

Commentary (<https://warontherocks.com/category/commentary/>)

THE RUSSIANS READ OUR COLD WAR PLAYBOOK

(<https://warontherocks.com/author/james-ludes/>) JAMES M. LUDES

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Early last month, the U.S. government tied the disclosure of emails from the Democratic National Committee (and others) and the penetration of their networks to the Russian government. In a [joint statement](#), the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of Homeland Security

(<https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/215-press-releases-2016/1423-joint-dhs-odni-election-security-statement>) said the theft and disclosures of electronic communications were authorized at the highest levels

of the Russian government and were intended to “interfere with the U.S. election process.” While the statement does

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not attempt to explain the Russian government's motive for interfering in the American election, it does note that "such activity is not new to Moscow — the Russians have used similar tactics and techniques across Europe and Eurasia, for example, to influence public opinion there."


Russian President Vladimir Putin has called the demise of the Soviet Union the "biggest geostrategic catastrophe of the 20th century." (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4480745.stm>) His lament is fueled by NATO's expansion into traditional Russian spheres of influence (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/vladimir-putin/12093042/Vladimir-Putin-blames-Nato-expansion-for-rising-tension-with-Europe.html>) (the Baltics) and (from his perspective) the meddling imposition of the values of Western liberalism — free speech (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/25/how-russia-independent-media-was-dismantled-piece-by-piece>), free conscience (<http://www.uscirt.gov/news-room/press-releases/russia-uscirt-condemns-enactment-anti-terrorism-laws>), and free elections (<https://www.ft.com/content/b8a93c78-55f2-11e5-a28b-50226830d644>). However, rather than just playing a defensive game within the motherland, Putin has borrowed a page from America's Cold War playbook and seeks to expose the rot within the West, and especially within the United States, as a means of destroying Western cohesion, diminishing American influence and leadership, and reinforcing Russia. The means employed by Russia are modern, including hacking and cyber-espionage, but, at its core, this is an influence operation of the kind embraced by the United States in the first decade of the Cold War.

The Cold War Playbook

Giants of the U.S. post-war experience shaped the early days of U.S. Cold War strategy. Truman, Marshall, and Kennan shaped the political framework of the United States' early Cold War response, while others like Bernard Brodie and Paul Nitze shaped U.S. military strategy. But it wasn't until the Eisenhower administration that the United States developed a national security strategy predicated on a generational confrontation with the Soviet Union. The central feature of the struggle, to Eisenhower, was political warfare — what today might be called information operations.

In an era where nuclear weapons made a shooting war between the Soviet Union and the United States unthinkable, American policymakers needed an alternative to appeasement or capitulation that fell short of hot war. The response was "cold war."

Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, broadly agreed with many of George Kennan's insights (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm>) about the Soviet Union, specifically that the Soviet Union was compromised by rot within its own system. In a 1950 book, War or Peace (https://www.amazon.com/War-peace-John-Foster-Dulles/dp/B0007J2UAW/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1476834800&sr=8-3&keywords=dulles+war+or+peace), Dulles chronicled the evidence of internal decay in the Soviet sphere. He pointed to the reception of German forces as liberators in Ukraine during the Second World War. The operation of the Soviet Union as a police state indicated to Dulles that tension was inherent within the system. As evidence of this, he pointed to the repression of the Orthodox faith and the estimated 15 million prisoners in Soviet concentration camps. Dulles also noted the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe and the love of country there which would breed hatred of Russian domination. Dulles wrote, "Even today, the Communist structure is overextended, over rigid, and ill founded. It could be shaken if the difficulties that are latent were activated."

Eisenhower shared Dulles' view of "cold war" and in late November 1952, just weeks after winning the election, the president-elect began organizing an advisory committee ke recommendations on how his administration could more effectively conduct political warfare against the Soviet Union. Chaired by William Jackson, the former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence in the Truman administration, the Jackson Committee (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/hrus1952-54vo2p2/d370>), as it was known, delivered its report on

January 30, 1953 calling for the exploitation of vulnerabilities within the Soviet system. Specifically, the report urged

the United States to capitalize on “the gap between communist ideology and Soviet practice.” Specifically, the Jackson Committee observed a number of internal weaknesses ripe for exploitation in the Soviet system. The first was the totalitarian nature of the regime. In the aftermath of Stalin’s death, the United States could hope to exploit tensions within the regime’s leadership, thereby, weakening its internal cohesion. The internal relationship within the communist bloc was also a source of potential weakness in the Soviet system. In fact, the Jackson committee noted latent indicators of unrest already prevalent throughout Eastern Europe. The report observed:

The attitude of the Russian and satellite peoples toward their rulers is another major weakness, especially in times of crisis. Millions of Soviet citizens were ready, for example, to regard the Germans as liberators in World War II. The suppression of religion is an important source of discontent, especially in the satellite countries. The large scale use of terror and slave labor is also a divisive force within the Soviet system.

