

The Google Election

by Michael Rectenwald



[This is the transcript of [Ron Paul Symposium](#) on November 7, 2020, in Angleton, Texas.]

“Don’t be evil” may no longer be Google’s official company motto, but it remains the last sentence of its [Code of Conduct](#). As part of not being evil, Google maintains that “everything [it does] in connection with [its] work...will be, and should be, measured against the highest possible standards of ethical business conduct.”

Apparently, Google does not deem it unethical to [fire](#) an employee [for expressing the research-based view that differences between the sexes/genders may include occupational proclivities](#). Google must not consider it unethical to [blacklist](#) conservative or otherwise nonleftist news sites, websites, and users. Google must believe that [autocompleting searches with patent nonsense](#) represents the highest ethical standards. Google maintains that factual search results representing the world as it is amounts to “[algorithmic unfairness](#)” and changing them to desired results using “[Machine Learning Fairness](#)” is highly ethical. That is,

nonideological, nonaltered search results represent unfairness, while fairness is the result of informational affirmative action results manipulation—in some cases. Algorithmically ranking search results in favor of leftist or left-leaning politics and down-ranking conservative or right-wing sites is most ethical. It must consider rating the [“Expertise/Authoritativeness/Trustworthiness”](#) of websites using Wikipedia as meeting the highest ethical standards. Fact-checking only conservative or nonleftist news, often wrongly, is highly ethical. Discrimination against populist political movements and campaigns and favoring other, establishment movements and campaigns meets the highest possible standards of ethical business conduct. YouTube’s routinely demonetizing and censoring conservative or otherwise nonleftist content is ethical. Bombarding users with political ads based on their search profiles, and especially bombarding nonleftists with items having a leftist perspective, represents the highest ethics. Blatant declarations of the intent to prevent the reelection of a US presidential candidate using search rankings meets the highest standards of ethics, especially since “(1) biased search rankings can shift the voting preferences of undecided voters by 20% or more,” as Robert Epstein and Ronald E. Robertson [conclude](#).

In the wake of the riots across US cities over the past several months, I ran a Google search for “left-wing violence.” The [top two results](#), from *The Guardian* and the *New York Times*, respectively, were entitled [“White Supremacists behind Majority of US Domestic Terror Attacks in 2020”](#) and [“Far-Right Groups Are behind Most US Terrorist Attacks, Report Finds.”](#) This is a highly ethical result, no doubt, especially when information on leftist violence was sought and no shortage of such articles exist. This is especially ethical, since the search analytics industry has found that the top three search results on Google drive over 70 percent of clicks. The top ten search results for the question, “Will Democrats steal the 2020 election?” included five articles

about the prospect of Trump stealing the election, while all ten of the top ten results for “Will Trump steal the election?” were actually about the prospect of Trump stealing the election.

All but leftists realize that Big Digital corporations like Google, [Facebook](#), Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others lean left and squelch opposing views—to the point of [creating an alternate reality](#). But few ask why they are apparently leftist, let alone satisfactorily answering the question—to my satisfaction, that is. How are we to understand the blatant and well-documented leftist bias and the censorship of nonleftist views and sites by these companies? Why leftist? Is the internet leftist merely because those in Silicon Valley have been indoctrinated into leftism?

And should we adopt the view that since Google, Facebook, Twitter and others are private enterprises, they can be as biased and censoring as they like? After all, aren't these private platforms and not public utilities, with no obligation to represent views with which they disagree? They are no more obliged to do so than I am obliged to allow some Antifa member into my home to spout his, her, or zir beliefs, right?

These are the kinds of questions I address in this talk. The answers should go a long way toward explaining the disavowed yet blatant attempts on the part of Big Tech internet companies to decide the 2020 election, and much, much more. In terms of the election, they've interfered in the election with completely favorable coverage of one candidate and unfavorable content along with the near-complete blackout of favorable content about another. They've likewise made a rigged election result appear to be a credible result. Then they've censored or banned everyone from the president on down from talking about how the election was rigged. That's more than an in-kind donation. They may be considered accomplices in a federal election crime. They represent a fraud on public credulity.

