

How Russia Seeks to Hurt America (aka The Trump/MAGA Playbook)

Vladimir Putin's playbook for destroying western democracy found a useful idiot in Donald Trump, because that's exactly what the "Make America Great Again" theme is all about.

That's a bold statement, and I realize it will annoy the disgraced president's fan base, so let me spell it out for them.

I was a student of Russian and of the Soviet Union for several years in the 1960s. As such I even subscribed to *Izvestia* for a year, and I visited the Soviet Union four times — once as a tourist with an MIT alumni group in 1978 and three times as a "citizen diplomat" with the Center for Soviet-American Dialogue in the Gorbachev era of the late 1980s.

"Disinformation" didn't appear in English dictionaries until the late 1980s, but I first learned that term in the early 1960s as the Russian word **дезинформация**. It is indeed a Soviet concept introduced and perfected by the KGB and one of its premiere chiefs, Vladimir Putin.

The United States is not the only western democracy in which disinformation has been, and continues to be, deployed by the Russians. It played a big and successful role in the Brexit campaign, since breaking up the European Union is as much a goal of Vladimir Putin as is the creating of chaos and irreparable partisanship in the United States. And this Monday, a news item caught my attention that Russia is mounting a similar effort in Germany to support the election of an anti-EU candidate to succeed Angela Merkel.

"America First" is just what Putin wanted, which is why he mobilized multiple social media channels in the United States to turn public opinion against his arch-enemy Hillary Clinton toward electing Donald Trump.

These columns are posted on my blog at www.JimSmithBlog.com and are archived at www.TalkingTurkey.online.

I welcome your help in paying for these ads via my GoFundMe campaign. Get to it at www.FundTalkingTurkey.com.

Talking Turkey



By Jim Smith

At first Putin merely sought revenge against Clinton, who, as Secretary of State, had attacked Putin's own election victory as corrupt, but the election of a president, Donald Trump, who would balk at supporting NATO and who also publicly supported Brexit, was a dream come true for him.

As I wrote in my Nov. 15, 2018, page 3 column, "**Yes, the Russians Wanted Trump Over Hillary, But Their Real Goal Is to Divide Americans.**" You can download it at www.JimSmithColumns.com. Also check out my Feb. 27, 2020, column, "**Why Wouldn't the Russians Want Trump Re-Elected? Look at His Accomplishments.**"

I've also written previously that the MAGA playbook is also inspired by the playbook of fascism, in that it includes the concerted effort to reduce trust in the country's electoral system, in the free press, and in the university system. I also wrote in my April 9, 2020, "Talking Turkey" column (see it at www.TalkingTurkey.online) about how Donald Trump's mentor and legal counsel, Roy Cohn, taught Trump the key rules to be followed by an aspiring autocrat: **1) Never settle or admit anything, never admit a mistake; 2) If someone hits you, hit back harder and never stop; 3) Even when you lose, claim victory; 4) Tell a lie long enough and people will think it's the truth. 5) Use lawsuits like machine gun bullets; and 6) Take no prisoners.**

Creating distrust in the free media and university professors is essential for success, because they are the ones who know the history I outlined above and are going to educate the public about it, so they must be labeled as "fake news" or "elites." Throw in "socialist" and "communist" and repeat, repeat, repeat until believed.

We still don't know the reason that Donald Trump would never say a negative word about Putin. We know that even during the 2016 campaign (which he thought he'd lose), he had his "fixer" Michael Cohen trying to secure from Putin a Trump Tower in Moscow, but what was exchanged during his

secret solitary meeting with Putin in Helsinki, following which he confiscated his inter-

preter's notes? Was he just a "useful idiot" or was something more sinister going on?

How Much of America Do You 'Own'

I've always been a person who hated litter. When I find litter on a trail, I will pick it up and usually carry a bag for that purpose. When I walk my dog, I always carry extra poop bags so I can pick up the poop other dog owners have failed to pick up.

I don't say this to garner praise, but to make a point. It started with a thought I had as a teenager about people who throw litter from their cars. It's the following: I believe that people who throw trash from their car hate litter as much as I do. They don't want litter in their car, which they own. They simply don't have a sense of ownership that extends beyond their personal property. Myself, I have that sense of "ownership" of the world around me, and I want to keep it as litter free as my car or home.

Think of it, if you prefer, as "citizenship." I'm a citizen of Golden, but I'm also a citizen of Colorado, of the United States and, yes, of the planet. I want to keep Golden, Colorado and my planet clean, healthy, and sustainable.

As a citizen of the planet, I worry about plastics and microplastics in our oceans, about air and water pollution, and about climate change. I take seriously what scientists tell me, whether it's about viruses, vaccines, or our climate. Fortunately, most of my fellow citizens feel as I do. The entire world listened to scientists 40 years ago, when they told us CFCs were creating an "ozone hole" endangering human health. The world responded by banning CFCs, and the ozone hole has now closed, according to the European Environment Agency.

The entire world also listened in 2016 when it passed the Paris Climate Accord, but one nation — the United States — withdrew from that accord when a person without our world view became president.

Diversity (the acceptance of equal rights and respect for people unlike yourself) goes

hand-in-hand with global citizenship. Racism is a logical extension of that narrow world view. "America First" is the antithesis of that sense of ownership or citizenship of the planet. Make America Great Again, as I have written before, is demonstrably the same as "Make America White Again."

There's a theme of self-centeredness among those who have gravitated toward our supremely narcissistic, even psychopathic, former president and his worldview. Self-centered people are people who might litter, might not care about recycling, and think we can keep exploiting the earth's resources without worrying about the consequences. They might not be as compassionate toward the suffering of immigrants or the homeless or the unemployed. They would definitely favor tax cuts for themselves over improved social services for those less blessed than themselves.

Is this a theme that resonates with you? If not, perhaps you agree with this unsigned letter I received from a reader last week:

"I see you are still writing your hysteria and paranoid rants against the great Donald J. Trump. What kind of businessman pisses off half of his possible clientele? What kind of fool pays the Post for an opportunity to put his head up his ass on a weekly basis?"

"In case you haven't noticed, the idiot in charge in a five-star cluster fuck of epic proportions."

"On every social and foreign policy question, Trump was absolutely correct. Learn how to deal with it, ass-hole."

This reader needn't worry about me "pissing off half my possible clientele" by speaking the truth about Donald J. Trump. Frankly, I wouldn't want to do business with a Trumper, and I'm being rewarded by other readers with the best year of my career, receiving so many leads that I have to enlist my broker associates to serve them all.