It wasn’t long before the Eisenhower administration was confronted with a real crisis born of these issues.

In June 1953, civil disorder spread across the Soviet sector of Germany. The internal deliberations of the Eisenhower administration reveal a focus on the political/psychological opportunities for exploiting the vulnerabilities made evident by the disturbances. Policy was set on June 29, 1953 when the National Security Council (NSC) issued NSC-158 (<http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB50/doc74.pdf>), “United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States.” The document called for the United States “to exploit satellite unrest as demonstrable proof that the Soviet Empire is beginning to crumble.”

The Eisenhower administration sought to emphasize the weaknesses within the Soviet system brought to light by the riots in Germany. Another June 29, 1953 report, “Interim U.S. Psychological Strategy Plan for Exploitation of Unrest in Satellite Europe” (https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/declassified/fy_2011/1953_06_29.pdf), prepared by the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) — part of Eisenhower’s NSC — underscored the flaws in the Soviet system. It pointed to the now-familiar evidence of rot: “popular resentment” in Eastern Europe; and “the revelation that Soviet power in Eastern Germany has no basis but naked force;” as well as the novel turn of recent events, that “defiance of Soviet authority” had not been “equivalent to suicide.”

By the autumn of 1953, Eisenhower’s NSC had processed the input of the Jackson Committee, the legendary Solarium Exercises (<http://warontherocks.com/2015/06/a-solarium-exercise-in-strategic-choice/>), and National Intelligence Estimate 99 (<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/0000039792>) — a long-range view of the Soviet threat. Political warfare featured prominently in each — and it would figure prominently in the administration’s first national security strategy, NSC 162/2 (<https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-162-2.pdf>) adopted on October 30, 1953. Among its policy objectives, the United States would maintain a credible military deterrent, it would seek to build strength and cohesion in the West, and it would play a long-game against the Soviets with a reliance on political warfare.

NSC 162/2 committed the United States to “overt and covert measures to discredit Soviet prestige and ideology as effective instruments of Soviet power, and to reduce the strength of communist parties and other pro-Soviet elements.” The document went on to say,

Accordingly, the United States should take feasible political, economic, propaganda, and covert measures designed *to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR*, impair Soviet relations with communist China, complicate control in the satellites, and retard the growth of the military and economic potential of the Soviet bloc [emphasis added].

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Over the ensuing 40 years, American presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, adopted the basic framework of confrontation with the Soviet Union designed in the Eisenhower administration. So, when Soviet forces put down the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the United States pointed to the decay within the Soviet system — a refrain that would

echo in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1981. In contrast, American administrations would point to the strengths of the American system. In Nixon's "Kitchen debate" with Khrushchev (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CvQOUncy4>), the Vice President politely but emphatically defended the industriousness and productivity of the American worker. In the space race, the United States demonstrated that a free society could conquer the heavens. Even Reagan's massive defense spending was a test of whether Soviet society could bear the burden of economic competition as well as the free states of the West. By 1989, the answer was a resounding, "no." The United States had weaponized information successfully, shined a glaring light on the shortcomings of the Soviet system, and prevailed in cold war.

The Russians Know their History

The victory of the Western, liberal order was heralded prematurely as the "end of history" (<https://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf>), but for Russian nationalists like Vladimir Putin, it was an epic disaster (<http://www.rferl.org/a/1058688.html>).

In the years since the fall of the Soviet Union, Putin has consolidated his power in Russia (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/06/vladimir-putin-15-ways-he-changed-russia-world>), annexed Crimea from neighboring Ukraine (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-annexes-crimea-away-from-ukraine-with-signature-from-vladimir-putin/>), reinvested in Russia's armed forces (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-02/putin-s-secret-budget-hides-shift-toward-war-economy>), and menaced NATO countries with large Russian populations (<http://www.newsweek.com/putin-sets-his-sights-baltic-states-353682>), particularly Lithuania (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/18/the-president-who-dared-to-call-putin-s-russia-what-it-is-a-terrorist-state.html>), Latvia (<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-latvia-russia-next-20150502-story.html>), and Estonia (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-06/putin-s-military-buildup-in-the-baltic-stokes-invasion-fears>). Most recently, Putin has resurrected Russia's political confrontation with the United States, and has done so by borrowing heavily from the American cold war playbook.

