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| --- | --- |
| Jihad Report  Jul 15, 2017 - Jul 21, 2017 | |
| Attacks | 34 |
| Killed | 147 |
| Injured | 258 |
| Suicide Blasts | 9 |
| Countries | 14 |

**How did Taliban fighters get their hands on US special-operations gear?**



Taliban fighters are packing new American-made heat — at least, according to their propaganda videos.

A recently released 70-minute video of Afghanistan Taliban training exercises produced by the insurgent organization’s media arm appears to show militants wielding firearms and equipment usually carried by U.S. special operations forces, Military Times [reports](http://www.militarytimes.com/articles/scar-taliban-us-weapons-propaganda-video).

The video appears to show a Taliban fighter with a FN SCAR (Special Operations Forces Combat Assault Rifle) 7.62mm rifle decked out with a AN/PEQ 5 visible laser and an older Surefire flashlight model typically found in Special Operations Peculiar Modification Kits, [per](http://www.militarytimes.com/articles/scar-taliban-us-weapons-propaganda-video) Military Times. Other fighters are recorded carrying M4 and M16 assault rifles.

This isn’t the first time the FN SCAR has been observed in the hands of Taliban forces. Footage released by the Taliban in 2015 [appears](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCEEuT3pjWk) to show militants operating a captured Humvee and FN SCAR-H heavy rifle variants during a May assault on an Afghan National Army base in Afghanistan’s Kunduz province The group subsequently released [photos](http://www.thefirearmblog.com/blog/2015/06/29/taliban-fighters-in-kunduz-afghanistan-spotted-using-scars-and-hmmwvs/) of militants wielding the firearms, allegedly captured from ANA personnel.

That Taliban forces are rocking U.S.-made guns and equipment should come as no surprise. A non-declassified 2016 Department of Defense [audit](https://taskandpurpose.com/coalition-sdf-weapons-isis-problem/)revealed that poor record-keeping and regulations had allowed nearly half of the 1.5 million firearms provided to Iraqi and Afghan security forces since 2002 to go missing, including nearly 978,000 M4 and M16s. An earlier 2014 [report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction](http://gawker.com/u-s-successfully-exports-its-second-amendment-values-t-1612079032)found that some 43% of weapons provided to the Afghan National Security Forces likely ended up in the hands of ISIS or the Taliban. (The FN SCAR is not explicitly listed in the report).



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But the presence of the FN SCAR in the Taliban training video is something of a mystery, given that the only military personnel to utilize the rifle are U.S. Special Operations Command. SOCOM forces have fielded variants of the SCAR since 2009, five years after the command selected and tested the Belgian-made weapon for the Special Operations Forces Combat Assault Rifle Program. The 75th Ranger Regiment became the first large unit to deploy with the SCAR, arriving in Afghanistan with some 600 of the high-powered rifles.

So how, then, did this SCAR move from the hands of highly trained U.S. commandos to jihadi militants? None of our men gave up their weapons, and we lost less than a dozen special operations troops in this area. Operation Resolute Support spokesman Capt. William Salvin [told](http://www.militarytimes.com/articles/scar-taliban-us-weapons-propaganda-video) Military Times. “We can’t confirm where the weapons came from observed in the video.” The only way they got thes brand new weapons is that that someone shipped them directly to them, along with all the ammo. They were using AK-47’s, and now their using American made weapons.



That assessment leaves open a few possibilities. In August 2016, ISIS militants fighting in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan posted video [flaunting](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/08/u-s-military-equipment-captured-by-the-islamic-state-might-have-come-from-special-operations-forces/?utm_term=.06d945dfab7a) firearms and communications equipment supplied to them by State Obama’s State department. Washington Post reporter and Marine vet Thomas Gibbons-Neff [identified](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/08/08/u-s-military-equipment-captured-by-the-islamic-state-might-have-come-from-special-operations-forces/?utm_term=.06d945dfab7a) the firearms features in the video as Mk. 48 medium machine gun and an FN SCAR.

Though the relationship between ISIS and the Taliban has been fraught in recent years, the two groups reportedly in August 2016 forged what the Wall Street Journal [characterized](https://www.wsj.com/articles/taliban-islamic-state-forge-informal-alliance-in-eastern-afghanistan-1470611849) as “an alliance of convenience” to wage war against U.S. military personnel and Afghan security forces amid the jihadi resurgence that followed the official end of NATO-led combat mission in 2014. In other words, the US State department supplied ISIS, and ISIS supplied the Taliban. That relationship could account for the flow of captured SOCOM equipment from ISIS forces to Taliban militants over the last year.

U.S. Special Operations Command and Operation Resolute Support would not comment on the situation when questioned. The entire department is still staffed with Obama appointees, as the Democrats have not approved any of president Trump’s nominees.

**Drone War Update**

We have done quite a few drone war updates, but I can tell you that there is truth and then there is fake weaponry. I have told you about the Agnew Field Sentry before. It all fits neatly into a 55 gallon drum and is buried to the rim in the yard and hidden with a large flower pot. Inside the drum is a dual barrel mini gun that can fire 200 rounds a minute. The rounds can be full metal jacket, alternating with armor piercing and even exploding bullets. The drum can hold about 15,000 rounds. It is powered and controlled from the building it protects. It is a completely defensive weapon that is designed to clean a specific are of all living things. If a half dozen of them are installed, you can hold off a small army for days. The guns are auto targeting using IR sights. You have a body temperature, and you’re moving, you are targeted.

## I have read for you many article about AI robots going into the battlefield against humans. They are about 99% fake. Why? Because all autonomous, AI robots lack the same thing. The ability to hold a charge for more than a few minutes. Unless they make one that runs on gasoline or kerosene, it ain’t happening. And if it runs on an IC engine, it can be stopped with a simple fire extinguisher. Simply change the fuel-air mixture, and it will die. University weapons projects don’t scare me either. What does scare me is when a true weapons designer with a long reputation gets into the game. Kalashnikov, the Russian weapons manufacturer [behind](http://newatlas.com/kalashnikov-ak-47/12306/) the most effective killing machine in history, has stepped into the future of warfare, [announcing](http://newatlas.com/kalashnikov-ai-weapon-terminator-conundrum/50576/) its development of autonomous AI-controlled combat robots.

Kalashnikov Group Communications Director Sofiya Ivanova announced the automated weapons only days after a visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin. She said that the manufacturer “will unveil a range of products based on neural networks” in the “imminent future.” In a statement to Russia’s state-run TASS news agency, she added that “a fully automated combat module featuring this technology is planned to be demonstrated at the Army-2017 forum.”

While lacking in elaborate description, the information provided is clear enough. A fully automated warfare AI based on neural network technology will not only accept programming but learn from its experiences. The fact that it is already primed for demonstration this year makes a strong statement regarding Kalashnikov Group’s confidence in a weapon that aims itself.

This is precisely the sort of development that General Paul Selva [warned](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/07/19/air-force-general-warns-lawmakers-about-a-i-employing-lethal-force/) lawmakers about during Tuesday’s Senate Armed Services Committee hearing and the basis for the open letter [published](https://futureoflife.org/open-letter-autonomous-weapons/) by the Future of Life Institute cosigned by Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking, among many others.

