Russia Won’t Hack US Voting Machines, That’s America’s Job

With the Democratic National Convention in high gear, the corporate media has inundated the television and computer screens of American voters with endless accusations of Russian meddling in US electoral politics. Democrats have conveniently chosen to deflect attention away from their own criminality – the Wikileaks release of official Democratic Party communications revealed collusion against Bernie Sanders, among myriad other crimes and unethical behavior – by making the story about Russia hacking DNC servers. But the reality is that the emails show just how controlled and undemocratic the ironically named Democratic Party, and the US political system in general, truly is.

But the corporate media, whose job it is to run interference for the establishment thereby providing invaluable service to its elite patrons, has now gone even further by planting in the public consciousness the narrative that the Kremlin intends to hack US voting machines in a further indication of the depravity of the Mephistopheles of Moscow, Vladimir Putin. Indeed, it seems that the Russians are the real threat to democracy as we know it. At least, that’s what we’re told to think.

But I wonder whether the amnesiac media even bothers to consider that their own newspapers and websites, as well as major non-governmental institutions, have proven a thousand times over that the very infrastructure of US elections is entirely compromised, untrustworthy, and controlled by the same corporate interests that rule over every facet of American life. OK, I guess I don’t really wonder, I know they don’t think about it. No, the corporate media is doing what it does best: misinforming in the service of the one percent.

Why Shouldn’t You Trust the Voting Machine? Hint: Not Russia

The establishment and its media minions really do think we’re stupid. They honestly believe that if they simply whisper the most terrifying words in the English language – Russia...Putin – suddenly the mountains of evidence proving the unreliability and corporate control of voting machines will simply disappear. On second thought, they don’t need the evidence to disappear, they simply pretend it doesn’t exist, knowing that the vast majority of Americans will remain blissfully unaware. But not me. So let’s review the fact, shall we?

Let’s begin with that dark and mysterious Russian front group the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University’s School of Law which issued a comprehensive, and quite damning, report entitled America’s Voting Machines at Risk which found that the voting machines currently in use are outdated, running the risk of catastrophic failures. The report highlighted many shocking examples that should give anyone pause when considering the validity of election results. The authors of the report noted that “Virginia recently decertified a voting system used in 24 percent of precincts after finding that an external party could access the machine’s wireless features to record voting data or inject malicious data.” Oops.

The Brennan Center report goes further, noting that, nationwide:

The majority of machines in use today are either perilously close to or exceed [the expected lifespan for the core components of electronic voting machines]. Forty-three states are using some machines that will be at least 10 years
old in 2016. In most of these states, the majority of election districts are using machines that are at least 10 years old...Several election officials mentioned “flipped votes” on touch screen machines, where a voter touches the name of one candidate, but the machine registers it as a selection for another.

So, based on the findings of a well-respected institution at one of America’s most prestigious universities, a significant number of America’s voting machines are open to manipulation from just about anyone with some basic hacking skills and a desire to do it. No Russians required.

The machines are also so badly outdated and/or so deeply flawed internally, that they can either break down or otherwise malfunction on election day. But of course, these inconvenient facts will not deter propagandists from capitalizing on a deeply internalized Russophobia embedded in the collective consciousness of the US which sees in Russia the dark heart of anti-American malevolence.

Perhaps even more embarrassing for the establishment mouthpieces masquerading as journalists is the fact that we have documented evidence of hackers who, by their own admission, have already manipulated electoral outcomes. A case in point is Andrés Sepulveda, a Colombian hacker who literally stole Mexico’s 2012 federal election for Enrique Peña Nieto, the current president. Sepulveda, who is linked with Miami-based political power broker Juan José Rendón (the right wing king-maker widely seen as the engineer of numerous fraudulent elections in Latin America), has laid bare the utterly fraudulent machinations just behind the artifice of so-called democracy. Does anyone really believe that US elections are not equally suspect?