The objective of Putin's actions is to discredit western liberalism (<http://theweek.com/articles/648449/vladimir-putin-trying-take-down-liberal-democracy--might-winning>) — the idea that societies should be organized for the benefit of the citizen; that individuals have God-given rights to freedom of thought, speech, and religion; that societies are best organized as democracies. These ideals have posed substantial challenges to Putin in places like Ukraine, where two separate popular uprisings (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25210230>) have chased Russia's favored strongmen from power. In the Baltic states, the insistence on popular democracy makes it impossible to imagine any sort of willing return to the Russian sphere of influence (<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/russian-influence-fades-baltics>). And in Russia itself, a small but courageous (<http://www.voanews.com/a/russian-activists-rally-against-vladimir-putin/2972584.html>) cohort of activists challenge Putin's grip on power, calling for more transparency, greater freedom of the press, and meaningful elections.

The central challenge for Putin is the appeal of western, liberal values. For him to achieve Russia's policy goals, he must diminish their appeal and the moral authority of their greatest champion: the United States of America. The easiest way to achieve both outcomes is to shine a light on the rot implicit in the U.S. system:

- Widespread government surveillance of citizens and their communications;
- A corrupt political process that benefits insiders; and
- The corrupting power of money in the American political process.


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Edward Snowden's theft of intelligence secrets (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/nov/01/snowden-usa-files-surveillance-revelations-decoded#section/1>) from the National Security Agency accomplished the first goal, revealing not just capabilities, but

the fact that the United States government was, in fact, gathering intelligence from the communications of ordinary Americans and countless others around the world. Snowden, famously, fled to Moscow to seek political asylum, but in the process confirmed one element of Putin's narrative of strategic rot.

The hack of the DNC emails (<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/27/us/politics/spy-agency-consensus-grows-that-russia-hacked-dnc.html>) revealed that the professional staff of the Democratic Party favored Hillary Clinton's candidacy over that of Bernie Sanders. While no one should be surprised that a party's leadership preferred a prominent party leader over someone who had never been a part of the party, the resulting narrative confirmed in many eyes and ears that the American political process was corrupt. With Donald Trump arguing (<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/22/us/politics/donald-trump-a-rigged-election-and-the-politics-of-race.html>) on an almost daily basis (<http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/298856-trump-calls-on-supporters-to-monitor-polling-places-for>), both in speeches (<http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/10/watch-trump-says-this-whole-election-is-being-rigged.html>) and on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump>), that if he loses in November (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/2016/10/16/rigged-election-chorus-complaint-team-trump/92195244/>) it will be because the vote is "rigged" (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-rigged-idUSKBN12GoSU>), Putin's second strategic narrative could appear confirmed — all thanks to a hack that originated with Russian intelligence (<http://motherboard.vice.com/read/all-signs-point-to-russia-being-behind-the-dnc-hack>).

Donald Trump is not the only source of threat to public confidence in the outcome of the election. Reports (<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/russians-hacked-two-u-s-voter-databases-say-officials-n639551>) began to emerge over the summer that hackers with ties to Russia were also probing the data systems of the offices that run elections in several states. The danger, as Ben Buchanan of the Belfer Center explained to War on the Rocks (<http://warontherocks.com/2016/10/emails-and-influence-investigating-russias-attack-on-the-u-s-political-system/>), is that any manipulation of poll-books — the registers of valid voters in a given precinct, community, or state — could cause frustration, long-lines, and voter suppression on election day — and thus seem to confirm that the American election was "rigged."

By mid-September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offered technical support (<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/09/16/statement-secretary-johnson-concerning-cybersecurity-nation%E2%80%99s-election-systems>) to state election officials amidst reports that at least 20 states (<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/states-major-election-hacking-228978>) had faced hacks targeting their elections. Forty six states (<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/state-asked-federal-protect-voting-systems-hacks/story?id=43197682>) have thus far taken advantage of the DHS offer — which is critical. While only five states (<http://warontherocks.com/2016/10/emails-and-influence-investigating-russias-attack-on-the-u-s-political-system/>) rely on paperless voting machines — which by definition cannot be audited against paper ballots — any perceived threat to the integrity of the election would benefit Russia's narrative.

The DNC hack also revealed the way money provides access (<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/us/politics/dnc-wikileaks-emails-fundraising.html>) in American politics. Of course, this is not really news (http://www.econrsa.org/system/files/publications/working_papers/working_paper_234.pdf), choice ambassadorships have long been given to major political donors. Now there are leaked documents showing the amounts of money and the considerations afforded to  Print ors, thereby confirming Putin's third strategic narrative, again thanks to the work of hackers following orders from the Russian intelligence services.

