

Postmodernism Weaponized: Russia's Assault on American Science



By Alex Berezow — August 27, 2018



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Winston Churchill once described Russia as "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." Today, Russia is far less complicated but still perplexing.

The *raison d'être* of Russia's foreign policy seems to be little more than to cause chaos in as many Western countries as possible. That's why they meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, as well as the Brexit election before that. All told, Russia has been accused of interfering in the elections of [27 countries since 2004](#) ^[1]. Not always interested in achieving particular outcomes, their goal appears to be chaos for the sake of chaos, a concept now known as the [Gerasimov Doctrine](#) ^[2]. Politico explains:

The approach is guerrilla, and waged on all fronts with a range of actors and tools—for example, hackers, media, businessmen, leaks and, yes, fake news, as well as conventional and asymmetric military means. Thanks to the internet and social media, the kinds of operations Soviet psy-ops teams once could only fantasize about—upending the domestic affairs of nations with information alone—are now plausible.

Why? What's the point? Russia is a country in inexorable decline. Its economy is roughly the same size as the combined economies of [Belgium and Netherlands](#) ^[3]. Thus, causing trouble keeps it relevant. If Russia is on its way down, it can stay relatively powerful by bringing others down. However, instead of focusing merely in the realm of geopolitics, Russia's troublemaking extends

into science and technology.

Russia's Assault on American Science

Recently, the *New York Times* [reported](#) [4] that many of the same Russian internet trolls that meddled in the election were also tweeting about vaccines. Which side were they on? Neither. "[T]he trolls and bots they programmed hurled insults at both pro- and anti-vaccine advocates. Their only intent, the study concluded, seemed to be to raise the level of hostility."

This is perfectly in line with the Gerasimov Doctrine -- chaos is both the means by which the Russians operate and the ends they wish to achieve. It's as if nihilism and cynicism are the two guiding principles of Russia's foreign policy. As the aforementioned Politico article writes, "the objective is to achieve an environment of permanent unrest and conflict within an enemy state."

Vaccines aren't the only topic in which Russians sought to inflame hostilities. They also actively promote [anti-fracking propaganda](#) [5] on the Kremlin-backed RT network. Furthermore, [RT is colluding with anti-GMO activists in America](#) [6], such as Gary Ruskin, who runs U.S. Right to Know. In these areas -- energy and biotechnology -- Russia has a strong economic interest in undermining American industry, and it has found useful idiots willing to advance its agenda for it.

Russia Can Dominate a Postmodern World

We have written many times about the [dangers of postmodernism](#) [7]. A society that can no longer distinguish truth from lies is in serious trouble. Purposefully blurring the distinction is part of Russia's geopolitical strategy. How else can we explain the fact that Russian media outlets promote all sorts of nonsense -- such as [declaring three-fingered Peruvian mummies to be aliens](#) [8] ? Or that the [Kremlin is openly supporting kooky academics, pseudoscience, and conspiracy theories](#) [9]?

A world in which truth carries no weight is a dark one, indeed. But it's a world in which Russia can thrive, if only temporarily.

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[1] <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/09/07/alleged-russian-political-meddling-documented-27-countries-since-2004/619056001/>

[2] <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538>

[3] <https://merchantmachine.co.uk/russian-in-western-europe/>

[4] <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/23/health/russian-trolls-vaccines.html>

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/01/09/fracking-protesters-are-putin-puppets-10707>

[6] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/05/02/dear-gary-ruskin-and-anti-gmoers-stop-being-puppets-putin-11225>

[7] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/07/05/casual-lies-postmodernism-hallmark-societal-decline-13158>

[8] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/03/13/russian-propaganda-three-fingered-mummies-nazca-peru-are-aliens-12696>

[9] <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/29/putins-great-patriotic-pseudoscience/>