Bringing this technology from concept to execution poses very serious questions for our armed forces. An essay by retired US Army Colonel Joseph Brecher [highlights](https://warontherocks.com/2016/08/my-droneski-just-ate-your-ethics/) the threat of ignoring these hyper-efficient, artificially intelligent killing machines. In “My Droneski Just Ate Your Ethics,” Colonel Brecher rebuts General Selva’s position by noting the disparities between the U.S.’s currently allowable war machines and tech that the Kalashnikov Group is now preparing.

In the scenario described, a semi-autonomous weapon is easily dispatched by a fully automated enemy force. The first concern notes the inherent vulnerability of a unit that requires constant communication between weapons systems and a human controller, which can have its communications intercepted. The second concern is more elemental: There is no human on our planet who can match the decision-making efficiency of a computer.

It is a conflict that will pit our ethics against raw pragmatism, and Kalashnikov Group just opened fire.

**The Article V Convention**

There’s a fundamental problem in Washington, according to Tom Coburn.

The American people keep sending representatives to the nation’s capital thinking they can fix the country’s problems, but instead those elected representatives become part of Washington. They seek not to fix America’s problems but simply to hold onto power, thereby breaching the trust of the people who sent them there.

Coburn witnessed the problem firsthand, having served six years in the House of Representatives and 10 more in the Senate representing Oklahoma.

“We over the last 60 years have built a gigantic, uncontrollable behemoth in Washington through the career politician, much to the detriment of our kids and our grandkids,” Coburn said in a recent interview with [“The Hagmann Report.”](https://www.hagmannreport.com/) “And so what happens is most people who go to Washington succumb to the power and the trappings of power rather than keep their oath.”

Coburn said he left the Senate in 2015 partly because he didn’t see a solution for the country in Washington. Apparently, neither do most Americans. According to the [Pew Research Center,](http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/03/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/) only 20 percent of Americans trust the federal government to do what is right “just about always” or “most of the time.”

“That’s a disaster, because that means we have an illegitimate federal government if people don’t support it,” Coburn remarked.

However, the answer is not anarchy, according to the senator, but rather a tool America’s Founding Fathers built into the Constitution to allow citizens to restore the balance of power between the federal government and the states. That tool is the Article V Convention, also known as an Amendments Convention.

“The most fun thing I do is to talk to people who have never heard about Article V, because most Americans think there’s just nothing to do,” said Coburn, who serves as a senior adviser to the Convention of States project.

“You know, ‘(They think) the politics is slanted, we can’t have any influence on our congressmen or senators, it’s just going to be that way,’ and people have kind of given up. And what you tell them is you individually can make a difference by becoming an activist for Article V in your state.”

An Article V Convention is one of two methods by which the U.S. Constitution can be amended, but it has never been used in American history.

Two-thirds of the 50 state legislatures must pass an application asking Congress to call a convention at which amendments to the Constitution may be proposed. All state applications must ask for a convention dealing with the same issue or set of issues, and if the states meet the requirement, Congress cannot block the convention. The states, not Congress, get to choose their delegates to send to the convention. The states have the right to guard against a “runaway convention” by limiting debate to the consideration of a single topic or set of topics, according to the [Convention of States project.](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/conventionofstates/pages/899/attachments/original/1423177477/Kelly__Single_Subject_Convention.pdf?1423177477)

Any amendments agreed upon by the convention delegates would then be sent back to the states for approval, and three-fourths of state legislatures would need to ratify an amendment for it to become part of the Constitution.

Coburn does not believe Americans have anything to lose by pursuing an Article V Convention.

“The only danger or downside to it is not doing it,” he declared.

Coburn fully explains the case for an Article V Convention and responds to opponents’ objections in his new boo,k [“Smashing the DC Monopoly: Using Article V to Restore Freedom and Stop America’s Runaway Government.”](http://superstore.wnd.com/smashing-the-DC-Monopoly-Tom-Coburn-Hardcover?promocode=MSTORY)

Currently, 12 states have passed a Convention of States application calling for a convention to limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government. Nine more states have passed such an application in one chamber of their legislature. A total of 34 states need to pass an application to force Congress to call a convention.

Coburn is optimistic the COS project will soon usher in a convention.

“I think it’s going to take us two or three more years,” he asserted. “I think next year we’ll probably get 10 states.”

Coburn closed his time on “The Hagmann Report” with a challenge to listeners frustrated by a too-powerful federal government.

“The next time you catch yourself complaining and you haven’t read this book [(“Smashing the DC Monopoly: Using Article V to Restore Freedom and Stop America’s Runaway Government”)](http://superstore.wnd.com/smashing-the-DC-Monopoly-Tom-Coburn-Hardcover?promocode=MSTORY)on how to fix it, shut up, because if you’re going to complain but not work hard to fix it, you’re not any better than the politicians in Washington. But if you want to complain, learn how to fix it, and this book will tell you how to fix it. It’ll enthuse you, it’ll give you hope. There are ways to solve our problem, and we the people are the ones who can do that.”

**The Alien Signal From Space**

Astronomers have finally solved the mystery of peculiar signals coming from a nearby star, a story that sparked intense public speculation this week that perhaps, finally, alien life had been found.

It hasn’t. The signal, which has been formally named “Weird!” was interference from a distant satellite.

Of course, astronomers said all along that extra-terrestrials were quite far at the bottom of the list of possibilities for the signals detected from Ross 128, a dim star known as a red dwarf some 11 light-years away.

To experts, the true mystery was that they couldn’t figure out if the bursts were unusual stellar activity, emissions from other background objects, or interference from satellite communications.

“However, many people were more interested in the signals as potential proof of transmissions from an extraterrestrial intelligent civilization,” wrote Abel Mendez, director of the Planetary Habitability Laboratory at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo in a blog post Friday, revealing the true nature of the signals.

After further fueling speculation by summoning the world experts in the hunt for life elsewhere in the universe — The SETI Berkeley Research Center at the University of California — the team issued its conclusion.

“We are now confident about the source of the Weird! Signal,” Mendez wrote.

“The best explanation is that the signals are transmissions from one or more geostationary satellites.”

The signals only appeared around Ross 128 because it is located “close to the celestial equator where many geostationary satellites are placed,” Mendez added.

He also released the results of an informal survey that he had posted on his website, asking people to weigh in on what they thought the source of the signals was, and whether or not they were scientists well versed in the matter.

“Nearly 800 people participated in this informal survey (including more than 60 astronomers),” he wrote.

The whole group’s consensus was that the signals were most likely coming from some sort of stellar activity, or some kind of astronomical phenomenon.

Most people discounted the possibility of radio interference or instrumental failures, saying these were least likely. This, Mendez explained, was hardly a scientific approach to the question.

“This is interesting since in the absence of solid information about the signal, most astronomers would think that these were probably the most likely explanation,” Mendez wrote.

Furthermore, about one quarter of respondents said “the most likely explanation of the signal was that of a communication with an Extraterrestrial Intelligence (ETI),” he added.