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The evidence does not seem to suggest that Putin favors one candidate over the other this November. Instead, it  Twitter  Google+ (<https://plus.google.com/share?url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/>) suggests that he favors chaos (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/05/russia-influence-us-presidential-election-investigation>)  LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/>) He wants the American political process to look bad; he wants the champion of elections to

mini=...playbook/)

struggle to keep its own house in order so as to undermine American leadership on this issue. The impact of a successful operation of this nature would be vast. As Dmitri Alperovitch of the cybersecurity firm Crowdstrike recently said in a War on the Rock's podcast (<http://warontherocks.com/2016/10/emails-and-influence-investigating-russias-attack-on-the-u-s-political-system/>), "I'm hearing from a lot of European governments who are very concerned that if [Russia] can get away with doing this to America, [in Europe], they are just going to be walked all over by Russia." The threat, he believes, is not limited to the U.S. election:

I think what we're seeing is a blueprint for how you can run these influence operations to sow discord in a country, to weaken ultimate elected leaders, and that playbook — if it's not ultimately deterred — is going to be played over and over again across the globe.

In fact, evidence is already mounting of Russian interventions in significant political issues across Western Europe designed to undermine international cohesion. Russia, we know, helped finance the British advocates of Brexit (<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/06/08/why-putin-is-meddling-in-britain-s-brexit-vote.html>). Russia is also reportedly supporting a range of European nationalist parties, including the National Front in France (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/08/russia-europe-right-putin-front-national-eu>), and others who want to weaken the European Union to preserve their own national identity.

What Can America Do About It?

After America's victory in the Cold War, Congress quickly and efficiently disassembled the country's ability to conduct political warfare abroad. The U.S. Information Agency — created in part to implement NSC 162/2 — is no more. The offices within the Department of State, the NSC, and Defense that used to worry about the narrative of American foreign policy don't operate the way they used to, and despite efforts to resurrect that capability, the results are, thus far, uninspiring.

All of these developments are to America's detriment. Just as the world emerged into an age of democratic reform, where the people of the world took on greater importance than ever before, the United States eliminated its bureaucratic structure to both speak to them and to listen to them.

The good news is, that it's not too late. The United States must refashion a political warfare capability to meet Russia on the battlefield of ideas and public opinion. This is, after all, the stuff of politics, whether domestic or international. Despite the well-documented shortcomings in the American system, as well as the challenges inherent in liberalism, our strengths remain substantial. Chief among them are the abilities of a free and open society to listen to criticism and respond with reform rather than oppression.

So the United States needs to get its house in order, beginning with protecting the pillars of our republic. We must restore confidence in our electoral system (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/08/10/are-u-s-voters-confident-in-their-electoral-system-yes-and-no/?tid=a_inl) and stop talking-down government (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhYJS8oMgYA>). We must work hard to restore confidence in our public (<http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/1-trust-in-government-1958-2015/>) and private (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>) institutions. We must affirm that we are a united nation (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/12/7-things-to-know-about-polarization-in-america/>). And we need to regain the offensive by shining a light on the flaws in the Russian system — on autocracy (<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/putin-talk-like-a-dictator-at-walk-like-an-autocrat/>), intimidation of the press (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/russia>), extra-judicial violence (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/alexander-litvinenko-murder-vladimir-putin_us_56a794e4b99404ebf05193), and open aggression against neighbors (<https://warisboring.com/how-russia-invaded-crimea-af7a59ff4ad8#mah5wfdag>).

This is a fight the United States knows how to win. Until we start acting that way, the Russians will keep using our playbook against us.

James M. Ludes is Vice President for Public Research and Initiatives at Salve Regina University and Executive Director of the school's Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy. He previously served on the Obama-Biden transition, built a DC think-tank, and advised then-Senator John Kerry on foreign and defense policy. His 2003 doctoral dissertation at Georgetown University, A Consistency of Purpose, explored the role of political warfare in the national security strategy of the Eisenhower administration.

Commentary

A COMPARATIVE GUIDE TO RUSSIA'S USE OF FORCE: MEASURE TWICE, INVADE ONCE

(<https://warontherocks.com/2017/02/a-comparative-guide-to-russias-use-of-force-measure-twice-invade-once/>)


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8 THOUGHTS ON “THE RUSSIANS READ OUR COLD WAR PLAYBOOK”



wiggum says:

November 3, 2016 at 10:13 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-851988>)

“In fact, evidence is already mounting of Russian interventions in significant political issues across Western Europe designed to undermine international cohesion. Russia, we know, helped finance the British advocates of Brexit. Russia is also reportedly supporting a range of European nationalist parties, including the National Front in France, and others who want to weaken the European Union to preserve their own national identity.”

