

Republican Perspectives

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by John Littig

Trump and the Ruskiies

Dear reader: Do not expect to find here an advocacy for either Presidential Candidate Donald Trump or Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton (well, you wouldn't have expected that anyway)---or an argument against either one. I focus here on the narrow issue of the hacking of the emails of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and, more specifically, the handling of that issue by the DNC, the media, the pundits, and the political operatives. So this writing is rated "safe for all readers"---even for my Democrat friends (yes, I think I still have some). But you'll have to pay attention because, as they say, it's complicated.

Hopefully, unless you have been comatose since July 24 or hiking incommunicado in the Desolation Valley wilderness, you know the background. Someone hacked into the DNC's emails and released some of the contents to the public. What was released showed that the DNC had, throughout the primary process, been tilting the playing field in favor of Clinton and against her disheveled but apparently lovable opponent. Bad press---sure to make the Bernie faithful madder than a swarm of killer bees.

The Democrats handled this crisis very well. DNC Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz was forced to resign pronto, sent packing before the convention was gavelled to order and, as far as I know, has relocated to Tierra del Fuego. Then the Democrats skillfully diverted attention away from the damning content of the emails by offering the opinion that the Russians had done the hacking. And furthermore, they had done it to help Trump! Obediently, the media, the pundits, and the political operatives from both camps went right along with this change of focus---opining, charging, or defending, depending on their political allegiance.

Even Trump himself got caught up in the side show. He denied any involvement or knowledge of the hack, who had done it, and whether the Russians were involved. Then, warming to the subject, Trump suggested that the Russians take a crack at finding Clinton's missing 30 thousand emails. Well, that immediately became the focus of the story---totally gone from the headlines was the DNC's undermining of the socialist candidate.

Those on the Left accused Trump of inviting the Russians to meddle in a U.S. election. Clinton campaign spokesman Robby Mook said Trump had encouraged a foreign power

to commit espionage to influence an election. Rep. Joaquin Castro declared the situation a "digital Watergate." Sen. Harry Reid said of Trump "This guy, he's part of a foreign power." Reid also offered that intelligence officials should "Fake it. Pretend you're doing a briefing, but you can't give this guy any information." Among others, Rep. Debbie Dingell literally accused Trump of treason.

Defenders on the Right said Trump was being sarcastic. I saw Trump's statement on live TV, before spinners from either side had managed to barge in. I laughed out loud; to me it was an obvious joke---not an invitation to the Russians to do anything.

Now let's think about this for a moment. Even if Trump had been serious, there's no foul. And here's why.

What Trump actually said was "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30 thousand emails that are missing." What 30 thousand emails are missing? Not the DNC's---but Clinton's. The emails that she and her attorneys determined to be personal, non-work related, and never to be seen by either the State Department's Inspector General or the FBI's investigators. Clinton has said they were of a personal nature, including her "yoga routines" and her daughter Chelsea's wedding plans.

So stay with me, here. Since the 30 thousand deleted emails were, as Clinton and her supporters have claimed, not work-related but personal, where is the digital Watergate, the attempt to involve a foreign power in our election, the danger to national security, the treason? Of course it is all imaginary. A diversion to focus the public's attention on Trump as the culprit rather than on the DNC's sabotage of Clinton's primary election rival.

I watch a lot of news on TV and I read a lot of punditry. But Charles Krauthammer is the only voice I have heard point out that the missing 30 thousand have (according to Clinton) nothing whatever to do with either national security or the election.

Everyone else---media, pundits, politicians---seems to have bought into the diversion. We are not well served by our politicians or by those who report on them.