



A Hancock County Democrat

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Dezinformatsiya or Disinformation: Does it Matter?

Bruce Workman

Those who paid any attention to the Mueller report know how the Internet Research Agency and other arms of Russian intelligence and defense agencies attempted to sow confusion and disrupt the 2016 election. Whether they influenced the vote enough to change the outcome of the election remains uncertain. In terms of their underlying goals, their work resulted in a resounding success. The access to the DNC mail servers was the result of an old tactic to get the unsuspecting to give out their passwords. In other words, they got lucky. They tried and were unsuccessful in altering the ballot counts. They tried again in 2018 with the same result and should they try to tamper with voting machines or software again, it is again highly unlikely they would be effective. But these efforts are largely just a smokescreen anyway. Direct election tampering is not their actual goal.

The goal has been the same since the days of the KGB and the Cold War. For years, the KGB has been conducting disinformation attacks (dezinformatsiya was the term coined by Joseph Stalin who added the extra “y” to the Russian term for disinformation to make it sound French and of western origin). It has even been suggested that Putin is merely the 21st-century version of Stalin. The KGB and their renamed successors have long embarked on a mission to discredit capitalist democracies by making it hard to determine what is true and making the citizens doubt the legitimacy of their government. It is in this regard that we can determine recent efforts have been productive.

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Dezinformatsiya or Disinformation: Does it Matter? (continued from page 1)

Although the American public has only recently become aware of the efforts of Russian intelligence, the nations of Europe have been dealing with this for decades. When Russians back a candidate, it is nearly always the candidate they believe will sow the most discord and undermine their national government. Their disinformation offensive in France was almost entirely aimed at opponents of the far-right National Rally party and their top candidate Marie Le Pen. In Germany, they supported the efforts of the National Democrat Party of Germany (successor to the German Reich Party, which was a revival of the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party). Given the history of Russia and the Nazis, it is obvious that a particular ideology is not part of the goal.

On July 4, 2017, a man dressed in 1770s garb of the town crier, stood in front of the White House ringing a bell and saying "Hear ye, hear ye, citizens. Resist the rule of the treasonous King Donald." This was followed by protestors waving flags and singing "Do You Hear the People Sing" (from *Les Misérables*). The whole event was originated with Facebook ads provided by user Helen Christopherson. It was not until Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee made ad purchases public that we learned Helen Christopherson was one of the names used by the young trolls hired by the I.R.A. What political damage this could have done remains a mystery. Maybe it was just a case of finding someone interested in show tunes or a trial to see if they could get American citizens to make asses of themselves. The latter should have been a given, so maybe it was just working with whatever was available. Protests were arranged this way and bitter arguments were initiated with no obvious goal other than to just stir the pot.

Other nations are joining the disinformation and discord efforts, but it is anticipated that the methods will be similar to what has been effective before. The seeds have been sown and have taken root. Conspiracy Apocrypha—I refuse to use the commonly invoked "theory" here because it lends undeserved credence to the spurious—have been around for probably as long as humans had language. Recently the craziest speculations have reached the higher levels of government and cable media and in record numbers. To this day Russian Intelligence is still actively attempting to influence American citizens' trust in their government. Russian social media accounts started the rumor that Covid-19 was a bioweapon developed by the U.S. Army. Despite efforts such as these, the real craziness comes from within.

The Russians could never match the damage done by the likes of Sean Hannity, Tucker Carlson, or the President himself—it is important to remember that he once praised Alex Jones as a credible news source. It seems every day we hear increasingly incredulous assertions only to be dismayed to learn that a sizable number of people have included them in their dogma. Perhaps the greatest danger will come when we can no longer discern truth from fiction. With increasingly sophisticated use of software such as Photoshop and Adobe Premiere Pro, will we be able to believe what we see? If you were to film a murder being committed, could it be accepted as evidence?

New areas of expertise are opening to address the latter problem. It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate layers in a "Photoshopped" photo so new methods must be developed. Currently, the best way to spot a "deep fake" is by the number of times the file has been saved, i.e. the number of times the photo or video has been compressed.

Addressing the former problem should be simpler. In the earlier days of radio and television, it was our government's position that the airwaves belonged to the people. In 1949 the Fairness Doctrine was put in place as a result of a complaint that a Boston network affiliate was using airtime to promote political policies and candidates that the station owner found favorable. The Fairness Doctrine and the policies of the National Association of Broadcasters prohibited the use of the public airwaves to promote political doctrine. The Fairness Doctrine was cast aside in 1987.

