

**United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**

Majority Staff Report



***Russian Attempts to Influence U.S. Domestic Energy  
Markets by Exploiting Social Media***

March 1, 2018

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## Executive Summary

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The purpose of this report is to provide the American people with the findings of the Committee's investigation into Russian efforts to influence U.S. energy markets. First, the report discusses several factors driving the Kremlin's desire to interfere with U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy. Next, it demonstrates how the Kremlin manipulated various groups in an attempt to carry out its geopolitical agenda, particularly with respect to domestic energy policy. Finally, this report provides an assessment of the Committee's findings, including examples of Russian-propagated content targeting U.S. energy markets and domestic energy policy. The facts put into perspective the nature and extent of the Kremlin's energy influence-peddling operation.

The Committee began investigating Russian attempts to influence U.S. energy markets in the summer of 2017 when Chairman Smith wrote the Secretary of Treasury regarding Russia's intricate money-laundering scheme. Russian-sponsored agents funneled money to U.S. environmental organizations in an attempt to portray energy companies in a negative way and disrupt domestic energy markets.<sup>1</sup> Upon discovering that Russia may have exploited American social media platforms to accomplish its disruptive objectives, the Committee broadened the scope of its investigation. On September 26, 2017, the Committee requested data from Facebook and Twitter as part of this expanded investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Documents that the American social media companies produced for the Committee confirmed that Russian agents were exploiting American social media platforms in an effort to disrupt domestic energy markets, suppress research and development of fossil-fuels, and stymie efforts to expand the use of natural gas.

Subsequent to the Committee's initial request, media revelations indicated that Russian operatives, "intent on exploiting existing divisions and social movements in the United States," had in fact sought to influence U.S. energy markets by exploiting American social media platforms.<sup>3</sup> According to the media report, Russian agents exploited Instagram by "shar[ing] images related to Native American social and political issues—including the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, many of the Russian-linked accounts targeted "highly visible tension points" in America, including "protests against pipelines."<sup>5</sup>

These revelations bolstered the Committee's suspicions that Russia was actively engaged in a concerted effort to disrupt U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy and was exploiting American social media platforms in an attempt to carry out this objective. As

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hon. Lamar Smith, Chairman, H. Sci., Space, & Tech. Comm. to Hon. Steven T. Mnuchin, Secretary, U.S. Dep't of Treasury (June 29, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Hon. Lamar Smith, Chairman, H. Sci., Space, & Tech. Comm. to Mr. Mark E. Zuckerberg, Founder, Chairman, & Chief Exec. Officer, Facebook and Mr. Jack Dorsey, Chief Exec. Officer, Twitter, Inc. (Sept. 26, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Ryan C. Brooks, *How Russians Attempted to Use Instagram to Influence Native Americans*, BUZZFEED NEWS (Oct. 23, 2017), <https://www.buzzfeed.com/amphml/ryancbrooks/russian-troll-efforts-extended-to-standing-rock>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

such, the Committee reiterated to the American social media companies its interest in information regarding Russian entities purchasing advertisements or posting content targeting domestic energy markets. On October 31, 2017, Chairman Smith again wrote the social media companies requesting information.<sup>6</sup>

The Committee received and reviewed the companies' produced documents for evidence of Russian influence. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram were able to identify Russian accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Russian company based in Saint Petersburg established by the Russian government for the purpose of deceptively using various social and traditional media platforms to advance Russian propaganda.<sup>7</sup> The information received from Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram shows that Russian agents indeed sought to disrupt U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy by exploiting American social media platforms.

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## Findings

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- Between 2015 and 2017, there were an estimated 9,097 Russian posts or tweets regarding U.S. energy policy or a current energy event on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- Between 2015 and 2017, there were an estimated 4,334 IRA accounts across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- According to information provided by Twitter, more than four percent of all IRA tweets were related to energy or environmental issues, a significant portion of content when compared to the eight percent of IRA tweets that were related to the election in the U.S.
- Russia exploited American social media as part of its concerted effort to disrupt U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy.
- The IRA targeted pipelines, fossil fuels, climate change, and other divisive issues to influence public policy in the U.S.

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## Discussion

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### I. Russia works to disrupt U.S. energy markets

Russia has a significant interest in disrupting U.S. energy markets and influencing domestic energy policy. American energy is booming. America's emergence as a global energy

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Hon. Lamar Smith, Chairman, H. Sci., Space, & Tech. Comm. to Mr. Mark E. Zuckerberg, Founder, Chairman, & Chief Exec. Officer, Facebook and Mr. Jack Dorsey, Chief Exec. Officer, Twitter, Inc. (Oct. 31, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> See generally Indictment, United States v. Internet Research Agency LLC et al., No. 1:18-cr-00032 (D.D.C. Feb. 16, 2018).

exporter presents a significant threat to Russian energy interests. Such competition reduces the revenue and influence generated by Russian energy exports. This adversely affects the Kremlin's ability to leverage Eastern Europe's reliance on their energy and their ability to carry out their geopolitical agenda. The surge of American energy into the global marketplace heightens the Kremlin's desire to eliminate or mitigate the American energy threat and to do so by influencing social media users, American voters, and public officials.