Well, more and more people in Europe want to preserve their own national identity and see the “project” EU (not Europe as a peaceful trade-union) critical. And that Russia is supporting parties that take a approach of de-escalation and recognizing Russian sphere of influence to some extent is news ? As if other players in the game (USA, Saudi-Arabia, Turkey, Qatar) wouldn't push a agenda favorable for them... Erdogan for example is really pushing the limits in “interventions in significant political issues across Western Europe” currently but all we talk about is big-bad Russia ? Why ?

“And we need to regain the offensive by shining a light on the flaws in the Russian system — on autocracy, intimidation of the press, extra-judicial violence, and open aggression against neighbors.”

Do we also go on the offensive against the Jihadist sponsors and human rights abusing rulers of Saudi-Arabia, Qatar and Turkey ? No ? Why, did they pay better ?

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Maurice Levie (<https://plus.google.com/+MauriceLeviejr>) says:

November 3, 2016 at 10:27 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-851990>)

Demography is destiny -Russia's is extinction. They know it, and that is why they are on the move now. Contain, contain, contain while bleeding them. ([Reference](#))

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Rick Sinnreich (<https://plus.google.com/113666194216616533551>) says:

November 3, 2016 at 1:42 pm (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-851993>)

We shouldn't need the Russians to convince us of the urgency of the recommendations in Ludes's penultimate paragraph. Unfortunately, we seem to be bereft of Ikes and Kennans.


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Kanes says:

November 4, 2016 at 1:11 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-851999>)

To America with love!

But the Russians have not tapped the biggest simmering issue in USA – discrimination against African Americans. It is likely to worsen after Obama leaves office which has symbolic value. Russians sponsor no information campaign, community events or social activist targeted to them. In contrast, USA was very heavily campaigning for ethnic minorities in the 1960s.  [Facebook \(http://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/&t=The+Russians+Read+our+Cold+War+Playbook\)](http://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/&t=The+Russians+Read+our+Cold+War+Playbook)

Russia is a waning power in terms of population. Japan also has a population reduction and economic contraction. However, USA and EU have their own demographic change in terms of ethnic composition. Their values will be completely different in another generation due to this. Elections in the US, UK and France are clearly decided by the minorities with different values to the majority. [Twitter Google+ \(https://plus.google.com/share?url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/\)](https://plus.google.com/share?url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/) [LinkedIn \(http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&ro=true&trk=EasySocialShareButtons&title=The+Russians+Read+our+Cold+War+Playbook&url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/\)](http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&ro=true&trk=EasySocialShareButtons&title=The+Russians+Read+our+Cold+War+Playbook&url=https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/)

The article concentrates only on Russia. China is the biggest player in this space. USA has not interfered in Chinese politics (a worse dictatorship than Russia) and therefore China has not retaliated. Things may change.

It also disregards very strong information campaigns funded by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran in the West. Although the Iranians are under check, Saudi and Qatar propaganda continues unabated. They are already having an impact.

During the Cold War, it was a bipolar world but today a multipolar world. Cold War playbooks may not be valid today.

Trump verses Clinton battle has made democracy unpopular in Asia.

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delta5297 (<https://plus.google.com/112731913477922383436>) says:

November 4, 2016 at 3:53 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-852000>)

Well it does seem to me that Putin doesn't need to do anything to discredit American democracy. We Americans have done a fine job of that ourselves.

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Emmett Dignan (<https://plus.google.com/104175731966856333707>) says:

November 4, 2016 at 11:38 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-852006>)

So perhaps in the future the tools of the Political Operatives will be discussed in the anti-democratic, anti-American terms that should be used?

Because in the face of voter exclusion and voter roll manipulation, gerrymandering of political districts, Swiftboating, dirty tricks and other "legitimate" forms of win by any means politics is it any wonder our kids are not horrified about Russia's interference in our political "game"?

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Dan Passaro (<http://www.danpassaro.com>) says:

November 7, 2016 at 10:27 am (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-852053>)

No kidding. 'The Left' has an exceedingly feral view of elections:

"Whatever it takes to TAKE office."

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Anthony Papagallo says:

November 5, 2016 at 8:24 pm (<https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/the-russians-read-our-cold-war-playbook/#comment-852021>)

"There is an attempt to perturb the existing world order... with one incontestable leader who wants to remain as such thinking he is allowed everything while others are only allowed what he allows and only in his interests.

This world order will never suit Russia."

Vladimir Putin

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