Twitter Bans "QAnon," But Still Protects the Most Dangerous Disinfo

While there are no doubts that the "QAnon" political movement is a purveyor of repeatedly absurd and unfounded claims, "predictions" so inaccurate and consistently wrong that it is difficult to take any of it seriously, Twitter's move to across-the-board ban not only accounts associated with the movement but any talk of it citing fears of "offline harm" is even more absurd.

CNN in its article, “Twitter cracks down on QAnon accounts,” would claim (my emphasis):

> Twitter is cracking down on accounts linked to QAnon, a group known for spreading conspiracy theories and disinformation online.

> "We've been clear that we will take strong enforcement action on behavior that has the potential to lead to offline harm," Twitter's safety team said late Tuesday in a tweet. "In line with this approach, this week we are taking further action on so-called 'QAnon' activity across the service."

CNN would also note specific measures Twitter is taking (my emphasis):

> "We will permanently suspend accounts Tweeting about these topics that we know are engaged in violations of our multi-account policy, coordinating abuse around individual victims, or are attempting to evade a previous suspension — something we've seen more of in recent weeks," Twitter said.

While deliberate campaigns of disinformation are almost certainly going to lead people who believe it into making poor real-life decisions that could potentially lead to "offline harm," QAnon is not the only source of such disinformation nor the most dangerous.

The Most Dangerous Liars are Not Only Safe, They Have Blue Check Marks

Twitter's concern comes across particularly hollow when considering the US and European corporate media, outlets like CNN, Fox, MSNBC, the BBC, AP, AFP and Reuters.

They and their employees enjoy "blue check marks" handed out by Twitter and proudly displayed next to their names "proving" to others on Twitter that they are verified and "trusted."

This includes lies and conspiracy theories regarding "weapons of mass destruction" they alleged were hidden in Iraq and required an invasion and subsequent occupation to "find" and "destroy."Together, these "trusted" media platforms have repeatedly spread lies that have caused very real and catastrophic "offline harm."

The weapons were never found, but hundreds of thousands of Iraqis would be slaughtered in the resulting war, millions more displaced and the nation ravaged by conflict and instability from 2003 to present day with US forces still occupying the country and these "blue check mark" accounts still promoting the US occupation.

Similar, now verified lies, were used to sell US wars of aggression in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria as well as US-led regime change in Ukraine where the US and European corporate media deliberately concealed the central role Neo-Nazi political parties and armed groups played in ousting the elected Ukrainian government.
Corporate Media Repeats Disinfo While Covering QAnon's Ban for Disinfo...

What's even more ironic is that this same corporate media, protected and promoted and now with an even larger monopoly over narratives discussed on Twitter, repeated lies even as it discussed QAnon's ban.

CNN would claim (my emphasis):

Followers make unfounded claims and then amplify them with doctored or out-of-context evidence posted on social media to support the allegations. The anarchical group's birth, and its continued seepage into mainstream American life, comes on the coattails of the Russian disinformation campaign that targeted US elections in 2016. While the Russian campaign had an apparent objective -- influence voters to elect Trump -- QAnon is decentralized, having no clear objective aside from its popular slogan, "Question everything."

The "Russian disinformation campaign that targeted US elections in 2016" was investigated for years with zero evidence ever emerging that it ever occurred.

Not only was no evidence ever found, but those accusing Russia of election interference were themselves caught posing as Russians to swing US elections. This includes the shadowy "New Knowledge" group who even submitted reports to the US Congress regarding "Russian disinformation."


While the misleading headline claims the interference used "Russian-inspired tactics," in fact, the Post itself admits in its own article the tactics were simply to falsely accuse Russia of supporting a Republican candidate to poison voters against him.

The article explains (my emphasis):

The document, for example, says it “planted the idea that the Moore campaign was amplified on social media by a Russian botnet. We then tied that botnet to the Moore campaign digital director, making it appear as if he had purchased the accounts.” Morgan [CEO of New Knowledge] denied any knowledge of the incident involving Russian bots. During the campaign, journalists wrote stories about Twitter accounts that appeared to be Russian followers of Moore. Those accounts were later suspended by Twitter. The Post found an archived version of a misleading tweet and also several news reports and tweets by journalists during the Alabama election describing evidence that Russian bots were supporting Moore. The Project Birmingham document cited an article in the New York Post with the headline “Roy Moore flooded with fake Russian Twitter followers.”

Thus, not only was no evidence found that Russia interfered in the 2016 US election, those making those claims and even involved in the investigation were caught openly posing as "Russians" to taint targeted candidates and manipulate voters while simultaneously smearing Russia and adding extra weight to justify sanctions aimed at Russia's economy.

Here we see the media covering QAnon's banning, citing their own collection of debunked conspiracy theories, lies that have led to sanctions and conflict that have most certainly created "offline harm" for Russia, its economy and its people.

Should we hold our breath waiting for Twitter to ban them as well?

Twitter Shifting from Social Media to Programed Media

With QAnon purged from Twitter, the way will be paved for Twitter to blanket ban and purge others, not for specific abuses of their terms of policy, but simply for holding or promoting a certain point of view.

It won't be long before Twitter is entirely dominated by corporate media accounts and ordinary people who listen rather than speak out of fear of being next in line for Twitter's growing purges.

Social media is clearly being transformed from a platform where people communicate with each other on equal
terms, into something resembling traditional programed media where giant conglomerates pick what the public sees, and the public consumes rather than interacts with or contributes to it.

For individuals, organizations and others seeking a social media platform, it is clear Twitter (and Facebook for that matter) have long since become something else. For nations who do not have their own Twitter and Facebook alternatives, the increasingly controlled and manipulated nature of both platforms pose obvious national security risks.

When a platform is purging ordinary people for "disinformation" but providing "blue check marks" to individuals and organizations that have literally lied nations into war and sent hundreds of thousands of innocent people to their graves, it no longer serves any other purpose but as a vehicle for propaganda and propaganda that will most certainly be aimed at these vulnerable nations to cause "offline harm."

While more traditional armed forces of the air, land and sea are still crucial for a nation’s defense, it is clear that nations now also need to defend their information space. Nations that take this threat seriously will be prepared and able to weather the storm that is clearly brewing. Those that do not, will suffer the fate of others who have faced US-led conflicts, in part, precipitated by America’s and Europe’s control over social media.

_Gunnar Ulson, a New York-based geopolitical analyst and writer especially for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”._