### ***Fracking Threatens the Kremlin's Agenda***

The United States has recently experienced an energy production boom that stands to “fundamentally reshape the global energy landscape.”<sup>8</sup> Although many factors have contributed to increased domestic production capacity, record-breaking production in the United States is primarily “attributable to increased production of natural gas and crude oil enabled by the use of hydraulic fracturing techniques,” also referred to as fracking.<sup>9</sup>

Horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing as a means for producing oil and natural gas began in the early 2000s.<sup>10</sup> At that time, there were “approximately 26,000 hydraulically fractured wells” in the United States, which accounted for “less than 7%” of all U.S. marketed natural gas.<sup>11</sup> By 2011, fracking had become the primary method for oil and natural gas development in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Since 2014, fracked wells have “accounted for most of all new wells drilled and completed.”<sup>13</sup> The number of fracked wells had climbed “to an estimated 300,000” by 2015, and were responsible for approximately 67 percent of all U.S. natural gas output.<sup>14</sup>

Government and industry projections indicate that domestic production will continue to increase. Trends from 2017 indicate that the U.S. has almost completed its transition from a net importer of natural gas to a net exporter. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), natural gas production will provide the greatest contribution to overall production growth during 2018, with growth in crude oil production providing the greatest impact on overall output in 2019.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the EIA expects 2018 to be a record-breaking year for domestic crude oil and natural gas production and government forecasts indicate that in 2019 domestic production will reach “a level that would rival Russia, the world's top producer.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Matt Egan, *Oil Milestone: Fracking Fuels Half of U.S. Output*, CNN MONEY (Mar. 24, 2016), <http://money.cnn.com/2016/03/24/investing/fracking-shale-oil-boom/index.html>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *EIA Expects Total U.S. Fossil Fuel Production to Reach Record Levels in 2018 and 2019*, EIA (Jan. 18, 2018), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=34572>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *Hydraulically Fractured Horizontal Wells Account for Most New Oil and Natural Gas Wells*, EIA (Jan. 30, 2018), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=34732>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *Hydraulically Fractured Wells Provide Two-Thirds of U.S. Natural Gas Production*, EIA (May 5, 2016), <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=26112>.

<sup>12</sup> See U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *supra* note 10.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *supra* note 10.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *supra* note 11.

<sup>15</sup> See U.S. Energy Info. Admin., *supra* note 9.

<sup>16</sup> Liz Hampton, *U.S. Oil Industry Set to Break Record, Upend Global Trade*, REUTERS (Jan. 16, 2018), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-oil-record-shale-analysis/u-s-oil-industry-set-to-break-record-upend-global-trade-idUSKBN1F50HV>.

The substantial increase in domestic production has resulted in an abundant supply of American energy, which is increasingly making its way into the global marketplace. While this stands to provide substantial economic benefits to the U.S., it simultaneously represents a direct threat to Russian energy interests. First, an abundance of American supply in the global energy marketplace stands to reduce Russian market share and thus revenues generated from oil and gas activities. Second, by providing supply alternatives for European countries dependent on Russian supply and infrastructure, American energy stands to disrupt the Kremlin's ability to leverage energy consumption for geopolitical influence.

Russia provides roughly 75 percent of the natural gas imported by countries in Central and Eastern Europe while the countries in Southeast Europe "receive almost all of their natural gas from Russia."<sup>17</sup> "Russia's Gazprom has acknowledged for the first time a threat to its dominant position in European gas market from an expected influx of liquefied natural gas (LNG) produced in the United States under [the Trump] administration."<sup>18</sup> Shortly after this acknowledgment, U.S. LNG made its way to Poland<sup>19</sup> and Lithuania.<sup>20</sup> In fact, Poland recently signed a five-year deal with the United States to import liquefied natural gas into the country in an attempt to decrease dependency on Russian energy supplies.<sup>21</sup>

As the threat of American energy continues to grow, so does the Kremlin's incentive to influence energy operations in Europe and the United States. Moreover, as they have demonstrated, the Kremlin will use any and all tools at their disposal to preserve Russia's dominant energy status and to maintain its stranglehold over Eastern and Central Europe.

## **II. Republicans and Democrats agree the Kremlin is manipulating environmental groups in an attempt to carry out their agenda**

The Kremlin has a motive to disrupt U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy, since American energy represents a direct threat to Russian energy interests. Russia's efforts to influence U.S. energy policy are well documented in the public domain. U.S. presidential candidates, European officials, and the U.S. intelligence community have all publicly noted that Russia and its government corporations are funding a covert anti-fracking campaign to suppress the widespread adoption of fracking in Europe and the U.S., all in an effort to protect the influence of the Russian oil and gas sector.<sup>22</sup> Anders Fogh Rasmussen, then-

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Energy Info. Admin, *Country Analysis Brief: Russia*, EIA (Oct. 31, 2017),

[https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis\\_includes/countries\\_long/Russia/russia.pdf](https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis_includes/countries_long/Russia/russia.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Oksana Kobzeva, *Russia Acknowledges Threat from Trump's Energy Policy on EU Gas Market*, REUTERS (Jan. 13, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-lng/russia-acknowledges-threat-from-trumps-energy-policy-on-eu-gas-market-idUSKBN14X1SU>.

