

<THREAD> I'm now hearing this meme that says Obama, Clinton, et al. are doing nothing, just gave up. Guys. It's time for some game theory.

ACTOR ANALYSIS: The Russians enter the Game with a broad objective, flexible tactics, and several acceptable outcomes. Russian interests have been, for many years now, the subversion of Western institutions, principally NATO, but any will do. This subversion can take many forms: driving wedges between US-Commonwealth-Euro intel cooperation, break up NATO, create chaos.

This game has been developing for many years, is asymmetrical, and much cheaper than building a decent aircraft carrier. Plus, the Russians f**king rule at covert shit. Always have. Ask a cold warrior. Mucho respect for our adversaries. They do clever work!

Post-communism, they're reduced to Drunk Uncle status in the global balance of power. Mouthy, smart, degraded, much reduced in stature. Russians as *people* are civilized, artistic, enamored of brilliance and tragedy, and generally proud. And should be. They do not like this.

From this position launches an initiative from an old hand at the KGB, now solidified in influence: Subvert for the throat. Go big. Go hard. While the West is frivolous and lazy and "Post-History," the clever take advantage. And here begins our present story.

Let's skip ahead to "Wikileaks." BRILLIANT. Ingratiate the Left into this anti-establishment distrust of Western intel. George W Bush and Dick Cheney being slovenly, reckless idiots, the moral authority of Iraq and US intel is nil. In step "journalists." Stealing hard drives from US intel and dumping them to foreign agents? That's *snicker* "journalism!" FREE SPEECH! ROFLMAO. Oh, and such grand characters, so well run: Manning, Greenwald. So righteous, yet fragile! And feisty! Try a Twitter war with Glenn! OH YOU PHILISTINE, YOU JUST HATE JOURNALISM! *sigh* *swigs something strong* And Moscow must have been doubling over. THEN, OMG, that worked so well that the pièce de résistance was next: SNOWDEN!!! BOOYAH! THE BIG GAME! NSA! PRISM! SPASM! (incidentally, the NSA was about the only agency the Russians took seriously) But then this EARNEST young man. He tells THE TROOTH! DID YOU KNOW YOUR TOASTER IS SPYING ON YOU? THE GUBMINT! IT IS EVERYWHERE! THEY SPY ON (*controls snickering*) ALLIES! ALL BAD! And still hungover from the rotten venality of the Iraq War and Bush's perversion of the IC as reliable, Wikileaks journalisms the NSA! DON'T YOU CALL IT SOMETHING ELSE. HARD DRIVES FROM THE NSA IZ JOURNALISM! Even when you take the files to Brazil! Honest! Ask Glenn!

And then, automagically, our man Ed ends up...what's this now? In Russia? Well, they are such welcoming folks! How...nice! Langley and Fort Meade run out of bourbon in about three hours, and every intel guy in Russia is drunk, dancing on the desks, and LAFFING. AND THE LEFT! HOLY F**KING ADORABLE BATMAN! Honi soit qui mal y pense! How dare you suggest untoward Russian involvement! Journalisms!!!! US intel snorts all of the Robotussin in the DC/MD/VA area. Putin calls Snowden "A weird guy." LOLZ. Moving on to the current chapter.

MEANWHILE, AT THE FOX NATION FORUMS: The other part of this impressive op is percolating - the buttress of the Alt-Right. ONCE UPON A TIME, Dan Rather chased Nixon around a room asking him questions VERY HARSHLY and the notion of the Evil Media Elite was born. See, because Nixon got impeached, that meant the media was in on it! WaPo! NYT! Traitors! We look bad! And the media hate begins. Never mind that to know something in Topeka, somebody's gotta send you a newspaper or a radio signal or whatevs: The Media Is Lying.

Now, it's true, high level journalists and editors don't always see the world like Johnny Lunchpail in Missouri. True facts. But. Trouble. Republicans decide to create a whole new layer of think tanks and media outlets in the 1980s dedicated to The Other Side. The think tanks have a POV, but some are quite good, Cato in particular. Heritage came up with what's now Obamacare. AEI...ehhh. 2 outta 3.