1. The Governmentalization of Private Industry

In [Google Archipelago](#), I argue that these Big Digital goliaths, or what I call the Google Archipelago, act as appendages of the state, at the very least. They are state apparatuses, or, to use a postmodern neologism, they are “governmentalities.” In a series of lectures entitled [Security, Territory, Population](#), the postmodern theorist Michel Foucault introduced the term “[governmentality](#)” to refer to the distribution of state power to the population, or the transmission of governance to the governed. Foucault referred to the means by which the populace comes to govern itself as it adopts and personalizes the imperatives of the state, or how the governed adopt the mentality desired by the government–governmentality. One might point to masking and social distancing as instances of what Foucault meant by his notion of governmentality. While Foucault’s usage has merit (yes, Foucault exhibited a few redemptive, libertarian tendencies), I adopt and amend the term to include the distribution of state power to extragovernmental agents—in particular to the extension and transfer of state power to supposedly private enterprises. This *governmentalization* of private enterprise, and not the *privatization* of governmental agencies and functions that leftists like Foucault decry, is the real problem with “neoliberalism,” as I see it.

Or do they amount to the same thing? We are witnessing the governmentalization of private industry, the turning of supposedly private enterprises into state apparatuses, *and* the growth of the state through putatively private extensions of it.

2. Governmentalities in Action

For clear and pertinent examples of governmentalities in this sense, consider government contractors that comprise the so-called shadow government. As depicted in the documentary [Shadow Gate](#)—which was banned from YouTube after just one

day—according to two whistle-blowers who worked for military and intelligence contractors for many years, government contractors like [Dynology](#), [Global Strategies Group](#), [Canadian Global Information \(CGI\)](#), and many others engage in intelligence projects that include [interactive internet activities \(IIA\)](#). Such “social media psychological warfare” and “social media influence operations” rely on masses of data that social media and other sources provide and are designed to influence individuals, groups, or populations to behave in ways desired by the “deep state,” or other customers. Desired behaviors include voting for particular political candidates; supporting desired political movements and outcomes; and opposing undesired political candidates, movements, and outcomes—both at home and abroad. According to the *Shadow Gate* whistle-blowers, social media psychological warfare, which includes fake news, was initially developed for intelligence agencies but has been used and sold by intelligence contractors independently. They claim that social media psyops were employed in an attempt to tie Trump to Russia and discredit his campaign. The dominant narrative, of course, is that it was used by Russia to benefit Trump’s election. According to the *Shadow Gate* whistle-blowers, it was also used to whip up the recent “protests” after the death of George Floyd, while other sources claim that and the hype about the protests was itself fear porn whipped up by Russia-initiated psyops. Still others maintain that the protests themselves were part of a Russian psyops campaign targeting black Americans.

What does this have to do with Google, Facebook, and other digital media companies? IIA operations use and mine their sites, apparently gaining immunity from “fake news” designations. But these platforms are more than passive participants in personal data mining, social media psychological warfare games, and social media influence operations. A brief look at their inception, funding, and histories should make this clear.

3. State and State-Connected Funding of Google and Facebook

First, both Google and Facebook received start-up capital—both directly and indirectly—from US intelligence agencies. In the case of Facebook, the start-up capital came through [Palantir](#), [Accel Partners](#), and [Greylock Partners](#). These funding sources either received their funding from, or were heavily involved in, In-Q-Tel.

[In 1999, CIA created In-Q-Tel](#), its own private sector venture capital investment firm, to fund promising start-ups that might create technologies useful for intelligence agencies. As St. Paul Research analyst Jody Chudley [notes](#), “In-Q-Tel funded Thiel’s startup firm Palantir somewhere around 2004. In 2004, Accel partner James Breyer sat on the board of directors of military defense contractor BBN with In-Q-Tel’s CEO Gilman Louie. Howard Cox, the head of Greylock, served directly on In-Q-Tel’s board of directors.”