<sup>19</sup> See Timothy Cama, *Poland Signs 5-Year US Natural Gas Import Deal*, THE HILL (Nov. 21, 2017), <http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/361413-poland-signs-5-year-us-natural-gas-import-deal>.

<sup>20</sup> See Andrius Sytas, *Lithuania Receives First LNG from the United States*, REUTERS (Aug. 21, 2017), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lithuania-lng/lithuania-receives-first-lng-from-the-united-states-idUSKCN1B11BW>.

<sup>21</sup> See Cama, *supra* note 19.

<sup>22</sup> Office of the Dir. of Nat'l Intelligence, *Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Election": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution* 8 (Jan. 6, 2017), available at [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA\\_2017\\_01.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf) (explaining the anti-fracking programming by RT American

Secretary General of NATO, told reporters in 2014, “Russia, as part of their sophisticated information and disinformation operations, engaged actively with so-called nongovernmental organizations—environmental organizations working against shale gas—to maintain dependence on imported Russian gas.”<sup>23</sup>

Former Secretary of State and then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, with access to intelligence reports, made a private speech in 2014, according to documents from WikiLeaks, which included statements about the struggles of dealing with Russian-backed environmental groups. According to a media report, Secretary Clinton said the following: “We [the State Department and the U.S.] were up against Russia pushing oligarchs and others to buy media. We were even up against phony environmental groups, and I’m a big environmentalist, but these were funded by the Russians to stand against any effort, ‘Oh that pipeline, that fracking, that whatever will be a problem for you,’ and a lot of the money supporting that message was coming from Russia.”<sup>24</sup>

In January 2017, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a report that contained “clear evidence that the Kremlin is financing and choreographing anti-fracking propaganda in the United States.”<sup>25</sup> The report found that the Russian-sponsored news agency RT (formerly *Russian Today*) “r[an] anti-fracking programing, highlighting environmental issues and the impacts on public health,” which “is likely reflective of the Russian Government’s concern about the impact of fracking and the U.S. natural gas production on the global energy market and the potential challenges to [Russian energy companies’] profitability,” such as state-controlled Russian energy giant Gazprom.<sup>26</sup> A Republican staff report by the Senate suggests

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TV – a Kremlin-financed channel operated from within the U.S.); Eric Roston, *Putin’s Other American Propaganda Effort: Anti-Fracking News*, BLOOMBERG (Jan. 9, 2017), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-01-10/putin-s-other-american-propaganda-effort-anti-fracking-news>; Michael Bastasch, *Hillary’s Leaked Speeches Confirm Russia Funded Anti-Fracking Groups*, DAILY CALLER (Oct. 10, 2016), <http://dailycaller.com/2016/10/10/hillarys-leaked-speeches-confirm-russia-funded-anti-fracking-groups/>; Fiona Harvey, *Russia ‘Secretly Working with Environmentalists to Oppose Fracking’*, THE GUARDIAN (June 19, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/19/russia-secretly-working-with-environmentalists-to-oppose-fracking>.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Higgins, *Russian Money Suspected Behind Fracking Protests*, NY TIMES (Nov. 30, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/01/world/russian-money-suspected-behind-fracking-protests.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Valerie Richardson, *Leaked Emails Show Hillary Clinton Blaming Russians for Funding ‘Phony’ Anti-fracking Groups*, WASH. TIMES (Oct. 10, 2016), <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/oct/10/clinton-blames-russians-anti-fracking-groups/>.

<sup>25</sup> Drew Johnson, *Intelligence: Putin is Funding the Anti-Fracking Campaign*, NEWSWEEK (Jan. 29, 2017), <http://www.newsweek.com/intelligence-putin-funding-anti-fracking-campaign-547873>; see Office of the Dir. of Nat’l Intelligence, *supra* note 22.

<sup>26</sup> Office of the Dir. of Nat’l Intelligence, *supra* note 22 at 8; For extensive detail on the connections, see H. Comm. on Sci., Space, & Tech. Subcomm. on Oversight, *Letter to Sec. Steven Mnuchin, U.S. Dep’t of Treasury*, 115th Cong. (June 29, 2017); see also Kevin Mooney, *Putin Is Funding Green Groups To Discredit Natural Gas Fracking*, NEWSWEEK (July 11, 2017), <http://www.newsweek.com/putin-funding-green-groups-discredit-natural-gas-fracking-635052>; John Sicilliano, *Hacking Report: Russia Engaged in Anti-Fracking Campaign*, WASH. EXAMINER (Jan. 6, 2017), <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/hacking-report-russia-engaged-in-anti-fracking-campaign/article/2611144>; Higgins, *supra* note 23.

that Russian funds have been funneled through off-shore corporations and passed on to U.S.-based environmental activist organizations with the intent to effect political change.<sup>27</sup>

