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Forget Russiagate, Now it's US-gate! US Election Meddling Extends to Britain



Drawing by Nathaniel St. Clair

So now we have pompous Mike Pompeo, America's current Secretary of State, on a visit to the UK, assuring a group of British Jewish leaders in a closed-door meeting that the US would work to prevent Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn from becoming prime minister if his party were to win enough votes in the next national parliamentary election to get the opportunity to try and form a new British government.

In a recording leaked to the Washington Post, Pompeo assured a group of Jewish leaders in Britain yesterday that the US government would "push back" against Corbyn

becoming prime minister in such a case, working behind the scenes to prevent a victorious Labour party from voting in Corbyn as Prime Minister.

In the British parliamentary system, the party with the most votes after an election, if it wins an outright majority, or, as the Conservatives did in the last election, a plurality of votes and then is able to successfully cobble together a majority by bringing in other parties, then can use that majority to elect a new prime minister. Normally the new PM is the leader of the party that won the most votes, but that need not be the case.

A questioner on the tape is heard asking Pompeo, “Would you be willing to work with us to take on actions if life becomes very difficult for Jews in the UK?” — an obvious reference to a rabid ongoing campaign in the largely conservative UK media and among Zionist groups in the UK to tar Corbyn as an anti-semitic because of his outspoken defense of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Pompeo, obviously not aware he is being taped, appears to suggest in his answer on the leaked recording that the US would seek to prevent Corbyn from becoming PM. “It could be that Mr Corbyn manages to run the gauntlet and get elected,” he says. “It’s possible. You should know, we won’t wait for him to do those things [presumably making life ‘difficult for the Jews in the UK’] to begin to push back. We will do our level best. It’s too risky and too important and too hard once it’s already happened.”

This — an acknowledgment that the US would try to influence the selection of Britain’s parliamentary leader — is truly an astonishing statement coming from a top US government official, and particularly a secretary of state. I mean we all know that the US routinely messes with elections all over the third world, and even in European countries, but our leaders don’t normally admit it, even in private, preferring to tout the US as a paragon of “democratic values.”

Imagine if Corbyn were Prime Minister in 2020, and his foreign minister were caught on tape in the US telling a group of black leaders or Muslim leaders that his government would try mightily to prevent Donald Trump from winning re-election?

Oh, I know, he or she would immediately be given a ticker-tape parade in San Francisco, New York and Boston! But seriously, much of the nation, and the media, would go ballistic.

Of course, AIPAC, Israel’s lobbying organization in the US. does exactly that kind of thing every election year, but still, as a matter of decorum and at least the pretense of

respect for other nations' sovereignty, one doesn't expect to hear a secretary of state talking about such crude interference in the democratic process in another country, particularly in a nation which is America's closest ally aside from perhaps outright dependencies like Taiwan or Dubai.

Not surprisingly, the response in the UK has been mostly outrage.

A Labour Party official told the British Guardian newspaper, "President Trump and his officials' attempts to decide who will be Britain's next prime minister are an entirely unacceptable interference in the UK's democracy."

The dust-up over Pompeo's leaked remarks should be recalled as one contemplates the absurd obsession among Democrats here about alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US election continues apace.

Yet certainly nothing Russia is accused of doing — like buying ads allegedly intended to promote division in the US on Facebook, or using bots to promote disharmony on various social media platforms — comes close to what Pompeo is proposing doing: actually using the full weight of the US government, with its ability to offer gifts of free weapons or conversely to impose punitive tariffs, not to mention making available the nefarious abilities and persuasive powers of the CIA and NSA to prevent the selection of a chosen party leader as prime minister following victory in an election (Pompeo was CIA director before becoming Secretary of State).

The hubris of this grotesque Tea Party Congressman-turned "top diplomat" is simply appalling.

One would have thought any self-respecting British Tory politician would have instantly denounced Pompeo's suggested intrusion into the workings of the British electoral system, but so far there hasn't been a peep from any of that party's leaders, who no doubt actually support the idea of the US preventing their nemesis Corbyn from ever moving into 10 Downing Street.

His comments may, however, have the effect of bolstering support for Corbyn among Labour's rank-and-file. Corbyn has already survived several concerted attempts from the Blairite faction of his party to unseat him as party leader, always emerging stronger from those attacks. My guess is the same thing will happen here, when a clumsy outsider from across the Atlantic offers to do the same thing.

Meanwhile American liberals should keep this incident in mind as they continue to wallow in the self-destructive effort to conjure up a fake story line that the Russians “stole” the 2016 election for Trump by undermining Hillary Clinton’s campaign, when in fact it was the Democratic Party leadership and Clinton herself who blew that election. Those leaders are well on the way to blowing the next one, too, for example by refusing to hold a presidential debate focused on the existential issue of climate change.

Pompeo may think he has to “save” the Jews of Britain from Corbyn and Britain from the anti-Brexiteers in the Labour Party, but at the rate things are going here in the US, nobody is going to have to come in from the outside to “save” America from a Democratic president and a Democratic Congress in 2020. The Democrats, with their continuing whining about Russiagate, look like they’ll manage that all by themselves.

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