“These results reflect the still high expectations the public maintains on the possibility of contacting ETI.”

Still, all was not lost in these last few weeks of speculation and tumult.

“The Planetary Habitability Laboratory of the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo made many new friends from this experience,” Mendez said, adding it had been a “great experience of open science.”

“The lesson here is that we all need to continue exploring and sharing results openly. Some people prefer to only learn about the successes, but others prefer science in real-time, no matter the end result.”

**The Clinton Crime Syndicate Takes the Fifth**

For all the talk of obstruction and interference by the Trump camp, it's neither Donald Trump Jr. nor Paul Manafort who are challenging their scheduled testimony in the Senate next Wednesday, but rather the man who according to many started the whole "Trump Russia collusion" narrative, who is doing everything in his power to avoid testifying next week.

On Friday, attorneys for Glenn Simpson, a former WSJ reporter who now runs the infamous Washington political intelligence firm Fusion GPS - best known for compiling the salacious "dossier" of unverified research about President Trump - told the Senate Judiciary Committee in a letter that their **client was on vacation through July 31 and traveling abroad through August 3, and would be unavailable for next week’s hearing.** Perhaps for writers of opposition research fiction, vacations take precedence over being summoned to Congress.

[](http://www.zerohedge.com/sites/default/files/images/user5/imageroot/2017/07/20/glenn%20simpson_0.jpg)  
Fusion GPS co-founder Glenn Simpson

As a reminder, **Simpson’s Fusion GPS is the firm which hired former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele, and his London-based Orbis Business Intelligence, to conduct opposition research on then presidential candidate Donald Trump, resulting in a 35-page dossier that was widely shared in political and media circles during and after the 2016 election.** Steele and Orbis are currently being sued in the U.S. and U.K. by Aleksej Gubarev, a Russian tech executive who says he was falsely accused in the dossier of hacking the Democratic National Committee’s email systems.

McClatchy News recently reported that Steele filed new documents in that lawsuit. In one, dated May 18, Steele says that he was instructed by Fusion GPS to meet with reporters at various outlets in order to publicize some of the allegations made in the dossier. It has been widely known that Fusion GPS and Steele were in contact with reporters to discuss the dossier. It has been reported that rumors of the dossier were floating around in Washington, D.C. political and journalist circles for months prior to BuzzFeed’s decision to publish it on Jan. 10.

Intelligence agencies made the existence of the dossier known to Trump in a January meeting. The dossier contains unverified, hyperbolic and in some cases, disproven, information about Trump’s activities and engagement with Russians. It served as a the basis for many of the ongoing allegations of Trump camp collusion with Russia.

*[](http://www.zerohedge.com/sites/default/files/images/user5/imageroot/2017/07/20/1060x600-1b85d04e0634effe86248c6f17cbbd47.jpg)*Ex-British spy Christopher Steele was the author of the Trump Dossier, which Fusion   
GPS put together as opposition research by Trump political opponents in 2016

In any case, Simpson's attorneys asked that their client be excused from appearing, adding that allegations he had failed to register as a foreign agent were "nothing more than an effort to smear him."  The lawyers also said that they were "profoundly disturbed" that the hearing had been expanded due to "partisan agendas" to include allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S. election and possible ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. **The letter also said they were prepared to fight a subpoena and invoke Mr. Simpson’s constitutional right not to give testimony if compelled to appear.**

According to the WSJ, **the letter explaining Simpson’s refusal to appear cites his obligations to keep his client information confidential and his First Amendment right under the Constitution to engage in political speech and political activity,** as well as his Fifth Amendment reight to refuse self-incriminating testimony, also known as the "I admit I am guilty" option.

His gambit did not work however, and late on Friday the Committee issued a subpoena to compel Simpson to testify next Wednesday.

Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley and the committee’s top Democrat, Dianne Feinstein, in a joint statement said: “**Glenn Simpson, through his attorney, has declined to voluntarily attend Wednesday’s Judiciary Committee hearing regarding compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Therefore, a subpoena has been issued to compel his attendance. Simpson’s attorney has asserted that his client will invoke his Fifth Amendment rights in response to the subpoena.**”

Yet while the vacation-challenged Simpson is afraid of revealing the true identity of his "client(s)" who commission the Trump smear piece, also on Wednesday appearing in the Senate will be Donald Trump Jr. and Paul Manafort, along with Russia sanctions activist and businessman Bill Browder. The Judiciary Committee said Messrs. Trump Jr. and Manafort are providing documents to the committee and are still negotiating the terms of their testimonies.

As the [WSJ adds](https://www.wsj.com/articles/senate-judiciary-committee-subpoenas-founder-of-firm-behind-trump-dossier-1500682608), in addition to the dossier compiled on Trump, Grassley has alleged that Simpson’s firm has worked with a Russian-American lobbyist on a campaign against a package of Russian sanctions that was being considered by Congress. That lobbyist was present in a meeting in Trump Tower in June 2016 with the younger Mr. Trump. **Grassley has raised questions about whether Simpson’s firm should have registered as a foreign agent for its work on the Russia sanctions**.

And while Simpson’s attorney called those questions and allegations “nothing more than an effort to smear him and his firm”, many are curious to find out just who it was that worked with Fusion GPS to launch the narrative that Trump's victory in the elections was the result of Kremlin interference.

**The Privileged Soldiers of the Clinton Crime Syndicate**

Susan Rice, former President Barack Obama's national security adviser, is no longer expected to testify Tuesday in a closed-door hearing before the House Intelligence Committee on allegations that she requested the identities of "masked" U.S. persons in intelligence reports linked to President Donald Trump's transition and campaign.

Rice was planning to appear before the committee on Tuesday to discuss her role in asking intelligence officials to unmask Trump associates, but the hearing has apparently been postponed, Fox News [reported](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/07/17/susan-rice-no-longer-planning-to-testify-tuesday-before-house-panel.html) Monday.

The House Intelligence Committee is leading one of several [investigations](http://www.npr.org/2017/06/09/532266457/the-russia-investigations-what-comes-next) into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. The investigations aim to produce clarity on what precisely Russia did to interfere in the election and whether any Trump associates colluded with the Kremlin to defeat Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton.

Rice was expected to be asked tough questions on whether she requested the unmasking of Trump associates whose identities were anonymous in intelligence documents. The documents were based on electronic eavesdropping of foreigners, and the conversations of the individuals in the U.S. were collected incidentally.

According to press [reports](https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-04-03/top-obama-adviser-sought-names-of-trump-associates-in-intel) from earlier this year, Rice requested the masked identities on several occasions. Critics have said that the Obama administration sought to use intelligence to hurt Trump, a charge that Rice ardently denied.

Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan (R.) told Fox News last week that he wants Rice to answer one basic question: "Did you unmask the names, and if so why?"

On March 22, Rice told PBS she "[knew nothing](http://freebeacon.com/national-security/flashback-susan-rice-said-i-know-nothing-unmasking-trump-officials/)" about the unmasking of Trump associates.

After reports came out about the unmasking, she denied any wrongdoing in April.