More recently Senator Ben Cardin released a voluminous report on Russian manipulation of the media over decades. Specific to oil and gas, the Cardin report cited a “study by the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies [which] reports that the Russian government has invested \$95 million in NGOs that seek to persuade EU governments to end shale gas exploration,” which illustrates how American energy directly clashes with the Russian energy agenda.<sup>28</sup> Senator Cardin’s work reiterates that “according to NATO officials, Russian intelligence agencies also reportedly provide covert support to European environmental groups to campaign against fracking for natural gas, thereby keeping the EU more dependent on Russian supplies.”<sup>29</sup>

Additionally, as further evidence of Russian attempts to spread propaganda in the United States, U.S. Department of Justice officials have demanded that the U.S. based affiliate of RT register as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).<sup>30</sup> FARA requires that agents representing the interests of foreign governments in any political or quasi-political capacity disclose public communications aimed at influencing American political debate or public policy.<sup>31</sup> Through local programs all over the world, RT and other news agencies operate as a government-funded arm of Russia in its attempts to destabilize and disrupt democratic institutions and the free market. Under FARA, the American people have the right to evaluate the “statements and activities of [persons acting as foreign agents] in light of their function as foreign agents.”<sup>32</sup>

To that end, the Kremlin is attempting to make, as Senator Cardin’s report states, “useful idiots” of unwitting environmental groups and activists in furtherance of its energy influence operations.<sup>33</sup> Although this is not a new tactic in the Kremlin’s playbook, it has been adapted to account for modern technological advancements like the Internet and social media. Throughout history, the Kremlin has engaged and manipulated unwitting individuals to disseminate propaganda in furtherance of its global agenda.<sup>34</sup> The Kremlin continues to employ this tactic, which has become substantially more effective with the proliferation of the Internet and social media. By leveraging the sincerely held views and beliefs of unwitting agents, the Kremlin is able to exploit polarized issues in American democracy to influence action in furtherance of its agenda.

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<sup>27</sup> See Senate Comm. on Env’t & Pub. Works, 113<sup>th</sup> Cong., *Chain of Environmental Command: How a Club of Billionaire and Their Foundation Control the Environmental Movement and Obama’s EPA* (Comm. Print July 30, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Staff of S. Comm. on Foreign Relations, 115<sup>th</sup> Cong., *Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security*, at 53 (Comm. Print 2018), available at <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FinalRR.pdf> [hereinafter Cardin Report].

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> Megan R. Wilson, *Russian Network RT Must Register as a Foreign Agent in US*, THE HILL (Sept. 12, 2017), <http://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/business-a-lobbying/350226-russian-network-rt-must-register-as-foreign-agent-in>.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. DEP’T OF JUSTICE, *Foreign Agent Registration Act* (last visited Sept. 15, 2017), <https://www.fara.gov/>.

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> See Cardin Report, *supra* note 28 at 47.

<sup>34</sup> See Cardin Report, *supra* note 28 at 7.

### III. The Kremlin exploited social media to influence opinions about U.S. energy and environmental policy

In recent years, the Kremlin has ramped up its influence operations on the Internet and social media.<sup>35</sup> Social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, have the ability to serve as an effective propaganda arm for conveying specific messages to geographically targeted audiences.<sup>36</sup> Using the lightning rods of energy and environmental policy, Russian agents affiliated with the IRA worked to influence public opinion in the U.S. This section of the report provides social media posts or examples of this effort and discussion of the underlying issue. The examples (also referred to as “Russian posts” or “Russian content”) included in this section were provided by Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (collectively “the social media companies”), and were propagated by accounts the social media companies have linked to the IRA.

#### *Pipelines and Energy Infrastructure*

Pipelines and domestic energy infrastructure were a primary target of the Russian agents. Specifically, several posts encouraged protests of pipeline construction, which is illustrative of the Kremlin’s indiscriminate efforts to influence U.S. energy policy. Numerous posts, for example, directly targeted the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The posts emphasized and exacerbated the alleged violent nature of the DAPL protests. Additionally, several Russian posts focused on the counter-narrative and sought to exploit anti-activist sentiment by propagating content supportive of pipeline construction efforts, illustrating once again the Kremlin’s indiscriminate efforts to cause discord and disruption.



The Russian content targeting pipelines was not limited to the DAPL. Russian posts also targeted several other pipelines, including Sabal Trail, Keystone XL, Colonial, Bayou Bridge, and Enbridge Line 5. Additionally, the efforts of the Russian agents went beyond stirring up existing controversy surrounding the pipelines. Russian agents attempted to incite Americans to take action against pipeline efforts by promoting links and references to online petitions. Numerous tweets, for example, encouraged viewers to follow links to petitions aimed at stopping the Dakota Access, Sabal Trail, and Enbridge Line 5 pipelines. This demonstrates that Russian agents attempted to directly influence the American energy industry. Russians, through posts, engaged in a concerted effort to undermine U.S. energy production.

<sup>35</sup> See Cardin Report, *supra* note 28 at 29.

<sup>36</sup> Alex Hern, *Facebook and Twitter Are Being Used to Manipulate Public Opinion – Report*, THE GUARDIAN (June 19, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jun/19/social-media-proganda-manipulating-PUBLIC-opinion-bots-accounts-facebook-twitter>.



