Such language is deliberately reminiscent of the Cold War.

The *Guardian* doesn't spell out how the "democratic systems" must be defended, but its implications are spelled in the op-ed piece by Nick Cohen that accompanied the editorial, "Russian treachery is extreme and it is everywhere."

A one-time "left", Cohen championed the 2003 invasion of Iraq

on the grounds that the US was leading the opposition to dictatorship and spreading democracy. When all the lies about weapons of mass destruction and a “quick” end to the war had been exposed, he played a lead role in founding the Euston Manifesto group aimed at developing a new rationale in favour of imperialist intervention.

This gathering of ex-liberals made a speciality of denouncing sections of the left for failing to fall sufficiently into line behind US President George W. Bush and Britain’s Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, and their supposed battle to defend “Enlightenment” values and western civilisation across the globe. By this, they meant the comfortable lifestyles of the upper-middle-class layer they personified, whose privileges were bound up with the inflated stock market shares and property values achieved through the impoverishment of the working class and unending war.

The Euston Manifesto articulated the political conviction of these layers that preserving this state of affairs was dependent on the so-called “special relationship” between the US and the UK, which had long allowed Britain to “punch above its weight” on the world arena.

The ascendancy of Trump to the White House on a policy of “America First” and his dismissals of NATO and the United Nations—the very institutions through which a much diminished British bourgeoisie has been able to play a global role—have thrown all this into question.

In the manner of a jilted lover, Cohen’s response is frenzied. Since the Euston Manifesto was written, the pseudo-left milieu has largely been recruited to imperialist militarism and war. Therefore, while he attacks Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, Cohen now finds himself mainly in conflict with a section of the right with which he was formerly aligned—who are denounced for not being sufficiently patriotic, anti-communist, pro-CIA and similar crimes.

Cohen describes Trump as an “open admirer of a hostile foreign power” and castigates those who voted for him as nationalists whose problem is that they “hate enemies *in* their countries more than they hate the enemies *of* their countries.”

They are guilty of faux patriotism, Cohen suggests, because “when it came to the crunch” they are indifferent to “national security.”

Trump is attacked for preferring the word of Julian Assange to that “of his own intelligence agencies.”

Cohen’s claim to defend media “accuracy” and “impartiality” only applies when he is agitating, as in his column, for the regulatory authorities to close down Russia’s RT news.

When it comes to the WikiLeaks founder, who exposed the war crimes of US imperialism in Iraq and many other conspiracies, he burns with hatred. Any invoking of Assange, who Cohen accuses of “cowering from rape charges in the basement of the Ecuadorian embassy,” only makes “the task of regaining your composure harder,” he writes.

Likewise, the problem with many one-time “Cold War conservatives,” he complains, is that their hostility to the Soviet Union was not motivated by the fact that it was a “communist dictatorship” but that it was “godless.”

These “useful idiots of the right” now “welcome Putin as an

unapologetic foe of Islam,” when Bush and Blair had apparently “bent over backwards to say that the west is not in a war against Islam.”

Whereas once the CIA “inspired fear around the world,” Cohen complains that now it “is so feeble it cannot stop a Russian plot in plain sight to manipulate a US election. The FBI once harassed real and imagined communists it claimed were in the pocket of the Kremlin. In 2016, its director intervened on behalf of the Kremlin’s chosen candidate in the US presidential election.”

Just how deranged the social layer from which Cohen was spawned has become is made clear in the closing sections of his filthy column.

The Euston Manifesto denounced critics of the Iraq war as being motivated by “anti-Americanism”, insisting that the US was “the home of a strong democracy with a noble tradition behind it and lasting constitutional and social achievements to its name.”

Now Cohen complains of the “unprecedented dilemma” facing the British government.

Britain’s military-intelligence services have “woken up to the danger” of Russia, he states, praising MI6 for “falling over itself in an effort to recruit Russian specialists...”

However, whereas in the past the UK “would have looked to the US for support and leadership,” now, “and with the worst timing imaginable”, just as Britain’s “European alliance is in crisis” following the vote to leave the European Union, “Britain has to wonder if America is still a reliable partner.”

Indeed, “For the first time since 1941, a Britain isolated from Europe may have to regard the United States as a potentially hostile foreign power.”

Cohen’s op-ed articulates the further rightward lurch of the pseudo-left, and the social impulses driving them. It confirms that the *Guardian* and the nominally liberal coterie that it represents is not only preparing for war with Russia, but is actively seeking it. To this end, it champions the police/military apparatus and defends state censorship. Anyone deemed an obstacle to these goals is now a quisling—and that, potentially, even includes the US.



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