

As US election approaches, New York Times intensifies its anti-Russia disinformation campaign

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In the final weeks of the election campaign, as the Trump administration intensifies its coup plotting and incitement of fascistic violence, US intelligence agencies, with the assistance of the *New York Times*, are once again spreading unsubstantiated propaganda that Russia is seeking to “interfere” in the elections and “sow chaos” in the United States.

In the space of three days this week, the *Times*, the main newspaper politically aligned with the Democratic Party, published three articles focused on the supposed Russian plot. All were co-authored by the *Times*’ most reliable stenographer for the CIA, David Sanger.

The latest offensive in the *Times*’ McCarthyite anti-Russia campaign follows a typical pattern. Ominous assertions and claims are presented as truth, devoid of any concrete facts. Everything is attributed to generally unnamed “intelligence officials,” backed by statements from security firms with close ties to the state.

On Tuesday, Sanger and Nicole Perlroth, under the headline “As Election Nears, Government and Tech Firms Push Back on Russia (and Trump),” wrote of a collaboration between US Cyber Command and tech giants to counter “an aggressive campaign against a suspected Russian network that they feared could hold election systems hostage come November.”

This was followed Wednesday by an article co-authored by Sanger and Julian Barnes, “Iran and Russia Seek to Influence Election in Final Days, US Officials Warn.” The article reported on an announcement the same day from Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliff and FBI Director Christopher Wray that the *Times* claimed provided “the first concrete evidence that the two countries are stepping in to try to influence the presidential election as it enters its final two weeks.”

Then on Thursday, Sanger, Perlroth and Barnes joined

forces to center attention on Russia in the third article, “Russia Poses Greater Election Threat Than Iran, Many US Officials Say.” Pushing back against the efforts of Trump administration officials to focus on Iran, the *Times* asserted that “many intelligence officials said they remained far more concerned about Russia, which in recent days has hacked into state and local computer networks in breaches that could allow Moscow broader access to American voting infrastructure.”

All of these reports are based on crass fabrications. Thursday’s article, for example, breathlessly reports that “American intelligence agencies... have pieced together details of what they believe are Russia’s plans to interfere in the presidential race” and that “FBI and Homeland Security officials” have announced “that Russia’s state hackers had targeted dozens of state and local governments and aviation networks starting in September.”

In reporting on the claim that “Russia” has targeted “dozens” of local governments, the *Times* links to releases from the FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. The release reports on the activities of *one individual* that it claims, without proof, is sponsored by Russia. The technical details in the report note that the IP addresses used in the alleged hacking are actually from Turkey, and there is no attempt to connect the activity with anyone in Russia, let alone the Russian government.

As for claims that Russia is trying to manipulate the vote, the *Times* notes far down in the article that, even assuming everything they report is true: “Officials say Russia’s ability to change vote tallies nationwide would be difficult, given how disparate American elections are.”

They quote Christopher Krebs, the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, as acknowledging that the supposed breaches involved

obtaining access “in a couple limited cases, to election jurisdiction, an election-related network” that have “nothing to do with the casting and counting” of votes.

The *Times* bolsters its claims by citing statements from FireEye, which is referred to simply as a “security firm that has been tracking the Russian group’s foray into state and local systems.” The company’s CEO, Kevin Mandia, is a former special agent in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations and a former contractor for military industry giant Lockheed. In 2018, FireEye was centrally involved in a move by Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms to censor and close down predominantly left-wing pages and accounts on the basis of allegations of “coordinated inauthentic behavior.”

The *Times* cites FireEye director of threat analysis John Hultquist as saying that “It’s reasonable to assume [by whom?] any attempt at the election system could be aimed at” creating uncertainty about the election results. Hultquist’s bio on the company website notes that he was “previously involved in counterinsurgency operations in the US Army.”

The intensified *New York Times*-CIA operation of “Russian meddling” serves several interrelated political aims.

First, there is an ongoing battle within the state over the direction of foreign policy. Thursday’s article in the *Times* was aimed at pressing back at the efforts of the Trump administration to focus on Iran at the expense of Russia. For the past four years, opposition within the state to Trump has centered on the concerns within the factions of the military-intelligence apparatus for which the Democrats speak that Trump has been insufficiently aggressive against Russia.

“Russia is the villain here,” the *Times* quoted Nancy Pelosi. “From what we have seen in the public domain, Iran is a bad actor, but in no way equivalent.”

At the presidential debate on Thursday night, Biden seized on a question from moderator Kristen Welker about the reports that “both Russia and Iran are working to influence this election” by attacking Trump for being soft on Russia. “They will pay a price if I’m elected,” he threatened. “They’re interfering with American sovereignty. And to the best of my knowledge, I don’t think the President said anything to Putin about it.”

Second, it is part of the official cover-up of the very real and ongoing conspiracy by the Trump administration to stoke fascistic violence and remain in power whatever the outcome of the vote.

As the *Times* hysterically reports on manufactured

claims of Russian interference, it has entirely dropped coverage of the coup by fascistic militia, encouraged by the White House and with ties to sections of the police, to kidnap and murder the Democratic governors of Michigan and Virginia. While Biden and Trump traded accusations on Thursday of being in the pockets of Russia and China, not a word was said about these plots or Trump’s efforts to establish a presidential dictatorship.

As a party of Wall Street and the military, the Democrats are terrified of the growth of popular opposition to the Trump administration that will develop into a broader struggle against the ruling class and the capitalist system. Thus, as Trump calls on his supporters to monitor polling stations, arms in hand, it is supposedly Russia that is responsible for “undermining American confidence in the election” and “exacerbating disputes around the results,” as the *Times* put it.

Finally, the anti-Russia campaign of the Democrats and the intelligence agencies has always been connected to demands for increased internet censorship and the criminalization of domestic opposition. The growth of mass anger in the United States is to be attributed not to unprecedented levels of social inequality, the endless string of police murders or the ruling class’s criminal pandemic policy that has resulted in the deaths of nearly 230,000 Americans, but the efforts of Russia to “sow discontent.”

Even as it covers up Trump’s coup plotting in the final weeks of the elections, the Democratic Party is engaged in discussions behind the scenes with sections of the state and the Republican Party over what to do if Trump attempts to remain in power even if he loses. If the Democrats come to power next year, it will be on the basis of a commitment to intensified war abroad, further attacks on democratic rights within the United States, and the strengthening of the power of the military-intelligence apparatus.



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