RUSSIAN SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



**Facebook**  
Page name: "Born Liberal"  
Shares: 5  
Likes: 9  
Reactions: 3  
Comments: 0  
Posted: May 11, 2017

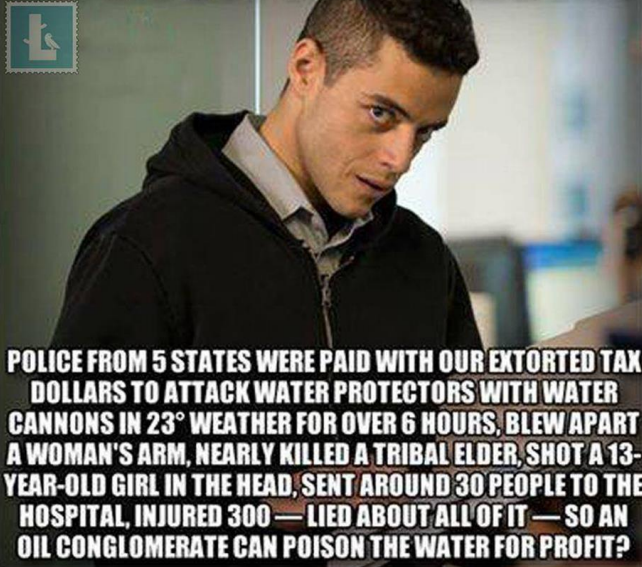
**Instagram**  
Account name: "bornliberal"  
Likes: 1,794  
Comments: 96  
Posted: May 11, 2017



**Facebook**  
Page name: "Blacktivist"  
Shares: 497  
Likes: 378  
Reactions: 293  
Comments: 65  
Posted: November 25, 2016

We're about to celebrate thanksgiving and tell schoolchildren we made peace w Native Americans while DAPL protestors are being tear gassed

# LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT



## Facebook

Page name: "Born Liberal"

Shares: 56

Likes: 33

Reactions: 39

Comments: 4

Posted: November 29, 2016

# DEAR AMERICA: WE'VE BEEN BRUTALIZING AND STEALING FROM NATIVE AMERICANS FOR MORE THAN 500 YEARS



## Facebook

Page name: "Born Liberal"

Shares: 5

Likes: 12

Reactions: 0

Comments: 0

Posted: March 7, 2017

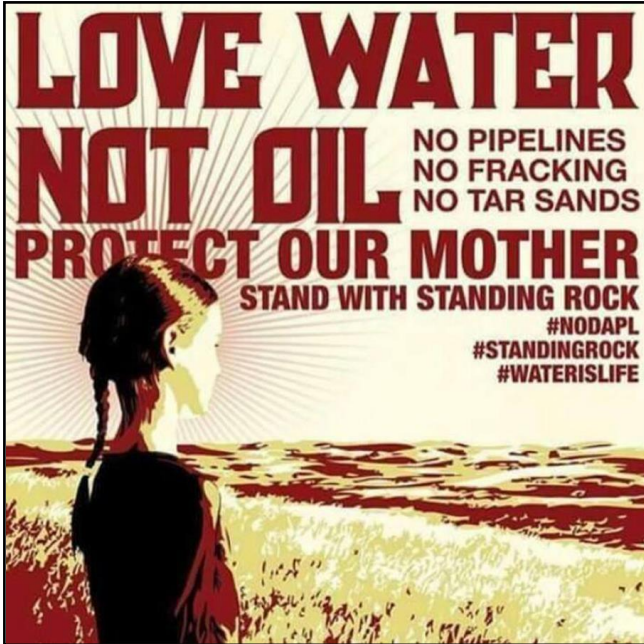
## Instagram

Account name: "bornliberal"

Likes: 1,042

Comments: 105

Posted: March 7, 2017



**Facebook**

Page name: "Native Americans United"

Shares: 8

Likes: 22

Reactions: 5

Comments: 0

Posted: February 14, 2017

**Instagram**

Account name: "native\_americans\_united"

Likes: 718

Comments: 14

Posted: February 14, 2017



**Facebook**

Page name: "Native Americans United"

Shares: 5

Likes: 13

Reactions: 6

Comments: 0

Posted: February 1, 2017

**Instagram**

Account name: "native\_americans\_united"

Likes: 473

Comments: 7

Posted: February 2, 2017



**Instagram**  
 Account name: “\_americafirst\_”;  
 “stand\_for\_freedom”  
 Likes: 3,076; 1,774  
 Comments: 57; 17  
 Posted: May 8, 2017; April 17, 2017

