



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on June 7, 2017

How Reliable Is the Leaked NSA Report on Russian Election Hacking?

With the recent news that an NSA contractor has been arrested after leaking a top-secret report to *The Intercept* claiming that Russian military intelligence agencies were involved in a plot to hack voting machines in the presidential election, the liberal mainstream media is playing another round of “pin the election hacking on Putin.” But is there any *real* evidence that Russia “hacked” the election, or is this just a regurgitation of the same old stuff from late last year and earlier this year?



The NSA contractor — Reality Winner (yes, that is her name) — is, as *The New American's* Selwyn Duke [reported](#) Tuesday, “a brainwashed, far-left #Resistance activist who supports Black Lives Matter, stated she would stand with Iran against the United States, and wrote that ‘being white is terrorism.’” She is now also a jailed criminal, having — according to the DOJ complaint against her — deliberately provided a highly classified document to *The Intercept* that she admits she knew “could be used to the injury of the United States and to the advantage of a foreign nation.” She will likely soon be convicted and incarcerated for violating the Espionage Act.

That’s all well and good. And it proves that the document that she printed and mailed to *The Intercept* is genuine. What it does not prove is that the document is accurate or correct.

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The Intercept [reported](#) Monday:

RUSSIAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE executed a cyberattack on at least one U.S. voting software supplier and sent spear-phishing emails to more than 100 local election officials just days before last November’s presidential election, according to a highly classified intelligence report obtained by *The Intercept*.

The top-secret National Security Agency document, which was provided anonymously to *The Intercept* and independently authenticated, analyzes intelligence very recently acquired by the agency about a months-long Russian intelligence cyber effort against elements of the U.S. election and voting infrastructure. The report, dated May 5, 2017, is the most detailed U.S. government account of Russian interference in the election that has yet come to light.

And:

The report indicates that Russian hacking may have penetrated further into U.S. voting systems than was previously understood. It states unequivocally in its summary statement that it was Russian military intelligence, specifically the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU, that conducted the cyber attacks described in the document.

As evidence, *The Intercept* quoted from the leaked report:



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Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate actors ... executed cyber espionage operations against a named U.S. company in August 2016, evidently to obtain information on elections-related software and hardware solutions.... The actors likely used data obtained from that operation to ... launch a voter registration-themed spear-phishing campaign targeting U.S. local government organizations.

That sounds — for all the world — like evidence (if not definitive proof) that Russia hacked, or at least attempted to hack, the presidential election. The devil, though, is in the details. As *The Intercept* admitted in its report on the leaked document:

While the document provides a rare window into the NSA's understanding of the mechanics of Russian hacking, it does not show the underlying "raw" intelligence on which the analysis is based. A U.S. intelligence officer who declined to be identified cautioned against drawing too big a conclusion from the document because a single analysis is not necessarily definitive.

In this and in the fact that "the NSA analysis does not draw conclusions about whether the interference had any effect on the election's outcome and concedes that much remains unknown about the extent of the hackers' accomplishments," this report shares similarities with [intelligence reports released late last year and early this year](#). There is innuendo, but no actual claim that Russia affected the election; there is implication, but no evidence.

When media reports on those intelligence reports — based at least in part on [an easily discredited "dossier"](#) of Trump's alleged illegal and immoral misbehaviors in Russia — asserted that Trump's electoral victory was due to Russian interference in the election, it was a bridge too far even for *The Intercept's* Glenn Greenwald.

Greenwald — a man no one could accuse of being a Trumpeteer — wrote in an article entitled "[The Deep State Goes to War With President-Elect, Using Unverified Claims, as Democrats Cheer](#)" that those who — because of their hatred and distrust of Trump — bought into this without demanding proof are guilty of ignoring President Eisenhower's farewell address advice to "guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

If even Greenwald can accept the notion that this all may be a manufactured attempt to discredit Trump and delegitimize his presidency, this writer feels no compunction sharing that view. It makes much more sense than the [wild conspiracy theory](#) that Putin moved heaven and earth to put Trump — who is beholden to him — into the White House as a "puppet" president.

And while the leaked NSA document continues the trend of asserting what it does not prove, it would serve the interests of Americans who still possess critical thinking skills and a memory better than that of a goldfish to recall that it may not matter even if the document did provide "evidence." After all, among the trove of hacking tools developed by — and lost by — the CIA were those for [obfuscating hacks and making it appear that the hacker was from Russia, China, North Korea, or Iran](#).

In the absence of anything resembling evidence, and remembering that the intelligence community's record for honesty and trustworthiness is hovering somewhere around zero, this report — leaked by a troubled young woman who hates both America and Trump — should be taken for what it is: an unreliable shot in the dark by the Deep State.

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