

16 WORDS: “THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS LEARNED THAT VLADIMIR PUTIN RECENTLY SOUGHT SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF VOTES FOR TRUMP”

This morning, I managed to remind the NYT *in the NYT* of its role in spreading leaks that led us to war in Iraq. I did so not to defend Donald Trump, but to point out how the flood of leaks leading up to the Iraq War is similar to the one we’ve had in the last week, insisting that Putin hacked Hillary specifically to get Trump elected. Here’s the comparison, which you’re familiar with from my posts in the last week.

Trump is not quite right when he claims that, “These are the same people that said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.” Neither the entire intelligence community nor even everyone at the C.I.A. was wrong about the Iraq intelligence. Rather, leaks like the ones we’re seeing now ensured elected officials didn’t hear from the skeptics who got it right.

That time, as members of Congress were demanding the Bush administration show its case for war, anonymous officials told this newspaper that aluminum tubes purchased by Iraq could only be used for nuclear enrichment. By the time Congress got a report, a month later, saying that might not be the case most members never read it; they had already been convinced that the case for war was a “slam dunk.”

This time, just hours after the White House revealed President Obama had ordered a (belated) review by the entire intelligence community of how hacks have tainted our democracy, the C.I.A.'s incendiary conclusion got leaked to the press: First, anonymous leaks said Russia had hacked Democrats not just to cause chaos, but specifically to get Trump elected. Last Wednesday the leaks went further: Putin himself oversaw the operation to put Trump in the White House. On Friday, another C.I.A. leak came out minutes before Obama started a news conference where he said, "I want to make sure ... I give the intelligence community the chance to gather all the information."

The point of my post is not – as numerous people who refute it without reading it suggest – to argue Russia didn't hack Hillary. While I have lingering questions, I think that likely.

Rather, it is to ask why the CIA is so invested in the narrative that Putin specifically intervened to get Trump elected, rather than the more obvious explanation, which is that he intervened to retaliate for real and imagined CIA-led covert operations targeted at Russian interests?