"The allegation is that somehow the Obama administration officials utilized intelligence for political purposes. That's absolutely false," Rice [told](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N03a6_Kr3Lo) MSNBC.

Among the names reportedly unmasked was Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser who resigned in February after he misled Vice President Mike Pence about conversations he had with the Russian ambassador to the U.S., Sergey Kislyak.

In May, Rice [declined an invitation](http://freebeacon.com/national-security/susan-rice-declines-testify-russia/) to testify from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R, S.C.), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism. At that time, Rice refused to testify because the senior Democrat on the subcommittee was not involved in the invitation, according to her lawyer.

The next month, Rice [suggested](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/06/susan-rice-on-trump.html) to New York Magazine that the way she has been "targeted" might have something to do with the fact that she is African American and female.

"Let me just put it this way," Rice said. "I do not leap to the simple explanation that it's only about race and gender. I'm trying to keep my theories to myself until I'm ready to come out with them. It's not because I don't have any."

In addition to pursuing Rice's testimony, congressional investigators have issued subpoenas to the NSA, CIA and FBI seeking "unmasking" information related to three Obama administration officials: Rice, former CIA Director John Brennan, and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power.

In a Wednesday [interview](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/us/politics/trump-interview-susan-rice.html?ref=todayspaper), Trump told The New York Times that he thinks Rice may have committed a crime. The president did not provide evidence for his claim, or expand upon what he thinks Rice specifically did wrong.

Experts note that any requests Rice made would have had to be granted by the intelligence agency that produced the report. The intelligence agencies say that once they receive a request, a small group of analysts and lawyers adjudicate it.

National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers, in testimony before the House intelligence committee last month, said 20 people at the NSA have the authority to grant a request, including himself.

“Susan Rice did not unmask anything,” Elizabeth Goitein, who co-directs the Brennan Center for Justice’s liberty and national security program, said in an interview with The Daily Signal. “She asked the NSA or whoever the source agency is to unmask. So even if it were a crime to unmask, it wouldn’t be one she committed. There is absolutely no reason to even be talking about criminal activity here.”

Experts say it could be a crime, though, if Rice leaked the name of any American caught in surveillance reports. Rice denied doing so in a Tuesday [interview](http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/susan-rice-speaks-out-unmasking-accusations-i-leaked-nothing-nobody-n742486) with MSNBC.

In an interview last month with “PBS NewsHour,” though, Rice appeared to deny that conversations involving Trump officials were incidentally collected during surveillance.

The government has a range of criminal statutes it may use against leakers, including the Espionage Act of 1917, which prohibits the improper accessing, handling, or transmitting of “information respecting the national defense” with the intent of injuring the U.S. or aiding a foreign nation.

Another related statute prohibits disclosure of classified information, including information “concerning the communication intelligence activities of the United States or any foreign government.”

It’s also possible Rice abused her lawful authority, the national security experts told The Daily Signal, although there is no evidence she has done so.

An example of this would be if Rice sought the names of Trump transition or campaign officials and then spread the information in an improper way.

The Times [reported](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/01/us/politics/obama-trump-russia-election-hacking.html) in March that Obama’s aides sought to preserve intelligence on Russia’s meddling in the presidential election, and about potential ties between Russian officials and Trump.

As part of that effort, the Obama administration in its final weeks allowed this type of information to be distributed more widely across the government.

“She might not necessarily be the leaker, but she could pass the information to unauthorized people who may have a security clearance, but who don’t have a ‘need to know’ status,” David Shedd, an acting director of the Defense Intelligence Agency under Obama who also served in the George W. Bush administration, said of Rice in an interview with The Daily Signal.

“Those people could then pass the information on to people who do the leaking,” added Shedd, who is now a visiting fellow at The Heritage Foundation. “There is still no evidence that this is what happened, and she could easily defend herself by saying she had no way of knowing information would be leaked.”

**The Final New Moon Before the Great Solar Eclipse**

## EclipSmart™ Solar Shades

Celestron's EclipSmart™ Solar Shades Observing Kit includes four ISO-certified pairs of solar eclipse glasses and a guidebook with timetables and maps for the Great American Total Solar Eclipse of Aug. 21, 2017. ($10 on Amazon)   
  
**Why we love it:** The guidebook in this family pack of eclipse glasses contains useful tips for viewing the solar eclipse as well as some fun facts about eclipses.

## Solar Eclipse Sunglasses

These plastic eclipse sunglasses have ISO-approved solar filters just like the paper glasses, but they're higher quality and built to last. While the [wrap-around goggles](https://www.rainbowsymphonystore.com/products/plastic-eclipse-glasses-wrap-around-goggle) don't fit over other eyeglass frames, the [folding eclipse shades](https://www.rainbowsymphonystore.com/collections/eclipse-glasses-safe-solar-viewers/products/plastic-eclipse-glasses) can be worn over your regular glasses. ($20 from Rainbow Symphony)

**Why we love it:** These sunglasses offer the same great protection as the paper eclipse glasses, but they're more comfortable to wear, and you won't have to worry about them falling off your face.

## EclipseView™ 10x50 Binoculars

Use these to watch the eclipse, then remove the two solar filters inside and you've got a sturdy pair of outdoor binoculars! These will magnify your view 10 times while providing crucial protection from the sun's bright light. These binoculars come with a padded carrying case, a neck strap and a cleaning cloth. ($70 on Amazon)  
  
**Why we love it:** Rubber armoring protects the binoculars from damage, making them great for outdoor adventures. You can use them to look at celestial objects in the night sky, or you can take them bird-watching. They're extremely versatile and built to last.

## EclipSmart™ Solar Scope 50

The EclipSmart™ Solar Telescope 50 by Celestron has a built-in solar filter and 20-mm eyepiece and magnifies your view 18 times. It includes a solar-safe finder scope that allows the user to easily align the solar scope to the sun without directly viewing the sun.($100 on Amazon)

**Why we love it:** This kit includes an adjustable tripod and a backpack that fits the telescope, tripod and other accessories. The reason I don’t like it is that there is no motor drive, so the sun will move out of view in less than a minute. Earth, being round of course, revolves on its axis every 24 hours. That’s like as fast as Santa Clause.

## EclipSmart™ 10x25 Solar Binocular

These compact binoculars also magnify your view 10 times, but with slightly smaller lenses, they're easier to transport. ($35 on Amazon)  
  
**Why we love it:** Small but powerful, these binoculars can even reveal small features on the surface of the sun, like sunspots

## "Sun Catcher" 5x30 Binoculars

These little binoculars from Explore Scientific will give you a safe, zoomed-in view of the solar eclipse for just a few dollars. ($6 from Explore Scientific)  
  
**Why we love it:** The solar filters may not be removable, like the more expensive solar binoculars, but these are some of the most affordable eclipse-watching binoculars you'll find.

**Health Insurance**

There is a simple three step process for fixing health insurance.

1. Stop calling health insurance health care.
2. Repeal Obamacare.
3. Deregulate health insurers so they can sell policies the free market will buy.

