

Another Tucker Carlson Interview Shows Pentagon All Over U.S. Elections

by David Christie

March 5—Following his interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin Feb. 6, viewed by hundreds of millions worldwide, journalist Tucker Carlson conducted an interview Feb. 16, which has been much less viewed, but is nonetheless interesting to a world having 64 national elections in 2024. In that [interview](#), former State Department official Michael Benz asserted that a regime-change tool-kit for attempting to control the outcome of elections has been developed by the Pentagon and the National Security Agency, and that they now deploy it against the citizens of the United States, as well as its “allies.”

Michael Benz had a “cyber” portfolio at the State Department during the Trump Administration and is the current Executive Director of the Foundation for Freedom Online. His revelations about the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA, created in 2018) cohere with *EIR*’s earlier analysis of the military roots of what some have called the “censorship-industrial complex,” during the 2022 work of journalists Matt Taibbi, Michael Schellenberger, and Alex Gutentag on the “Twitter files,” made public by Elon Musk. In the Dec. 16, 2022 *EIR* [article](#) “Behind ‘Twittergate’: The NSA Meddles in Americans’ Right To Vote, Speak, Think,” Paul Gallagher and I reviewed how the Pentagon, NSA, and U.S. Cyber Command created the “Election Security Group” in the aftermath of allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 election. The Election Security Group, also called the Russia Small Group, was, in fact, a continuation of the Pentagon’s online counterinsurgency campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS)!

U.S. Cyber Command, which created the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), is a sub-command under the U.S. Strategic Command. U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus, who commanded U.S. forces in Iraq in their “counterinsurgency” phase,



X/Tucker Carlson

Interviewed by Tucker Carlson (left), Michael Benz (right), a former State Department official, explained that the Pentagon and the National Security Agency have developed a regime-change tool-kit to control U.S. elections. The interview was streamed on Tucker Carlson Uncensored, Feb. 16, 2024.

played a pivotal role in advocating for the creation of CISA.

Censorship in (Nuclear) Wartime

Before he opened his dialogue with Michael Benz, Tucker Carlson made the crucial point that the “specific kind of censorship [that] emanates from the fabled military-industrial complex, from our defense industry and the foreign policy establishment in Washington” is significant now, “because we’re on the cusp of a global war, and so you can expect censorship to increase dramatically.” Benz’s response was that initially, an open and free Internet was useful to the Pentagon and foreign policy establishment, to promote color revolutions like the Arab Spring; but it became a danger after the referendum in Crimea, which referendum went against the foreign policy desires of the West.

But Benz reminded that the development of the Internet was part of the Pentagon’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and that many of the major Silicon Valley companies were also initially DARPA-funded. Benz cited the case of Google and its geopolitical wing called “Jigsaw,” whose former CEO, Jared Cohen, helped shape regime-change operations in Southwest Asia during the Arab Spring in the early

2010s.

Benz then said that after the 2014 referendum in Crimea, in which citizens voted to integrate with Russia, there was an increasing recognition that the nature of warfare had changed, and had become more about controlling media and social media, to control elections:

If you simply get the right administration into power, they control the military. An industry had been created that spanned the Pentagon, the British Ministry of Defense, and Brussels [NATO command—ed.], into an organized political warfare outfit....

Infrastructure was created, initially stationed in Germany and in Central and Eastern Europe, ... to create the ability to have the military work with the social media companies to censor Russian propaganda; and then, to censor domestic, right-wing populist groups in Europe who were rising in political power at the time because of the migrant crisis.

A 2022 Australian university [study](#) of Twitter postings about Ukraine demonstrated that those postings were overwhelmingly anti-Russia; that they were dominated by postings by “bots” rather than human beings; and that Gen. Paul Nakasone’s U.S. Cyber Command had generated large volumes—perhaps most—of those postings. Benz and Carlson discussed how this type of hybrid warfare was mainly deployed internationally against “right-wing populist” movements. Benz asserted that these operations became “full throttle” after Brexit, and especially after the election of Donald Trump. But he added that similar tactics would be applied to the Left, if someone like Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, or Sen. Bernie Sanders in the United States, were to come to power.

Elections Become ‘Critical Infrastructure’

Benz concludes that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, was created to do domestically what the Pentagon, CIA, and State Department could only do against foreign actors. He reviewed the role of the Atlantic Council—which *EIR* has long assessed as the NATO think-tank with the mandate to secure the “special relationship” between the United States and the United Kingdom—in creating the space for what would become CISA.

After organizing European governments to enact censorship laws, the Atlantic Council turned its attention to America, arguing that the United States should adopt the “[Defend Forward](#)” blueprint of Cyber Command and the Election Security Group, and coordinate the censorship activities of NGOs, fact-checkers, and industry actors into a cohesive whole.

Benz then described how CISA was invented to do this:

And so essentially what they said is, well, the only other domestic intelligence entity we have in the U.S. besides the FBI, is the DHS [Department of Homeland Security—ed.]. So, we are going to essentially take the CIA’s power to rig and bribe foreign media organizations—which is the power they’ve had since the day they were born in 1947—and we’re going to combine that with the domestic jurisdiction of the FBI, by putting it at DHS. So, DHS was basically deputized—it was empowered through this obscure little cybersecurity agency [CISA] to have the combined powers that the CIA has abroad with the jurisdiction of the FBI at home.

Benz said that CISA was created by an act of Congress in 2018,

because of the perceived threat that Russia had hacked the 2016 election. And essentially on the heels of a CIA memo on Jan. 6, 2017—and the same-day DHS Executive Order ... arguing that Russia had interfered in the 2016 election—a DHS mandate [was issued] saying that elections are now critical infrastructure; you had this new power within DHS to say that cybersecurity attacks on elections are now our purview.

Benz then clarified that classifying elections as critical infrastructure allowed DHS to label any attacks on that infrastructure—for example, public criticism of mail-in voting—as part of foreign disinformation campaigns. This, in turn, allowed CISA to exist and expand, despite the acknowledged failure of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s “Russiagate” investigation to establish anything of substance.

There is much more to this provocative interview, which readers of *EIR* are encouraged to watch on their own.