<b>RUSSIAN TWEETS</b>	
<b>Pipelines</b>	
<i>Dakota Access</i>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
9/9/16	RT @DanteB4u: Please sign & RT- &gt; Petition to stop construction of Dakota Access Pipeline #HonorTheTreaties #NoDAPL#uCantDrinkOil <a href="https://t...">https://t...</a>
9/18/16	RT @BERNintoNITE: Sign the petition: Tell @POTUS to stop the Dakota Access pipeline <a href="https://t.co/v3GiRUc1hc">https://t.co/v3GiRUc1hc</a> via @CREDOMobile #p2#NoDAPL
10/30/16	RT @MsPackyetti: MoveOn Petitions - Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline once and for all - #NoDAPL <a href="https://t.co/Wu6vBbVILR">https://t.co/Wu6vBbVILR</a>
9/14/16	#TopVideo Protesters say Dakota pipeline will 'kill' <a href="https://t.co/HTGtZQHOUz">https://t.co/HTGtZQHOUz</a>
9/14/16	Protesters in central Phoenix rally against Dakota Access pipeline <a href="https://t.co/jfJgIxN3xl">https://t.co/jfJgIxN3xl</a>
9/11/16	RT @People4Bernie: If we can halt the pipeline at @SacredStoneCamp , we can halt it in Iowa too! Let's do this @bold_iowa! #NoDAPL <a href="https://...">https://...</a>
9/15/16	#NoDAPL Protesters Arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline Construction Site <a href="https://t.co/RU2E1uMGCD">https://t.co/RU2E1uMGCD</a>

<i>Sabal Trail</i>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
12/11/16	RT @NoDAPL_: Critics Call \$3 Billion #SabalTrailPipeline #Florida's Dakota Access Pipeline <a href="https://t.co/WtEqPTjti5">https://t.co/WtEqPTjti5</a> #WaterIsLife #NoDAPL.
12/11/16	RT @NoDAPL_: Pipeline Protests Are Happening In Florida #NoSabalTrailPipeline\n <a href="https://t.co/5MpXPf9DBh">https://t.co/5MpXPf9DBh</a> \n#WaterProtectors#SabalTrailPipeline...
12/29/16	RT @cook_robert_l: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Stop the Sabal Trail Pipeline - Sign the Petition! <a href="https://t.co/Cz4tPLLq34">https://t.co/Cz4tPLLq34</a> via @Change
<i>Keystone XL</i>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
4/4/16	RT @BernieSanders: The Keystone Pipeline would transport some of the dirtiest fuel on this planet. I've led the opposition to it from the b...
4/5/16	Keystone pipeline springs leak in South Dakota <a href="https://t.co/3PqaHXvfs7">https://t.co/3PqaHXvfs7</a>
3/25/17	RT @ChrisJZullo: Keystone XL pipeline puts water supply to 18 million at risk of oil spills for a ton of corporate profits and a total of 4...
3/27/17	Keystone pipeline faces bitter fight from environmental activists <a href="https://t.co/1ABEFxYFrM">https://t.co/1ABEFxYFrM</a> <a href="https://t.co/RwdlvQM0Eo">https://t.co/RwdlvQM0Eo</a>
<i>Other</i>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
1/14/17	UPDATE: Colonial Pipeline repair complete after 630 gallons of gasoline leaked into Sh... <a href="https://t.co/x6SiYaDjZa">https://t.co/x6SiYaDjZa</a> <a href="https://t.co/dv0Zw98C5l">https://t.co/dv0Zw98C5l</a>
1/9/17	RT @johnh_alexander: We Stand with Standing Rock\nSay NO to the Dakota Access Pipeline\nSay NO to the Bayou Bridge Pipeline\nSay NO to Environ...

### *Fossil Fuels*

Beyond pipelines and infrastructure, a large portion of the Russian posts focused on framing America as a nation fixated on oil to the detriment of our political and social institutions. One post, for example, highlighted energy companies' profits and the energy-related "subsidies" they receive and contrasted that with an apparent lack of subsidies for public school funding. Posts such as these use highly controversial issues to distort perceptions about the role energy companies play in American politics.

Additionally, numerous posts advocated the complete abandonment of specific fuel sources, such as fossil fuels, by touting exaggerated claims about alternative energy sources. One such post, for example, touted the progress made by Iowa in its efforts toward clean energy. While Iowa does generate an increasing amount of energy from wind power, the post is false and an example of Russian efforts to mislead Americans regarding energy.

## RUSSIAN SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



### Facebook

Page name: "Born Liberal"

Shares: 12

Likes: 8

Reactions: 6

Comments: 1

Posted: January 10, 2017

### Instagram

Account name: "bornliberal"

Likes: 511

Comments: 19

Posted: January 10, 2017



### Facebook

Page name: "Born Liberal"

Shares: 21

Likes: 22

Reactions: 5

Comments: 1

Posted: December 21, 2016

### Instagram

Account name: "bornliberal"