**Preexisting Conditions**

This is not health insurance. This is a current medical condition on a person too poor to pay for their own healthcare. Divide preexisting condition s into three groups:

1. Terminal within 3 years
2. Chronic, but controllable with regular medication.
3. Curable

Determine if the State’s taxpayers are willing to pay for these 9-10 million people. If they are, let the States develop a fund to pay for it. There is no need for federal funds.

Insurance

Everyone who operates a car must have car insurance to protect the public against your driving. If you have a debt against your vehicle, then you must also protect the bank against your driving as well as other things like falling trees and storms. This does not pay for oil changes, wiper blades, or tires. Health insurance should be exactly like this, and the buyer should be able to shop around for the best plan for them.

Progressive, State Farm, Farmers, Auto Owners, and Liberty are examples of car insurance companies that compete for your business. Prices and services vary. Companies can sell over State lines, but State regulations govern the rates and the coverage. Many States are cancel-rewrite States where your policy from Tennessee will not work in North Carolina if you move there. Rates are sometimes higher between States, so this can sometimes influence whether you move there or not.

Health insurance does not need to be mandatory to be profitable. It needs to be affordable, once you establish a history of health. $50 for a healthy adult. $30 for a child. This is affordable for everyone. If you have optional needs such as cosmetic dentistry or surgery, then you can save up money in a MSA and then shop for the best price to get it done when you’re ready.

Participation by the Federal government? None.

There. A multi-trillion dollar debacle was just avoided. Problem solved. No politicians required.

PRESIDENTIAL DRAG

President Donald Trump wants "Obamacare" repealed.

He also has public approval ratings below 40 percent — Bad! — and a propensity for turning on people.

Just ask House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

After Ryan labored for months before the House approved its health care bill and earned a Rose Garden celebration, Trump called the measure "mean." Trump said he wouldn't have picked Sessions for his job had he known he'd recuse himself from investigations into Russian meddling in last year's campaign.

Some lawmakers might not be blamed for declining to carry Trump's water.

Trump expressed frustration with Republicans Sunday on Twitter. He said: "It's very sad that Republicans, even some that were carried over the line on my back, do very little to protect their President."

While he didn't directly say why he was upset with GOP lawmakers, Trump's tweet came as lawmakers are struggling to reach agreement on health care.

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LEMONS INTO LEMONADE

The bill's rejection would still let lawmakers cast votes showing their positions. Supporters could say they honored their repeal "Obamacare" pledges, foes could say they protected their states or adhered to conservative principles.

Defeat would let the Senate refocus on tax cuts or other initiatives, though it's unclear what major issues don't divide Republicans.

A loss means there won't be a GOP law voters might blame for health care problems they encounter. Though Republicans may already own the issue in the public's eye, since they run the government.

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IT PASSES:

THE UNTHINKABLE

This isn't happening, right? Republicans have run on repealing "Obamacare" for years.

The administration won't let the effort fail without a fight.

Trump lunched with senators at the White House last week and tweeted that Republicans "MUST keep their promise to America!"

On Friday, Vice President Mike Pence urged leaders of conservative, anti-abortion and business groups to pressure senators. Medicaid administrator Seema Verma has tried luring senators unhappy with Medicaid cuts, including Ohio's Rob Portman and West Virginia's Shelley Moore Capito, with more flexibility for governors to use Medicaid funds to help pay expenses for beneficiaries shifting to private insurance.

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MCCONNELL

The health bill's floundering has tarnished McConnell's reputation as a legislative mastermind. Many Republicans privately say if the votes were gettable, he'd have gotten them already.

But the 33-year Senate veteran is wily and doesn't want his record stained with this failure. He understands what GOP senators need and has time, and if anyone can rescue the legislation, it's him.

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TRUMP FACTOR

GOP senators cross Trump at their own peril. Eight in 10 Republicans still rate him favorably. In the 2018 midterm elections, when turnout is traditionally down, those loyal voters could make a difference.

**Whistle Blowers: The Cure for Tyranny**

“The U.S. government is a criminal enterprise and is out of control. The U.S. Constitution was drafted to limit government and affirm the natural rights held by the people, but it is serially ignored and violated by the President, the Congress, the Supreme Court and law enforcers both Federal and local.

The result is growing tyranny and a police state and a Nation that is becoming a simmering cauldron of unrest — sparked by the passage of unConstitutional laws by a Congress controlled by moneyed interests; the affirming of those laws by the Supreme Court; long-term high rates of unemployment; a declining standard of living; increased regulation by unaccountable, bought-and-paid-for psychotic government functionaries; money printing; a presstitute mass media; increasingly militarized and militant local law enforcement officers; and a declining morality encouraged by both the political and celebrity classes — that is poised to explode.”

And here lies the rub. The prime objective is preserving the republic, which translates into protecting and maintaining the STATE, and all the power exercised by government. The entire chronicle of Western Civilization is based upon the primacy of the individual. Governments do not reflect the virtues of moral or ethical conduct. The artificial structures that claim legal authority over human beings are all based upon the naked dominance that is found in Machiavelli’s counsel.

With the abdication of personal responsibility and the loss of courage to limit the excess found in any temporal government, *denizens* have accepted tyranny as an inevitable curse. John Whitehead, Paul Craig Roberts and Pat Buchanan all share alarm with the tyrannical rule that stems from a non-critical acquiescence of the Machiavellian society. If you truly want to promote Liberty, recognize that the foremost foe is your government. According to Mahatma Gandhi, *“Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly.”*

The thing about behemoths governments is that they require employees; soldiers as it were. In our current world, these are people with self-will, although I must say that with this next generation coming up I have my doubts about that. I don’t think the world has ever really seen an entire generation of dependents. Whiners, crybabies, and wimps who wouldn’t tolerate a day without air conditioning and a pumpkin latte are hardly the mettle that would answer a call to action. Unless of course it means, putting a black mask over their faces, grabbing a bat, and releasing their drug-altered fury on an older white male with a MAGA hat on. Or maybe they want their yearbook to have a picture of them smashing the library windows in with a crowbar. Or maybe they just like screaming because they want more refugees to come to their school, or because they can’t wait to have their bits clipped off by some Muslim chop shop.

But some employees don’t like what they see happening around them by their drone counterparts. They see something wrong. Very wrong. So they decide to speak out about it. History shows us that tattle tales usually end up dead or in prison. Oh, yes, the wrong sometimes gets righted, or the bad guys end up going to jail, but the snitch never gets to share in the victory. So, you can see the slogans out there when the NDAA was activated by president Bush. “If you see something, say something.”

Then they kill you for it. Just ask Seth Rich. So we got smart and learned, “If you see something, say nothing.” But then, silence became success. Hence, anonymous was born. How do you get the proof into the hands of the organization that can make the arrest? Is everyone on the take? How far does the corruption in Washington DC go? It used to go all the way to the top. That’s what made it work so well for the bad guys. The top guy was in on it. Better yet, how do you take your own action, make your own correction without getting caught. That, earth explorers, is called hacking.

So, you see the evolution of the revolution? The bad guys are going down, but we pray for every day is that the guys that are taking then down are not badder still. Mean guys being taken out by meaner guys. Robbers being robbed. Traitors being outed by your enemies is not really a way to victory, now is it?

