

Exploding myth of 'Russian control' over Trump

written by Greg Butterfield

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Supporters of Bolivarian Revolution rally at Venezuelan Embassy in Moscow, Jan. 28.

Ever since Hillary Clinton was defeated by Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election, one issue has dominated the anti-Trump “resistance” coming from the Democratic Party and corporate media.

Is it Trump’s flagrant racism and bigotry against im/migrants? His support for Israeli terror against the Palestinian people? His rampant misogyny, homophobic and transphobic hate-mongering? How about his sympathy for violent white supremacists, from Charlottesville to Covington Catholic?

No, no, no and no!

Instead, the Democratic Party leadership, cable TV talking heads and mainstream editorial writers have been shouting this message: “Russian interference won the election for Donald Trump. Russian President Vladimir Putin is pulling Trump’s strings. That’s why Trump has got to go.”

Robert Muller’s investigation into Trump’s dealings with Russia is daily news — often the top story — and has led to an ugly trend by liberals and even some progressives to valorize the racist, anti-people FBI and other repressive state bodies that supposedly oppose Trump, while normalizing the demonization of Putin and Russia.

Never mind that Clinton won the popular vote, and the only reason Trump is in office is because of the Electoral College, originally enacted to protect slavery. The Democratic Party has declined time and again to work toward abolishing the Electoral College, even when it costs them elections.

Why? Because their paymasters on Wall Street like having this safeguard for their domination of the “democratic” electoral process.

Never mind that no one, to this day, has presented a credible explanation of how Russia supposedly swung the elections. It all hinges on conspiracy theories about

buying ads and “misleading” people with fake profiles on social media — particularly African Americans, an especially patronizing and racist theory — or in divulging the dirty dealings by Hillary Clinton’s inner circle to sabotage the Bernie Sanders campaign.

Never mind that Russia’s government had good reason to oppose Hillary Clinton’s election. Clinton campaigned hard on a pro-war, anti-Russia platform. Her record as secretary of state during the Obama administration gave good reason for people everywhere to worry.

Clinton helped to mastermind the right-wing military coup against democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras in 2009 — talk about election interference! This led directly to the Central American refugee caravans that Trump is spewing hatred against today. Clinton was also responsible for the 2011 NATO bombing war that overthrew the sovereign government of Libya and saw the slavery of Black Africans reintroduced in that country.

And she helped set the stage for the 2014 coup in Ukraine, led by open neo-Nazis, on Russia’s Western border, and Kiev’s brutal war against the primarily Russian-speaking residents of the Donbass mining region. The coup occurred under the watch of Clinton’s successor, John Kerry.

Trump and his ultraright campaign advisers exploited the natural mass revulsion for Clinton’s warmongering, just as they took advantage of the long U.S. history of racist divide-and-conquer tactics to court the white supremacist right.

Meanwhile, Trump won the backing of powerful elements among the bosses, who not only wanted his promised tax cuts, but sought a shift toward China as the main target of U.S. aggression.

Those are some of the real, homegrown reasons behind Trump’s victory. Russia had

nothing to do with it.

No conspiracy required

Two recent developments should explode the myth of “Russian control” over Trump once and for all. Both are acts by the Trump administration that have been reported in all major media in the U.S. and around the world — no conspiracy theories required.

First is [Trump’s decision to withdraw from a major arms-control treaty with Russia](#): the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, known as the INF. This is the latest in a string of attacks on treaties that once offered some guarantees of protection to the Soviet Union, and later capitalist Russia, near the end of the Cold War.

A common refrain in reports of the Trump administration’s Feb. 1 announcement was that it would [set off a new nuclear arms race](#) — not only with Russia, which can ill afford it, but also with China.

The source of Trump’s decision to axe the INF wasn’t Moscow, but the bankers and corporate heads of the U.S. military-industrial complex, who are hungry to increase their profits by developing new generations of high-tech weaponry for the Pentagon — at public expense, natch — and to sell abroad.

Second is the Trump administration’s attack on an important Russian ally in Latin America: Bolivarian Venezuela.

While their political perspectives are very different, Moscow and Caracas have forged an alliance of mutual benefit and self-defense against Western aggression.

Both countries are largely dependent on oil sales and have taken hard hits from the last decade’s slump in oil prices. Both are subject to harsh U.S. economic sanctions

on their oil sales. And both have struggled to create alternatives to the U.S.-Western European dominated global financial system.

Venezuela's state-owned oil company, PDVSA, [is shifting proceeds of its sales to a bank based in Russia](#) after Washington, London and other countries moved to freeze Caracas' accounts.

Moscow views the ongoing U.S. coup attempt against Venezuela's rightful president, Nicolás Maduro, with alarm. "The international community's goal should be to help, without destructive meddling from beyond its borders," [said Alexander Shchetinin](#), head of the Latin America department of Russia's foreign ministry.

On Feb. 7, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zajarova held a press conference [declaring Russia's belief that the U.S. had already taken the decision to militarily intervene](#) in Venezuela and was only waiting for a fortuitous moment to strike.

"Signs are coming from Washington about the possibility of using force to overthrow the legitimate authorities," Zajarova said. "I would like to remind you that these kind of statements from U.S. officials are a direct violation of the article of the U.N. Charter that requires all members of the organization to refrain in their international relations from the threat of force or its use."

The same day, [Russia's delegation was blocked from attending the summit](#) on Venezuela organized in Montevideo, Uruguay — a sure sign of how little respect imperial Washington has for its erstwhile "puppet master."

It's been reported that Russia, as well as China, will [participate in military exercises by the Venezuelan armed forces](#) in mid-February to practice defending the country from potential invasion.

Old Cold War, new Cold War

The truth is, Russia's standing in the world economy is far more similar to a developing country like Venezuela than that of the imperialist United States. Socialism hasn't existed in Russia for nearly 25 years. Its former socialist economic system was ravaged by Western profiteers and local oligarchs during the big sell-off of the 1990s, which destroyed much of the country's economic infrastructure — at the price of millions of jobs and the [steepest decline in peacetime life expectancy ever recorded.](#)

Today, capitalist Russia is largely dependent on the export of resources like oil and natural gas. The perception that it is a world power on the scale of the U.S. is false and entirely based on the military defenses it inherited from the Soviet Union, built up to counter decades of Washington's Cold War aggression.

Of course, politicians on both sides of the aisle in Washington are more than happy to take advantage of this popular misconception and exploit the anti-communist and anti-Soviet biases long indoctrinated in people here.

As for election interference — what could compare to what the U.S. is doing now in Venezuela?

Washington tried everything it could to sabotage last year's presidential election in Venezuela, from sanctions to sabotage to boycotts. Yet the people still handed victory to President Nicolás Maduro.

So now the U.S. government appoints its own stooge, Juan Guaidó, as the "legitimate" president of Venezuela, and twists the arms of its allies and puppets to fall in line.

Imagine if Russia declared that it didn't recognize the president of the U.S. and appointed its own candidate — under threat of military intervention. But of course, nothing of the sort has happened.

The real enemies of the workers and oppressed are right here at home, not in Russia or Venezuela.