Likes: 784

Comments: 24

Posted: December 21, 2016

**THREE CHEERS FOR IOWA!**



**STATE APPROVES SWITCH TO 100% GREEN ENERGY BY BUILDING 1,000 WIND TURBINES**

**SHARE IF YOUR STATE SHOULD ABANDON FOSSIL FUELS NEXT!**

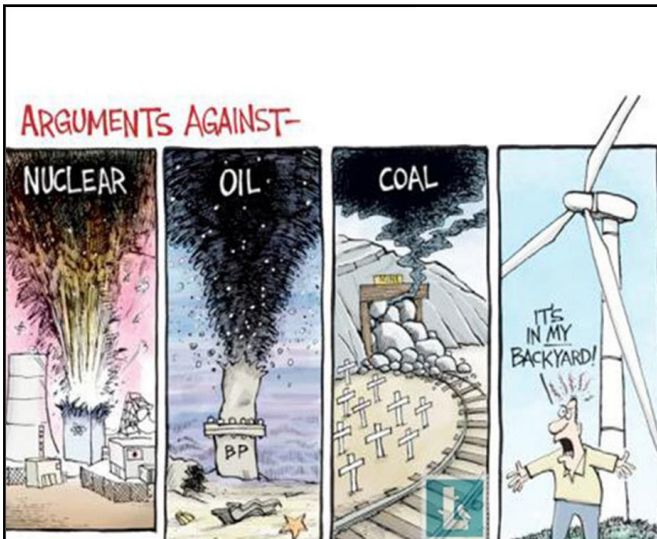


**Facebook**

Page name: "Born Liberal"; "Born Liberal"  
 Shares: 103; 81  
 Likes: 184; 120  
 Reactions: 22; 9  
 Comments: 3; 2  
 Posted: January 26, 2017; September 8, 2016

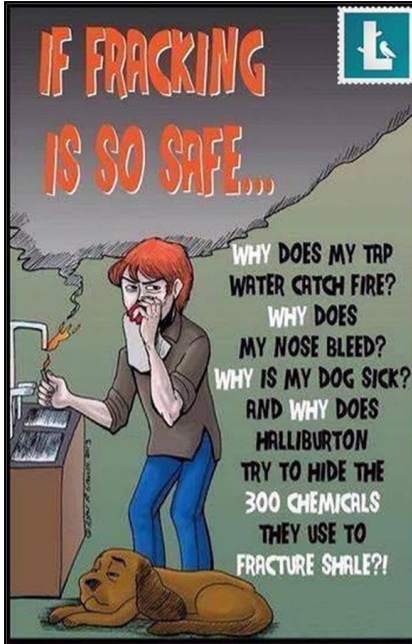
**Instagram**

Account name: "bornliberal"; "bornliberal"  
 Likes: 1,618; 207  
 Comments: 51; 3  
 Posted: January 28, 2017; September 10, 2016



**Instagram**

Account name: "bornliberal"  
 Likes: 3,052  
 Comments: 169  
 Posted: April 28, 2017



**Instagram**

Account name: “bornliberal”; “bornliberal”

Likes: 458; 68

Comments: 14; 2

Posted: January 8, 2017; August 2, 2016


<b>RUSSIAN TWEETS</b>	
<b>Fossil Fuels &amp; Fracking</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
4/12/2016	RT @BernieSanders: Fracking pollutes water, degrades air quality and worsens climate change. No amount of regulation can make it safe. \nhttp...
4/25/2016	Fracking Exec Reportedly Admits Targeting the Poor, Because They Don't Have 'The Money To Fight'\nhttps://t.co/NFeAHc409t
7/19/2016	Fracking associated with asthma flare-ups #health
7/19/2016	Fracking may worsen asthma for nearby residents, study says https://t.co/wbl1kBLPxO
4/30/2016	Pennsylvania probes possible link between quakes, fracking #local
8/9/2016	Colorado anti-fracking initiatives hit signature target #US #news
5/28/2016	#TopVideo Sanders: "We have got to end fracking" https://t.co/HMH9JnJBLI
10/23/2016	RT @Tim_Canova: Good news: Last night, Miami-Dade officials voted unanimously to ban fracking. #ProgressForAll \nhttps://t.co/JpEEpL6QdH



## Climate Change

Numerous Russian posts focused on the ongoing debate about climate change by linking catastrophic weather events to climate change and divisively labeling one viewpoint as right and one as left. One post characterizes Americans as ignoring major events that are allegedly signs of climate change. Additionally, these posts frame the conservative viewpoint regarding climate change as a “liberal hoax,” all in an effort to generate further domestic controversy surrounding the issue of climate change.

### RUSSIAN SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



**Facebook**  
Page name: “Born Liberal”; “Born Liberal”  
Shares: 140; 64  
Likes: 100; 73  
Reactions: 38; 22  
Comments: 10; 1  
Posted: November 16, 2016; August 22, 2016

**Instagram**  
Account name: “bornliberal”  
Likes: 117  
Comments: 2  
Posted: August 23, 2016



**Facebook**  
Page name: “Born Liberal”; “Born Liberal”  
Shares: 24; 3  
Likes: 32; 12  
Reactions: 11; 1  
Comments: 1; 0  
Posted: December 27, 2016; August 16, 2016

**Instagram**  
Account name: “bornliberal”; “bornliberal”  
Likes: 617; 129  
Comments: 64; 6  
Posted: December 27, 2016; August 17, 2016

<b>RUSSIAN TWEETS</b>	
<b>Climate Change</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Tweet Text</b>
1/9/2016	RT @Latinos4Bernie: .@BernieSanders: "Climate change is real," but the "GOP will not admit this" given the oil industry lobbying power. htt...
5/15/2016	Climate activists in New York, Washington state protest fossil fuels #money
5/15/2016	Climate activists in New York, Washington state protest fossil fuels #environment
5/15/2016	Climate activists protest oil shipments at New York port hub #politics
6/29/2016	RT @SenSanders: Our grandchildren will ask us why we allowed fossil fuel companies to rake in record profits while climate change ravages
7/22/2016	New gas pipelines would make U.S. miss climate target: report #environment

### ***Further Disruption***

The main focus of the Russian efforts centered on disruption of pipeline development or the advancement of climate change policies targeting fossil fuels. Many posts highlighted other viewpoints about the energy sector from across the political and ideological spectrum and attempted to divide Americans based on geographic region. Numerous posts from a Russian account named “Heart of Texas” advocated for pro-drilling and oil positions. The text associated with the post pictured below, for example, stated: “I don't care what ecologists say. Texas is the top oil producing state, and I'm [] proud of it! Let's douse the Yankees with it and then just throw a burning match.” This is an attempt by the Russians to arouse emotion among Americans based on their geographic location.