My guest tonight knows about this trail of ones and zeroes. She knows what happens when little offices in big departments figure out how to skim cash off the budget for themselves. And she knows what happens when those little offices are caught. And, she knows what happens with the proof is handed over to the authorities. The topic of tonight’s interview is “When the Whistle Blows, run for your lives.”

**The Marijuana Market**

Marijuana legalization might have you thinking it makes sense to buy marijuana stocks as an investment. However, the marijuana market is only beginning to develop, and most marijuana stocks that can be bought on stock exchanges aren't earning a dime in profit yet.

## Big market, but big risk

So far, 29 U.S. states have legalized medical marijuana, and medical marijuana is already legal across Canada. Additional states could approve pro-pot legislation in 2018, and Canada could legalize recreational marijuana this year.



IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES.

As the marijuana market emerges from the shadows, billions of dollars will transition from the black market to regulated markets.

According to Matt Karnes at GreenWave Advisors LLC, the marijuana market in California alone could exceed $7 billion by 2021, and based on states that have already legalized marijuana, the marijuana market nationwide could be worth [$25 billion in 2021](https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/01/14/heres-how-big-the-opportunity-could-be-for-marijua.aspx).

In Canada, cannabis could be similarly lucrative. Canadian bank **CIBC** estimates that recreational legalization could create a marijuana market in Canada valued between $5 billion and $10 billion, depending on volume.

Clearly, a lot of money is up for grabs, but unfortunately, it's not clear which companies will capture the lion's share of this opportunity. While many marijuana stocks have rallied sharply on the potential to profit from marijuana, the reality is that there are thousands of businesses elbowing each other for market share, and only a few of those companies trade on market exchanges.

Instead, most are bootstrapped by family or venture capital, or they trade on risky, unregulated over-the-counter stock markets. Stocks available on over-the-counter markets don't have to meet the strict regulatory requirements associated with major stock exchanges, including the New York Stock Exchange, and therefore, they're [ripe for fraud](https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/03/18/this-fraud-shows-how-massively-risky-it-is-to-buy.aspx).

## Few marijuana stocks make the grade

The vast majority of marijuana stocks are still losing money, but an argument can be made that some of these companies are worthy of consideration.

For instance, **GW Pharmaceuticals** ([NASDAQ:GWPH](https://www.fool.com/quote/nasdaq/gw-pharmaceuticals/gwph)) isn't a pure-play marijuana company, but it is developing medicines that are derived from marijuana cannabinoids.

Currently, the company's only commercial product is Sativex, a THC-based drug sold in Europe for use in multiple-sclerosis patients with muscle spasms. However, a decision from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Epidiolex, an epilepsy drug developed from the cannabinoid cannabidiol, could be coming soon.

While Epidiolex could become a top-selling epilepsy drug someday, the company's shares have rallied 145% since 2013, so a lot of Epidiolex's opportunity may be priced into shares already. GW Pharmaceuticals expects to officially file for Epidiolex's approval in the middle of this year; a go/no-go decision could come from the FDA later this year or early next year, depending on the exact date of the application, and whether or not Epidiolex receives a priority review from regulators.

[](https://ycharts.com/companies/GWPH/chart/)

[GWPH](https://ycharts.com/companies/GWPH) data by [YCharts](https://ycharts.com).

**Scotts Miracle-Gro** ([NYSE:SMG](https://www.fool.com/quote/nyse/scotts-miracle-gro/smg)) is another intriguing back-door marijuana stock for investors to consider. The company is best known for its fertilizers and pesticides, but it's invested a lot of money in hydroponics so that it can serve the marijuana market. As legalization drives marijuana volume higher, and grow facilities ramp up their capacity, the company could significantly increase its hydroponic product sales.

In the past year, Scotts Miracle-Gro reports that hydroponics revenue is up 22%, and sales this year of hydroponics products are up 13%. However, hydroponics represents a small proportion of Scotts Miracle-Gro's business, and weak demand for lawn and garden products last quarter caused Scotts Miracle-Gro's overall sales to fall despite hydroponic growth.

Investors might also want to look at **Canopy Growth Corp.** ([NASDAQOTH:TWMJF](https://www.fool.com/quote/nasdaqoth/canopy-growth-corporation/twmjf)), Canada's biggest medical-marijuana company. Canopy has been acquiring competitors and inking deals with celebrities like Snoop Dogg ahead of Canada's legalizing recreational marijuana.

Canopy Growth's story, however, isn't undiscovered. Its shares rocketed more than 200% higher last year, and while shares have lost 16% of their value this year, the company's $942 million market valuation still dwarfs the company's $23 million in trailing 12-month sales. Furthermore, Canada's marijuana industry suffered a blow to its reputation from product recalls due to the use of banned pesticides in grow facilities.

Health Canada is implementing mandatory testing in response to the recalls, but the news has created some uncertainty. And given this company's valuation, there's reason to avoid buying Canopy Growth shares.

## Looking ahead

Surely, tens of billions of dollars in marijuana sales will turn some companies into big winners, but it's very possible that the companies that end up dominating this market aren't the ones that have seen their share prices shoot higher over the past few years. For that reason, investing in marijuana stocks is very risky, and most investors might be better off investing in other stocks until marijuana companies are more established.

**The Marijuana Scam**

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission alleges that most of the revenue reported by the once fast-growing marijuana company Medbox was due to "sham transactions with a shell company."

According to a complaint filed by the regulator last week, the company used illegal stock sales to boost the revenue it reported to investors. The revenue-boosting scheme serves as an important reminder why it's critical for investors to approach cannabis companies cautiously.



IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES.

## A fast-growing company? Nope.

Medbox's wanted its marijuana vending machines on every street corner, but its revenue growth came mostly from proceeds from stock sales, not marijuana sales.

At its height, the company, which traded on the unregulated over-the-counter stock market, saw its shares soar from $1 per share to as high as $200. Unfortunately, much of that run-up was due to investor enthusiasm sparked by revenue growth that the SEC alleges wasn't revenue at all.

According to the SEC, Medbox was "falsely touting 'record' revenue numbers" and "claiming to be a leader in the marijuana industry while some of its earnings came from sham transactions with a secret affiliate."

Specifically, Medbox founder Vincent Mehdizadeh formed a shell company -- New-Age Investment Consulting -- and installed his then-fiancee as its CEO. Afterwards, he reportedly transferred stock in Medbox to New Age that New Age later sold.

"As alleged in our complaint, investors were misled into believing that Medbox was a leader in the burgeoning marijuana industry when the company was just round-tripping money from illegal stock sales to boost revenue," said Michele Wein Layne, director of the SEC's Los Angeles regional office.

The SEC argues that proceeds from those illegal stock sales accounted for "nearly 90%" of Medbox's revenue in the first quarter of 2014. In a text message released by the SEC, Mehdizadeh seems to concede that misrepresenting the company's revenue to investors was part of his business strategy. In that text, he wrote:

The only thing we are really good at is public company publicity and stock awareness. We get an A+ for creating revenue off sheer will but that won't continue.