Hey, maybe you’re sitting in front of your computer screen or phone reading this article and thinking, “But that’s Mexico. Surely US systems would be harder to hack; I mean they are vital to national security, aren’t they? If they were not secure, then why wouldn’t the government just use new, secure machines?” Good question.

Perhaps here it would be relevant to note that virtually all US electronic voting machines are designed and manufactured by companies like Warren Buffet’s ES&S, Dominion (previously Diebold), Smartmatic, and Hart Intercivic, all of which are connected to very powerful interests within corporate elite circles. In fact, researchers at the Center for Information Technology Policy at Princeton University demonstrated that in under 60 seconds, anyone could bypass the lock and replace the memory card with another. As the researchers in the video explain, “Any desired algorithm can be used to determine which votes to steal and to which candidate or candidates to transfer the stolen votes.”

Indeed, as activist-journalists Harvey Wasserman and Bob Fitrakis pointed out in April 2016, “There is no way to verify the official tally on the electronic machines on which the majority of Americans will vote this fall. Nearly all the machines are a decade old, most are controlled by a single company (ES&S, owned by Warren Buffett) and the courts have ruled that the software is proprietary, making the vote counts beyond public scrutiny.”

Just in case you glossed over that quote, let me repeat: according to US court rulings, the software used in US voting machines is proprietary, which means there is no way to verify any of the vote counts, nor to evaluate the actual operation of the software, including auditing its mistakes. As Stanford University computer science professor and founder of Verified Voting Foundation, David Dill explained in 2012, “If you have a machine collecting and recording votes with an electronic ballot box there’s no way to go back after the fact and see if the machine made a mistake, whether through malice or simple software error.”

Essentially, the validity of US elections is rooted in faith: faith in a system entirely dominated by powerful corporations and the wealthy whose control over the electoral infrastructure mirrors their control over the US political system in general. So much for democracy.

Is The ‘Russia Hacking US Elections’ Narrative a Set-Up?

Given all the information about US voting machines, one has to wonder whether the avalanche of accusations about Russian hacking isn’t just the preparatory stage for a massive vote fraud campaign. Most likely would be manipulation of the vote counts in key swing states like Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Florida, Virginia, and Colorado, all states that Trump needs to win in order to overcome major demographic and electoral deficiencies in his campaign. As the above information indicates, hacking into the machines and/or physically altering them is not only possible, but actually quite easy. Another even more dangerous scenario would be that Trump narrowly wins the election. Consider the endless stories about Donald Trump being a partner/puppet of Vladimir Putin (here, here, and here for just three examples), and what impact that meme will have in a close election scenario. You can almost see the headlines already: “Trump Wins by Narrow Margin, Russian Hacker Involvement Suspected” or “Democrats
Reject Trump Election Victory, Claim Russian Espionage.” It would seem the Democrats and the liberal corporate media are cynically constructing a prima facie case against Donald Trump wherein anything other than a Hillary Clinton victory will be immediately in doubt. The likely outcome of that would be a major court case similar to what happened in the Bush-Gore election of 2000. And, given that, the Democrats have enough judges and lawyers in their deep pockets to ensure their desired outcome. How the Trump movement would respond to such a development? I shudder to imagine. But of course, the outlined scenario is by no means the most likely as US elections are ultimately determined by Wall Street money, a particular area of strength for corporate Clinton. Still, it would seem they are hedging their bets in preparation for the unthinkable. The Democrats, and the entire political establishment, understand perfectly well that Hillary Clinton is one of the most reviled politicians in American history, and is hated the world over. They understand that she is compromised with multiple scandals, any of which could easily doom her campaign. And so, they are preparing the battlefield.

Ultimately, what the recent allegations of Russian hacking are really about is deflection: away from Clinton’s failings, away from Clinton and the Democratic Party’s clear criminality, away from the rigged system that both Trump and Sanders have railed against throughout the election season. By casting stones, the Democrats hope Americans will ignore the fact that their house is made of glass.

*Eric Draitser is an independent geopolitical analyst based in New York City, he is the founder of StopImperialism.org and OP-ed columnist for RT, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.*