But then the media play comes in. The cranky insane tent pastors on AM radio get...a makeover. They become Legitimate. Embraced. Magnates start investing in outlets. Brand new pundits get huge audiences yelling about The Way Things Ought to Be (for White People).

And it's more successful than free chicken and beer. The money flows, the ratings swell. An Australian starts a TV network in the US. What develops is an attractive, well-produced alternate universe. You no longer need an alternate take. You have alternate facts. Al Gore mutters and bores his way out of a presidency in a race against a guy who spoke English like he learned it from Rosetta Stone.

And now, the stage is set for a metastasis of batshit nuttury, jingoism, and irrational autocratic fervor. A party becomes a cult. September 11, 2001 occurs. A buncha guys are in DC who couldn't wait to go to Iraq. And the right wing media is shiny and tuned-up. We go kick a bunch of barbarian ass in Afghanistan, as well we should have. They were beating women and destroying Buddhas. F**k 'em.

But then, The Axis of Evil Speech. And all the analysts in DC I know collectively go, "Oh, fuuuuu...they're not serious, are they?" Bill Clinton spent most of his years pounding the living snot out of Hussein. Dude built anything funny lookin', in came the rockets. There was one concerning nation-state for most, and - hint - it's in Asia. The other threat was non-state actors. *ahem* Which played out.

And now - *headdesk* - they're going to Iraq. With bullshit intel. Goddamn it. GODDAMN IT. This is going to suck, said smart people. And there's the entire right-wing think tank and media machine blaring, careening, gloating. From the gov't itself, and from every outlet. HOW DARE YOU BE SKEPTICAL? WE HAVE AGENCIES! INTEL! IT'S SECRET! DO YOU WANT MORE PLANES IN YOUR NOSTRILS, UP YOUR BUTTS? BE PATRIOTIC!

And goddamn, did those media outlets sell a lot of ads for trucks, pain killers, pharmaceuticals and financial services. \$\$\$\$\$ Many earnest patriots also pointed out, hey, um, there apparently are no weapons that could have blown up Cleveland, so...

But now, this whole thing has morphed into tribalism. YES THEY DID TOO FIND WEAPONS OF MASS DEPRESSION AND YOU SUCK BUSH ROCKS PUSSY Ann Coulter comes on TV to talk over B-roll of rusty munitions WE SOLD HUSSEIN and said, well look, there they are. Total. Propaganda. America looks like shit. Our intel services take a helluva beating. Iraq's invasion - which was basically unplanned - results in chaos. Katrina. Bush. Looking out the window. Confused. Hey, but in intel news, the National Geospatial-Intel Agency helps critically.

2008. The housing Ponzi we used to get out of the DotComBust-9/11-era recession has now gone pear-shaped. Utterly nuclear. America's banks, the one thing other than movies and video games we do reliably, all shit the bed simultaneously. We then elect a cappuccino-colored president whose middle name is Hussein. The Right goes completely over the f**king cliff into insane. They start the TEA PARTY! YO REMEMBER BOSTON! PAAAATRIOTS SOMETHING SOMETHING! TEA PARTY! NOTHING MATTERS TAKE IT ALL BACK YAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!! This political movement happens when the only thing Obama has really said with conviction is "Fired up! Ready to go!" In late November 2008. But ON GEORGE WASHINGTON'S GRAVE THIS HAS GONE TOO FAR!!! And the entire right-wing media gets its next several years of revenue LOCKED.

Now, we've got a really, reaaaally fertile field in which former KGB agents can make a long play. And Moscow gets to work. America's at this weird nihilistic place, which is one thing for France and Russia, but NOT for earnest midwesterners who are agape. Now the American Left has got some juice back again. But the Right is just apoplectic from pure suffering. Both are ripe for subversion. The Left is out of love with American business and military-industrial, the Right foams at the mouth against legitimate government. And the guys who have been twisting minds from Vladivostok to Havana and back get to work building an "alt" media structure.