Our first order of business should be restoring the FCC to its role in protecting the public airwaves. Whether it comes via an antenna, through a cable, or via a satellite, the citizens of the United States of America own the methods that deliver information. First, we should remove current or former media executives and their inherent conflicts of interest from the board of the FCC. Next, we should restore net neutrality. Verizon and AT&T do not own the internet, we do! The FCC should disband the "entertainment as news" cable industry. If someone wants to sell distorted news as entertainment, they should seek a slot on comedy central. It is my opinion that Fox News has already done more to sow division and promote misinformation in the past two and half decades than Russia, China, and Iran combined have in the past seventy plus years.

To Honor Ginsburg, Democrats Have One Choice: Go Nuclear

David Corn, *Mother Jones* September 18, 2020



John Duricka/AP

It's a popular sentiment on the left: Don't mourn, organize. But with the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, that won't be enough. Ginsburg, a hero of female empowerment and of the Supreme Court, deserves much mourning. But Democrats and progressives can waste no time prepping for the battle royale that lies ahead. After all, it took Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell mere minutes after the news of RBG's passing to declare that the GOP-controlled Senate will vote on whoever Donald Trump sends its way to fill the Supreme Court vacancy—a direct eff-you to the Democrats after McConnell in 2016 refused to consider President Barack Obama's SCOTUS nominee Merrick Garland with the phony-baloney argument that the Senate should not consider new justices during an election year. So yes, Dems will have to organize, but they must do more: They have to get ready to rumble.

What is coming, at least as the Republicans see it, is a grand political clash. They have been hellbent on reshaping the entire federal judiciary and especially drool over the prospect of locking the highest court into a right-wing course that will last decades and counter demographic trends that favor Democrats. This is their Holy Grail. After all, nothing galvanizes conservative evangelical voters more than the courts. For political consultants, it has long been conventional wisdom that right-wingers obsess over the composition of the courts and the Supreme Court far more than progressives. So Ginsburg's departure is a gift for Trump. If there has been any erosion occurring on the edges of his conservative and evangelical base, his effort to shove another anti-choice, pro-corporate conservative on to the highest court could certainly shore up that ground for him. Here's something Trump can campaign on for the next six and a half weeks, without breaking a sweat or fielding a tough question. It's his lifeline. A cure for his coronavirus problem.

It will be bare-knuckles politics from the right. Do or die. By any means necessary. To replace Ginsburg with a young right-wing extremist. And for the Democrats to have a chance of thwarting them, they must realize that this fight is not only a matter of persuasion. They will not win by writing well-reasoned op-eds. Cable host tirades will be of little use. Panel discussions will be irrelevant. Clever ads highlighting GOP hypocrisy won't do the trick. Angry editorials in the New York Times won't help. **(continued on page 4)**

To Honor Ginsburg, Democrats Have One Choice: Go Nuclear (continued from page 3)

Not even a freckin' David Brooks column ("conservatives should realize they have an interest in preserving democratic norms!") will do them any good. Passionate speeches on the floor of the US Senate? Fuggedabout it.

This is about power.

Sure, the Democrats and influential voices in the political media world might focus on a few GOP senators and, appealing to that good ol' American sense of fair play, urge them to preserve institutional norms and refuse to go along with McConnell's night ride against democratic governance. But that is a long shot. Susan Collins, hero of the Republic? Do you want to bet? (She did tell a reporter earlier this month she would not seat a Supreme Court justice in October and would oppose doing so in a lame duck session if Biden wins. Yet...) Mitt Romney might be willing to throw his body on the tracks. And Lisa Murkowski has already said (before Ginsburg's death) she won't vote to confirm a new SCOTUS appointee until after the inauguration. But if the Dems round up this trio, you got a tie, with Veep Mike Pence eager to break the deadlock to please his lord and his Lord. Are there other Rs willing to derail the Trump-McConnell express? Don't wager the mortgage. (One interesting wrinkle: If Arizona Democrat Mark Kelly defeats incumbent Sen. Martha McSally on November 3 in what is a special election, he could be immediately sworn in, and the Democrats might pick up a vote. But don't think for a moment that McConnell hasn't already taken that possibility into account.)

It will be bare-knuckles politics from the right. Do or die. By any means necessary.

The win-over-reasonable-Republicans-with-reason strategy is weak sauce. That leaves the Democrats with one other choice: total political warfare. The Senate's Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer—with the backing of Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi—needs to threaten massive retaliation. Should McConnell try to ram a Trump nominee through, Schumer ought to vow that the Democrats, if they win back the Senate and Biden is elected president, will demolish the filibuster, which will allow the Senate to proceed to make Washington, DC, a state (two more senators, who are likely to be Democrats!) and that they will move to add two or four more seats to the Supreme Court. (There is nothing in the Constitution that limits the court's size to the current nine justices.) In other words: They will implement a Republican nightmare (which, as it happens, can be justified on arguments of equity and fairness).