Mehdizadeh is settling the charges against him for $12 million, plus a promise never to serve as officer or director of a public company or participate in any penny-stock offerings in the future, but that's probably little comfort to investors who bought Medbox shares because of revenue reported in those press releases.

## Spotting marijuana-stock manipulators

Like Medbox, most marijuana stocks trade over the counter (OTC) because they can't meet the financial and reporting requirements of major stock exchanges, like the New York Stock Exchange. For this reason, it's probably best to avoid over-the-counter stocks altogether.

However, here are some tips to help you spot a fraud, regardless of what stock exchange a company's shares trade on:

* Ask "Why me?" If a marijuana stock is being recommended to you, keep in mind that you might be a target of someone who is being paid to sell that stock to you.
* Use extreme caution with companies that seem to rely more on hype than on fact.
* Research every company thoroughly, and don't invest a dime until you've done all your homework.
* Dig into the details. If a company files its financials with the SEC, know that the SEC isn't responsible for making sure that information is true. Legitimate companies use top-shelf auditors from the country's biggest accounting firms, and it can pay to make sure one of them is signing off on the financials.
* Consider the ancestry. If a company has unproven management, or its business model or name has changed multiple times in the past, then you might be best off taking a pass.

## Looking forward

There's considerable momentum behind marijuana legalization, but the market is only in its earliest stage of evolution, and that means that there's likely to be far more failures than successes. The potential market opportunity, while large, brings with it the risk of scam artists eager to separate you from your hard-won money -- so make sure you approach these stocks with a very healthy dose of skepticism.

**The Coup of Donald Trump**

A funny thing happened on the way to Hillary’s coronation. The American voter stepped into the voting booth and 87% of US Counties said no to her, and yes to Trump.

Something had to be done. A plan B had to be developed and the DNC only had from November 8th until January 20th to do it. Or so they thought. First, they had to soil the election itself. That was going to be hard, since it was the DNC that was fixing the election and selling the American people that the thing they were doing was actually impossible.

They only had one thing left to do. Obama had to mobilize and authorize and empower the world’s most powerful military weapon to destroy Trump. I’m talking about the American intelligence community. We frequently hear people say they have **nothing to hide** - so surrendering privacy and constitutional rights to the Surveillance State may not be such a big deal if it helps catch a terrorist or two. **But with each passing day in the RussiaGate drama, we are learning that facts are not necessary when you can manufacture fingerprints and bank accounts and even meeting minutes after the fact and sell them to the American public.**

**We are referring here to the unrelenting witch hunt that has been unleashed by Imperial Washington against the legitimately elected President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.** This campaign of lies, leaks and Russophobia is the handiwork of Obama’s top national security advisors, who blatantly misused Washington’s surveillance apparatus to discredit Trump and to effectively nullify America’s democratic process.

That is, constitutional protections and liberties were systematically breached, but not simply to intimidate, hush or lock up citizens one by one as per the standard totalitarian modus operandi. Instead, what has happened is that **the entire public debate has been hijacked by the shadowy forces of the Deep State and their partisan and media collaborators.**

**The enabling culprits** are Obama’s last CIA director, John Brennan, his national security advisor Susan Rice and UN Ambassador Samantha Power. There is now mounting evidence that it was they who illegally “unmasked” NSA intercepts from Trump Tower; they who confected the Russian meddling narrative from behind the protective moat of classified intelligence; and they who orchestrated a systematic campaign of leaks and phony intelligence reports during the presidential transition—-all designed to delegitimize Trump before he even took the oath of office.

All three are being compelled to testify, but behind closed doors. Doors that make it possible for deals to be made, souls to be bought and sold. You and I know that all three of them should be ***locked ­up***—-that’s for sure. But the more urgent solution would be to ***unlock and make public*** all the innuendo, surmises, assessments, half-truths and boilerplate intelligence chatter on which the entire false narrative about Russian meddling and collusion is based.

**Stated differently, without the nation’s massive intelligence apparatus and absurd system of secrecy and classified information to hide behind, the RussiaGate witch hunt would have never gotten off the ground.**

In truth, as we will essay below, there is no there, there. So what this new chapter in McCarthyite hysteria actually demonstrates is that the Imperial City’s far-flung, 17-agency, $75 billion Intelligence Behemoth is a plenary threat not just to individual liberty, but to the very constitutional democracy on which the latter depends. It is huge, powerful, and hungry.

To appreciate the severity of the threat against America, it is necessary to recognize that **the post-9/11 Deep State has a knife against the throat of the Constitution.** That is, it unconstitutionally collects the entirety of all internet based communications of America’s 325 million citizens, while at the same time it has made Congress irrelevant. They are powerless. They have no political capital left. Their committees are revolving stages at Disney World. Why do you think Jason Chaffits quite right in the middle of his term and joined Fox News? Well, five times the money that’s for sure, but also he can actually be more powerful as a contributor on TV than as the Committee Chairman.

Accordingly, behind the Surveillance State’s vast wall of secrecy and so-called “classified” information, **there operates a Dark Government that is unaccountable to the public and largely unconstrained by normal constitutional limits**, which the Patriot Act and secret FISA courts have more or less suspended.

**In the realm of this Dark Government, the heart of American democracy—-the US Congress—has been completely usurped.** Almost everything behind the secrecy wall is off limits to the rank and file. Only a handful of intelligence committee members and the House and Senate leadership gets sworn into the classified intelligence.

Yet just consider the hideous asymmetry of this arrangement. The so-called “Gang of Eight,” comprising the heads of the intelligence oversight committees and their respective party leadership, gets orally briefed in a secure “vault”, where they can’t take notes or carry-out any documents.

Moreover, this select handful of legislators consists of the incessantly mobilized and frazzled potentates of Capitol Hill who are always knee-deep in a thousand other distractions—-including a heavy quotient of politicking, fund-raising, and campaign trail excursions.

**On the inside of the Surveillance State wall, by contrast, there are 600,000 employees or contractors with “top secret” security clearances alone**; and more than 4 million total operatives who spend night and days feasting on the $75 billion Intelligence Community (IC) budget and carrying out projects and missions designed to justify their existence and keep the budgetary gravy train flowing.

For example, in the National Security Agency (NSA) there is a subsidiary entity called TAO (Targeted Access Operations) with a budget of several billions and more than 1,000 employees. The latter predominately consist of high-powered civilian and military hackers, computer geeks, intelligence analysts, targeting specialists, computer hardware and software designers and electrical engineers—-whose job it is to do exactly what Russia is being accused of.

Namely, to hack and electronically infiltrate the communications and operations of nearly every government on the planet, and most especially those of IC designated enemies and adversaries such as Russia and Iran. Indeed, TAOs motto says it all:

***“Your data is our data, your equipment is our equipment ­ anytime, anyplace, by any legal means.”***

In any given 24-hour day, the TAO hacks and deposits more disinformation and malware into its targeted foreign networks than all the low level Russian probes that were intercepted by NSA during the entire Presidential campaign.