We've already covered the genius of that who Wikileaks op on the Left. SCORE! Now for the perversion of the formerly nationalist Right. JESUS TAPDANCING CHRIST THERE'S A BLACK DUDE IN THE WHITE HOUSE! LIVING THERE! It's not hard to convince Southerners this is insane.

But put a little elbow grease in on some internet forums, and pretty soon you can have Northern John Adams-type conservatives, too. A whole generation of disaffected Rush Limbaugh fans (WE LISTENED AND DITTOED SO HARD WHY IS THERE A BLACK DUDE THERE?) is ripe for picking. In addition to alt-finance sites and "Russia Today" a new TV network, they start infiltrating "social media." Disclosure: Because I'm mouthy all the time like this, RT had me on as a guest. They prop up US "subversives." And they don't edit you! Fun fact: Al Jazeera and RT just let me talk. US media almost always wants some hand in your final product before booking you. Ironic, no?

But from about 2009 to the 2016 election, a madness is being brewed and slowly poured down the throats of increasingly hysterical Americans. When you imbibe from this potion, everything is awful and everyone official is lying to you. Only other members of the cult are with you! US media, which is complicit in many of our problems, is portrayed for the extremists as conspiratorial liars. All the time. Formerly sane members of US society start sounding like my schizophrenic grandfather, who said Government was keeping him from His Mission.

Only the Gubmint knew the Archangel Gabriel was sending him to find the next Jesus. So, cut it out, CIA! Stop it, Giant Conspiracy! And then people you knew from Functional Daily Life started talking that way. People with car dealerships. Dentists. Regular folk. They started with CONSPIRACY, especially after 2012, because DAMMIT NO THERE SHOULDN'T BE A BLACK DUDE TWO TERMS NOOOO! NO NO NO NO NO NO THEY ARE ALL IN ON IT. THE CORPORATIONS. THE MEDIA WHORES. THE GOVERNMENT! (except for my Medicare, don't touch that) ALL OF THEM! A CABAL CALLED The Pentaveret: The Queen. The Pope. The Gettys. The Rothschilds. AND COLONEL SANDERS, BEFORE HE WENT TITS UP! If you haven't unfollowed by now, 1. You're nuts and 2. Thank you for indulging my So I Married an Axe Murderer reference.

MOVING ON. The conspiratorial fever at about 108, we begin the 2016 election - AGAINST EVERYTHING HOLY - in 2015. The Republicans debate over 712 times, discussing topics such as who hated Obamacare more, and who had a large penis. Jesus, that happened. The Democrats all debate who's going to get out of Hillary's way first, except for VERMONT'S OWN BERNIE SANDERS, who...gets popular? I'm from Vermont and have known Bernie forever, so I'm very surprised, but everyone kinda likes it. Hillary wins anyhow.

And now, the target for electoral mischief is enormous. Hillary is the most known quantity in America, with huge backstory. Creating a conspiracy narrative around the Clintons is like creating a "southern" narrative around NASCAR and grits. Now - with Trump as the non-conformist, not-like-all-the-other-rotten-conspiratorial-assholes paragon, the Russians go into overdrive.

The Russians didn't create Trump - only New York City and American gullibility could have done that. But they've got a SWEETHEART outcome. Trump - a moron - is probably unlikely to take the whole enchilada, but that's perfect. If he gets close enough, he can cry UNFAIR! forever. Amazing scenario for Russia - instead of RT, they get an institutional nihilist chowderhead with American credentials. They butter him up.

Hell, to hear many tell of it, they have kompromat on him. But anyhow, they invest in his stuff. He was there in 2013. They have a lever. IF on the off chance, Trump actually (and who could guess this) wins, then...wow, they've got quite an opening.

Either way, on the run-up to Nov 2016, Russian involvement was as subtle as a fart in a spacesuit. Scroll down my TL for details. The U.S. IC had its hair on fire. This situation was incredibly dangerous. A paranoid U.S. faction backing a rogue with ties to Russia.

