Russia’s not so little election helpers | The Boston Globe

By Steven Livingston and W. Lance Bennett
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Investigations by news organizations, US intelligence agencies, the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee, and of course by special prosecutor Robert Mueller, all reached the same conclusion: The Russian government meddled in the 2016 presidential elections. Some observers have gone so far as to conclude that Russia’s machinations were essential to Trump’s victory. By taking advantage of social media’s tendency to aggregate and deepen political passions, Russia gave vital assistance to Donald Trump’s campaign.

For example, on Instagram, a group called “Born Liberal” pushed a meme showing a clenched fist holding a bundle of strings connecting to images of people with television sets for heads. Accompanying the image was this statement: “The People Believe What the Media Tells Them They Believe: George Orwell.” Orwell said no such thing, as may be obvious from the tortured grammar. “Born Liberal” was in fact the handiwork of the Internet Research Agency, the Russian Internet propaganda initiative in St. Petersburg. The point of this particular effort was to deepen American distrust of mainstream news.

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