

## Washington's Ominous Credibility Implosion

by Finian Cunningham via jaxie - Sputnik News *Sunday, Feb 4 2018, 9:16pm*

international / prose / post

All statecraft and politics is notoriously deceptive and duplicitous to a degree. It's part of the Machiavellian game and even at times, arguably, can be paradoxically key to success for good outcomes.

But Washington's current problem is on an altogether different scale. Its rampant duplicity seems to be spinning itself into an ominous credibility crisis. A crisis that conveys historic existential consequences for American democracy and political function. Perhaps even a harbinger of world war.

Take CIA director Mike Pompeo. Last week, he gave a big [interview](#) to Britain's state broadcaster, the BBC, in which he reiterated serious claims that Russia hacked into the American presidential election in 2016.

Further, he forewarned that Russian state agents were planning to repeat their alleged meddling in the forthcoming mid-term Congressional elections later this year.

However, within days of making such dire accusations against the Kremlin, the American spymaster was [reportedly](#) holding meetings in Washington DC with two senior Russian intelligence figures — Alexander Bortnikov and Sergei Naryshkin. The two men represent Russia's federal and foreign intelligence services, the FSB and SVR, respectively.

There was apparently nothing untoward about the top-level meeting. The American and Russian spy chiefs were reportedly exchanging views on counter-terrorism, which arguably is a positive thing. After all, a foiled terror attack in St Petersburg recently was thwarted by Russian security services reportedly following up on a tip-off from the American CIA.

But here's the thing. Doesn't it seem a bit strange that the chief of the CIA is warning in very public media interviews that the Kremlin is meddling in US democracy through underhand means, yet virtually his next appointment involves hosting Russia's top spies?

Not only that, but the two Russian intelligence chiefs in question have been put on an American government sanctions list and travel ban purportedly over Russia's "annexation" of Crimea and "aggression" in Eastern Ukraine.

So, if American official concerns about alleged Russian subversion in the US and abroad are as vexed as they are made out to be in public announcements, then how does that square with Mike Pompeo greeting his Russian counterparts in a convivial professional setting?

When the CIA director was challenged by Congressional Democrats about his meeting with the Russians he responded by claiming there was nothing incongruous about their cooperation in Washington, and, he said, it was tough-talking encounter.

"You and the American people should rest assured that we covered very difficult subjects in which

American and Russian interests do not align," [stated](#) Pompeo in a written reply to lawmakers.

"We vigorously defend America in these encounters and pull no punches," he added.

Still, there does seem to be something weirdly misplaced about the official words and actions of the CIA chief, and Washington's political class in general, with regard to Russia.

On one hand, the CIA and large sections of the US political establishment, including prominent news media outlets have been harping on about grave allegations of Russian meddling in American democracy for more than a year. Some Republican politicians have even gone as far as [describing](#) Russia's supposed interference as "an act of war" by Moscow.

On the other hand, however, the head of the CIA seems to have no problem holding professional meetings with the Russian "arch enemies" right in the seat of American democracy.

What we are talking about here is a stupendous lack of consistency, or put another way duplicity; which in turn undermines American credibility over the whole "Russiagate" narrative that has so dominated Washington's official discourse.

No bigger discrepancy perhaps is the fact that the American head of state, President Donald Trump, maintains that the allegations of Russian collusion and interference are "fake news" — or at least overblown. That puts the country's leader completely at odds with his head of foreign intelligence.

How is the world supposed to take anything these people say seriously if they are so inconsistent about a matter which, we are told to believe, is a grave national security concern?

They seem to have shot their own credibility to pieces.

In his BBC interview, Pompeo also [warned](#) that North Korea was capable of a missile attack on the US "within months".

This lack of American credibility and the danger of a catastrophic war are correlated.

America's credibility problem is much bigger than President Trump or his CIA chief. It encompasses the entire American political class.

This past week, the Trump administration [released](#) a so-called "Kremlin Report" which impugned 210 leaders of Russian politics and business. The figures included Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, as well as Foreign and Defense Minister Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Shoigu. The Washington report, drawn up by the Treasury Department, stems from the claims of Russian interference in US politics.

No credible evidence has ever been presented to substantiate the "Russiagate" claims. Moscow has repeatedly rejected the claims as baseless.

Indeed, there is plausible [evidence](#) — buried by the US mainstream media — that the alleged hacking of Democratic party computers during the 2016 election campaign was not a hack but rather was a leak from within the party by a staffer disgruntled with candidate Hillary Clinton's dirty tricks against rival Democratic nominee Bernie Sanders.

It is also now [emerging](#) that the agencies which quite possibly interfered in the presidential election were not Russian, but rather America's own "finest" secret services, the FBI, CIA and NSA, who

were allegedly trying to sabotage then Republican candidate, and future president, Donald Trump.

For over a year, the provocative and reckless accusations of Russian interference in American democracy, and additionally in European democracy, have run and run without relent. Even though those accusations have no legs of credibility. Just this past week, as noted, the head of US intelligence solemnly reiterated those claims and is warning of more Russian meddling.

Washington's political class and America's supposed bastions of journalism have indulged this dubious narrative to brain-numbing saturation point.

But when Washington shows such rampant duplicity and inconsistency that's not just a problem of unfortunate public relations. It conveys a profound crisis of credibility, authority and legitimacy for the entire edifice of government. That is fatally corrosive to the essence of government and American democracy.

And guess what? It has nothing to do with "Russian enemies". It is a credibility crisis made solely in America by its own morally and politically bankrupt system of governance.

The resulting chasm in Washington's credibility has onerous implications for an historic political implosion. And surely the much misled American people will take their revenge. It's going to get raucous and it's going to get ugly.

Paradoxically, a day of reckoning could be good for renewing American democracy, eventually.

There again it also makes the world a very dangerous place. Because war, for example a US military strike on North Korea, is a proven Machiavellian escape route for political scoundrels facing a dead-end.

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