OK, Jesus, at LONG LAST, back to my initial premise. Why didn't Obama and Clinton "do something?" JESUS, WHAT CAN YOU DO? You come out and have the CIA enter the goddamn race for Clinton? True or not, we look like some weird cryptofascist state. Or, you let the Russkis laugh and taunt and infiltrate Facebook with majillions of propaganda tales for idiots? Just let them run around? Do you come out the day after this totally weird-smelling abomination of an election with all its technical difficulties? Do you tell America the day after the election that Russia spearfished all of our think tanks in brazen fashion?

Hillary, for her part, gives a brief and all-too-calm speech and goes hiking. Probably the best move on the board. Obama WELCOMES! Mr. Trump in an intense, welcoming welcome. To the White House. Mr. Big Winner Guy! Welcome! Fellow American! Trump looks like he swallowed a goldfish and stares at the floor a bit too long. As if maybe a joke has gone too far.

In the next month, a small band of propagandists run in a circle and try to look like they're forming a government. It's ungainly. And now, it's December 11th. Trump says he don't need no stinkin' intel agencies. Russia (BWA HAHAAHAAAA) blames Ukraine! LOLLOLOLZZZ A lot of Republicans stare into the middle distance, except for McCain and Graham who are NOT HAVING THIS SHIT. (I salute you, gentlemen.)

And here we are. Americans. Hopefully soon united. This isn't a partisan issue. Obama isn't late to the party. People are doing their jobs. If you think any of this is easy, you're ignorant and delusional. Tonight, though, I write to you with great hope.

This may be America's finest hour, as we act together with unshakable resolve to deal with enemies foreign and domestic. We have done so in the past and come out a stronger, more just, more pluralistic nation. We will do so now. And for me? Or die trying.

America is the steward of a genius system entrusted to flawed stewards whose descendants seem to act on the right side of history. This system is not rotten, not beyond repair, not exiled from the future. We have been infiltrated by agents who would drive us mad. This is a nation built on civilization, humanity, and reason, rejecting the febrile superstitions of the past. It must stand. And will.

We are at present in a place of danger where some of our fellow citizens have forgotten our most cherished values. We've been here before. America, reluctantly but dutifully, recognizes its internal contradictions and failings. Slavery. Racism. Internment. Classism. The genius documents that gave rise to noble American sentiments were themselves authored by those who failed them. (h/t @ Mr. Jefferson) We spilled the blood of our brothers to resolve the contradictions of slavery and then abandoned the project while killing Indians. Americans proclaimed the equality of all men while treating women as chattel and all non-whites as lesser. We are indeed hypocrites.

But to be American is to accept that unflinchingly and to soldier forth for future generations, and DO BETTER, GODDAMN IT. There are those who would mire us in worldly cynicism, to anchor us in a world where our institutions betray forever, where values perish. And to be

American is to face that intellectual, moral, and spiritual assault with the unshakeable devotion to something more lofty. And when that loftiness fails, as it so often does, to be American is to seize it again and again, knowing that our Creator desire Progress. Progress can come from Traditionalists or Labor Unionists or mystics or musicians or doctors or Senators or journalists. All are exhorted. The Progress demanded by our Creator can be achieved by immigrants and natives, skeptics and believers, the elite and the humble alike.

That is America. That is the promise that Americans oft ignore and which more cynical nations would defile for their own gain. That America will last long after I have died, long after new people have picked the torch. Long after we betray it again, as we will. But America will go on, even if by another name, unless all who have heard her name are extinguished. This is just the locus of promise. America came from the olive groves of Italy and the shipyard of Plymouth and the islands of the Philippines. Indivisible. America came from the Torah and Voltaire's Candide and Adam Smith and zen koans and Greek mathematics and Rumi's poetry.

America is all these things, and should yet another absolutist demagogue, foreign or domestic seize her, it will be far from the end. Now is a time for patriots. It's also Sunday afternoon. I'm gonna get a beer and watch football. God Bless America, and all nations.
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