Schumer should utter this declaration publicly to lock the Democrats in. Of course, this could further propel Republicans to the polls. But it might do the same with Democrats. (The stakes in this election are now higher than they already were.) Crucially, there would need to be buy-in from Biden. The veteran Washington player will have to put aside his somewhat admirable (if misguided) desire to return to the older and more genteel means of legislating and compromising in the nation's capital. But with conservative voters fired up by the dream of replacing Ginsburg with a thirtysomething right-wing firebrand, the Dems will have to counter with more than a this-isn't-fair argument. Bring a gun to a knife fight? They will need a bazooka. Sorry if that sounds violent. But, as one sage person likes to say, we are in a fight for the nation's soul. And sometimes you don't get to choose the weapons or levels of intensity.

Ginsburg was an uplifting force in the ongoing American experiment. She was a feminist pioneer. She was an inspiring champion of equality, fairness, and perseverance. She wrote eloquent opinions that advanced and expanded progressive values and that made the United States a more perfect union. She penned blistering dissents that kept alive those values, even when they experienced setbacks. Her memory deserves more than passionate remembrances and praiseful eulogies. It warrants a fight. And perhaps a fight like one never seen before. One that will be damn notorious.



[Hancock County Democratic Party](#)

[Joe Biden for President](#)

[Nick Rubando for Congress](#)

[Melissa Kritzell for County Commissioner](#)

[Ohio Democratic Party](#)

[Democratic National Committee](#)

[Mobilize.us](#)



Please put yard signs in yards - not in public right of way between sidewalk and street. The city will remove signs placed illegally.

From now until October 1st the Hancock County Democrats e are raising money for billboard (s) , use the link or stop out to the booths to donate. [Billboard\(s\)](#)

Saturday September 26, 2020 [Write Letters to Voters Virtually with Swing Left & AHEAD!](#) 1—3PM

Sunday September 27, 2020 [Lit Drop!](#) 10AM—Noon Hancock County Young Democrats meet at George House

[Battleground OH: H.O.W.A Weekend Warriors Sunday Phonebank](#)

1—4PM or 4—7PM

[Meet the Candidates!](#) 2—4PM

Monday September 28, 2020 [Battleground OH: HOWA Monday Phonebank](#) 5—7PM

Tuesday September 29, 2020 [Hancock County - Battleground Phonebank](#) 5—7PM

Wednesday September 30, 2020 [Clean Energy for Biden Ohio - Wednesday Phonebank!](#) 6—8PM

Thursday October 1, 2020 [Write Letters to Voters Virtually with Swing Left!](#)

Friday October 2, 2020

Mixed Media



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

THE THING THAT ATE AMERICA'S BRAIN

THE ANCIENT HORROR AWAKENS FROM ITS SLUMBER ONCE MORE.

FEED ME, MORTALS! FEED ME FEAR AND TURMOIL AND LOATHING AND DESPAIR! FEED ME!



FORTUNATELY FOR THE MONSTROSITY, IT IS THE YEAR 2020.

ITS TELEPATHIC COMMAND SWEEPS ACROSS A NATION ALREADY TEETERING ON THE BRINK.

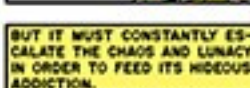
I HUNGER... FOR PERVERSE STUPIDITY AND MINOLESS OUTRAGE!



SOON...

THE CORONAVIRUS IS A HOAX!

WASH MANDATES ARE A PLOT TO CONTROL US-- WITH MASKS!



ONLY DONALD TRUMP CAN SAVE US--

YES-- KEEP GOING!



DOES IT AFFECT THE PRESIDENT? WHO COULD EVEN TELL?

THE VIRUS WILL GO AWAY ON ITS OWN-- WITH HERO MEN- TALITY! OUR DEATH TOLL IS VERY LOW, IF YOU DONT COUNT THE BLUE STATES! I HAVE THE BEST BRAINWORMS!



THE HORRIFIC THING GORGES ITSELF ON THE PSYCHIC DIS- CORD OF 2020 AMERICA.

DEMOCRATS ARE THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! I WANT TO BE PRESIDENT FOR LIFE!



YES-- MORE!

BUT IT MUST CONSTANTLY ES- CALATE THE CHAOS AND LUNACY IN ORDER TO FEED ITS HIDEOUS ADDICTION.

ONLY DONALD TRUMP CAN SAVE US--

YES-- KEEP GOING!



BEFORE LONG, THE CREATURE GETS ITS OWN SHOW ON FOX. LOW-I.Q. DEMOCRATS DONT GET IT--THE 'WCCONNELL RULE' DOESNT APPLY TO REPUBLICANS!

YESSSS... FEED ME... FEEEEEED ME...!



THE SMITHSONIAN 1010

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ABOUT

“A Hancock County Democrat is not approved by any formal organization of the Democratic Party.

Guest submissions are welcome. Please submit any work you would like to see published here to : [Bruce Workman](#)