**In other words, Washington is the mother of all hackers and cyber-warfare operations, and what Russia and other nations do is only a small potatoes version of the same.** Yet the overwhelming share of these digital cloak and dagger operation by all sides is a huge waste of national resources; and most especially it is of no value at all to the safety of the American people.

**That because Russia, China and Iran—-the principal targets of the IC’s massive surveillance and cyber warfare activities—are no threats whatsoever to America’s security.**

Iran has zero military capacity to attack the American homeland, and the claim that it is the leading sponsor of terrorism is pure bunkum. That hoary claim has been concocted by the Washington neocons and the Netanyahu political machine—both of which need demonized enemies in order to nurture the public fears on which their power is based.

Likewise, Russia has one 40-year old smoke-belching aircraft carry and a fleet of rowboats—–neither of which are capable of launching an assault on the New Jersey shores. True, it does have about 1,00o nuclear warheads; but where is the evidence that cool-hand Vlad is contemplating national suicide by using them against the US or Europe?

The purported Chinese threat is even more ludicrous. Notwithstanding the fertile imaginations of the Deep State fear-mongers who believe the South China Sea is actually an American Lake, the Red Suzerains of Beijing know fully well that without the continuous custom of Wal-Mart and Amazon warehouses, the Red Ponzi would collapse in a heartbeat. And that they would be hung by angry mobs from the CCTV (China Central Television) Tower shortly thereafter.

**In fact, we don’t need the $75 billion Surveillance State to deal with the Taliban, the jihadist warlords of Somalia or any of the warring Sunni vs. Shiite (Houthis) parties of Yemen, either. They do not threaten America’s security in the slightest.**

Nor did the government of Khadafy in Libya after he turned in his nukes. Likewise, the Assad regime has never, ever threatened to harm America—-despite the non-stop vilification from Washington.

At most, Washington needs modest local and theatre level capacity to monitor the fading remnants of the Islamic State—-a temporary scourge in the mostly the impoverished Sunni villages of the Upper Euphrates, which would not even exist in the first place had it not been fostered and armed with the weapons the US Army left behind in the fiasco of Iraq.

**So consider the contrafactual. In the absence of a vast Warfare State apparatus and associated Surveillance State wall of secrecy what would RussiaGate amount to?**

The answer is straight-forward: It was nothing more than a politically motivated plot orchestrated by former CIA director Brennan to undermine the Presidential campaign of a rambunctious outsider. That is, the Donald was unschooled in the groupthink of the Imperial City and had enough common sense to realize that Putin is not our enemy, that NATO is obsolete, that regime change has been a fiasco and that foreign policy should be based on homeland security first, not the perpetuation of an American Empire abroad.

Those inchoate impulses were the Donald’s original sin, and it was unverified and self-serving “intelligence” from the Latvian security service—-of all things—- that provided the pretext for Brennan to launch the Deep State’s own version of jihad against Trump.

What this dubious intelligence did was to finger Vlad Putin himself and that was crucial. It permitted Brennan to puff-up the evidence of run-of-the-mill cyber intrusions by the Russian security services—-or even unconnected Russian hackers and profiteers— into a sweeping but phony narrative about an attack on American democracy with Putin at the very center.

As Scott Ritter—- the weapons expert who blew the whistle on the IC’s trumped up claims about Saddam’s WMDs—-succinctly explained in a recent article, Brennan proceeded to turn a dubious molehill into a veritable mountain:

***According to reporting from the Washington Post, sometime during this period, CIA Director John Brennan gained access to a sensitive intelligence report from a foreign intelligence service. This service claimed to have technically penetrated the inner circle of Russian leadership to the extent that it could give voice to the words of Russian President Vladimir Putin as he articulated Russia’s objectives regarding the 2016 U.S. Presidential election — to defeat Hillary Clinton and help elect Donald Trump, her Republican opponent. This intelligence was briefed to President Barack Obama and a handful of his closest advisors in early August, with strict instructions that it not be further disseminated.***

***The explosive nature of this intelligence report, both in terms of its sourcing and content, served to drive the investigation of Russian meddling in the American electoral process by the U.S. intelligence community. The problem, however, was that it wasn’t the U.S. intelligence community, per se, undertaking this investigation, but rather (according to the Washington Post) a task force composed of “several dozen analysts from the CIA, NSA and FBI,” hand­picked by the CIA director and set up at the CIA Headquarters who “functioned as a sealed compartment, its work hidden from the rest of the intelligence community.”***

***The result was a closed­ circle of analysts who operated in complete isolation from the rest of the U.S. intelligence community. The premise of their work — that Vladimir Putin personally directed Russian meddling in the U.S. Presidential election to tip the balance in favor of Donald Trump — was never questioned in any meaningful fashion, despite its sourcing to a single intelligence report from a foreign service.***

***President Obama ordered the U.S. intelligence community to undertake a comprehensive review of Russian electoral meddling. As a result, intelligence analysts began to reexamine old intelligence reports based upon the premise of Putin’s direct involvement, allowing a deeply disturbing picture to be created of a comprehensive Russian campaign to undermine the American electoral process.***

**Here’s the thing. Vlad didn’t do it.** The only interference in the electoral process that he has been associated with is with respect to what Imperial Washington did next door while he was basking in glory at the Sochi Olympics in February 2014.

To wit, the violent coup on the streets of Kiev was organized by agents and organs of the US government; overthrew a constitutionally elected President who had decided to make an economic and security deal with Russia rather than Europe and NATO in keeping with Ukraine’s economic propinquity to the former and its 700- years of history as an integral part of Greater Russia; and which imposed a new government, hand-picked by the Obama State Department, which was dominated by Ukrainian nationalists and neo-Nazis who were demonstrably hostile to the Russian speaking populations of Crimea and the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

**Stated differently, Imperial Washington is the world champion meddler in other peoples’ politics and elections.**

Since the CIA sponsored coup against the Mosaddegh government in Iran in 1953, it has sponsored more than ***eighty incidents*** ranging from election bag money to military coups.

**By contrast, the putative Russian attack on American democracy consists of three specific accusations—all of which are readily refutable.**

**In the first place, Podesta’s password was “password” and could have been hacked by any fat guy, or not, on any computer plugged into the worldwide web anywhere.**

Moreover, Julian Assange of Wikileaks, who makes a living disclosing the truth, not propagating lies as does the IC, says it did not come from Russian state agents; and that it was in fact leaked, not hacked, by disgruntled Democrat insiders.

In any event, if it had actually been hacked by either Russian agents or the proverbial fat guy, there would be a digital imprint stored in NSA’s vast server farms. The fact that it hasn’t leaked amidst all the rest of the anti-Russian innuendo and intelligence hearsay proves beyond much doubt that no such record exists and no such Russian intrusion ever happened.

**As for the DNC emails, the smoking gun there still smolders in plain sight. The FBI apparently never even took custody of the DNC computer**—–farming out the job to an outfit named Crowdstrike. Alas, the latter is a DNC contractor and wannabe silicon valley IPO run by some fanatical Russian ex-pats looking for fame and fortune. It’s no wonder they didn’t want the FBI second guessing their conclusions. Comey Chameleon made sure of that.