Additionally, several posts took positions against climate change policies, supporting the notion that scientists “have no proof of substantial temperature fluctuations in recent history” and stating “liberals tax our business not because it is in the planet's interest, but because they are afraid of fair competition, want additional money for themselves, and wish to control [the] energy sector in this country.” The posts highlight claims that liberals “use fear of climate change to manipulate general public all in the name of greed and lust for power.” The post concludes with, “Stop taxing our business, climate change isn't real!”

By posting content that supports positions held by both liberals and conservatives alike, the Russians used social media to instigate and inflame discord in the United States. Russian social media manipulators intentionally injected foreign propaganda into American political discourse. These Russian agents are only interested in creating discord in America while hiding behind an anonymous and misleading social media pseudonym, as demonstrated by the highly divisive, often contradictory posts provided in this report.

## RUSSIAN SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



The image shows a Facebook and Instagram post. On the left is a photograph of several oil pumpjacks silhouetted against a sunset sky. A small logo in the top right of the photo reads "HEART OF TEXAS" with a star and the website "FB.COM/HEARTOFTXAS". Overlaid on the bottom of the photo is the text "NO PLACE TO DRILL LIKE TEXAS" in large, bold, white and red letters. To the right of the photo is the post's metadata.

**Facebook**  
*Page name:* "Heart of Texas"  
*Shares:* 50  
*Likes:* 260  
*Reactions:* 18  
*Comments:* 15  
*Posted:* October 18, 2016

**Instagram**  
*Account name:* "rebeltexas"  
*Likes:* 569  
*Comments:* 5  
*Posted:* October 18, 2016



The image shows an Instagram post with two photographs. The top photo is an aerial view of a large, terraced lithium mine. The bottom photo is an aerial view of an oil sands extraction site in Alberta, Canada. The post includes text overlays and metadata.

**THIS IS A MINE WHERE LITHIUM IS EXTRACTED FOR ELECTRIC CAR BATTERIES**

**THIS IS AN OILSANDS SITE IN ALBERTA**

**TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW YOUR ELECTRIC CAR IS BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Instagram**  
*Account name:* "mericanfury"; "southern.rebel.pride"; "wall\_up"  
*Likes:* 3,637; 3,005; 3,266  
*Comments:* 89; 36; 141  
*Posted:* July 14, 2017; July 17, 2017; July 12, 2017

## CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T REAL



Facebook

Page name: "Heart of Texas"

Shares: 100

Likes: 550

Reactions: 4

Comments: 32

Posted: April 14, 2016

**LIKE IF WE SHOULDN'T PAY  
CLIMATE CHANGE TAXES**

## RUSSIAN TWEETS

### Further Disruption

Date	Tweet Text
9/18/2016	RT @canativeobt: National Guard Begins Arresting Pipeline Protestors At Gunpoint <a href="https://t.co/IbAuJxqM9Q">https://t.co/IbAuJxqM9Q</a> via @YouTube #NoDAPL
9/17/2016	RT @JordanChariton: Cable News Silent as Two States Declare Emergency After Pipeline Spill <a href="https://t.co/ijntJ4zwDu">https://t.co/ijntJ4zwDu</a>
8/9/2016	Dangerous oil trains need greater oversight   Editorial
7/22/2016	Undercover officers mingled with protesters at oil-gas event <a href="https://t.co/TulhEHP0kR">https://t.co/TulhEHP0kR</a> #news

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## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

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Based upon the findings detailed above, it is clear that Russian agents are using social media to influence and impact U.S. energy markets. Regardless of one's political or ideological views surrounding U.S. energy policy and climate change, the American people deserve to be free from foreign political interference. As such, the Committee will continue to work with social media companies, which have taken positive steps to bring transparency to the online debate. Americans have a right to know that much of what they view online is being disseminated by foreign agents in an effort to disrupt U.S. energy policies. The goal of these foreign agents is to shape Americans' perceptions of energy and of climate change issues.

The Committee will continue its ongoing efforts to identify foreign interference in domestic energy policy, whether from Russia or any other country, so that the American people can formulate their positions based on facts rather than foreign propaganda. The Committee is publicizing the posts and tweets included in this report to show Americans the broad nature of Russia's meddling and to reveal Russia's attempts to deceive and influence the American public, especially as related to domestic energy issues. The goal is for the American people to be better positioned to make more informed decisions about domestic energy policy free from the influence of foreign operatives.