In the case of Google, as independent journalist and former VICE reporter Nafeez Ahmed has [detailed at great length](#), Google’s connections with the intelligence community and military run deep. Ahmed details that relationships with DARPA officials yielded start-up funding, and direct funding from the intelligence community (IC) followed. The IC saw in the internet unprecedented potential for data collection and the upstart search engine venture represented a key to gathering it.

In 2003, Google began customizing its search engine under special contract with CIA for its [Intelink Management Office](#), “overseeing top-secret, secret and sensitive but unclassified intranets for CIA and other IC agencies,” according to *Homeland Security Today*. In 2004, Google purchased [Keyhole](#), which was initially funded by In-Q-Tel. Using Keyhole, Google began developing Google Earth.

Intelligence agency backers also included In-Q-Tel itself. In-Q-Tel's investment in Google came to light in 2005, when In-Q-Tel sold its \$2.2 million in Google stocks. A no-bid contract with the NSA sister agency, the [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency \(NGA\)](#), followed in 2010. Google's connections with the IC and military communities also involved personnel exchanges, including the acquisition of the former head of DARPA and [Highland's Forum](#) cochair, [Regina Dugan](#), who left the agency in 2012 to become a senior Google executive [overseeing the company's](#) new [Advanced Technology and Projects Group](#).

"From its inception, in other words," Ahmed writes,

Google was incubated, nurtured and financed by interests that were directly affiliated or closely aligned with the US military intelligence community, many of whom were embedded in the Pentagon Highlands Forum.

Second, and lest I be accused of the genetic fallacy, it should be noted that Google technologies were developed largely in connection with the IC and military and thus bear the earmarks of IC and military interests. And Google's contracts with the IC have continued. Moreover, these platforms and social media outfits fully cooperate with the IC and military, handing over data to the NSA upon demand and granting them backdoor access to user data. Google was a deep-state asset from its inception and remains one to this day.

Furthermore, it is possible that tools developed by the IC and military have been acquired by private contractors and are being used by these platforms and social media giants to influence the behavior of users of their services. In particular, former IC contractor Patrick Bercy alleges that social media psychological warfare tools that he developed for the Defense Department were acquired, possibly illegally, by General James Jones, formerly the National Security Adviser

under then president Obama. In partnership with the [Atlantic Council](#), where Jones is now the executive chairman emeritus, Facebook, Bercy alleges, is using social media psychological warfare tools, supposedly for the purposes of “restoring election integrity worldwide,” and “to combat election-related propaganda and misinformation from proliferating on its service.” It just may be that what is deemed “fake news” by Google and social media platforms represents the truth about the fake news that the platforms themselves are proliferating.

In short, Google, Facebook and others are not strictly private sector entities; they are governmentalities in the sense that I have given to the term. They are extensions and apparatuses of the state. Furthermore, these platforms are governmentalities with a particular interest in the growth and extension of governmentality itself. This includes championing every kind of “subordinated” and newly created identity class that they can find or create, because such “endangered” categories require state acknowledgement and protection. Thus, the state’s circumference continues to expand. Big Digital is partial to the interests and growth of the state. It not only does business with statisticians but also shares their values. This helps make sense of its leftist bent and their preference for the deep state Democrats. Leftism is statism.

4. Russia, Russia, Russia! Or Chy-na!

This talk would be incomplete without a treatment of the “actually existing socialism” in our midst, including its most significant, official state form, namely “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” i.e., China. Much ink has been spilled and many airwaves have been congested with the “Russian interference” narrative. Nary a day goes by without multiple references to Russia’s attempts to influence or interfere in US elections using social media. Donald Trump has been consistently portrayed as Putin’s puppet, even after the “Russian collusion” narrative officially fell apart. Less has been written and spoken about possible influence and

interference by the Chinese Communist Party, although one may hear about this from a few sources. The recent revelations about the business dealings of Biden & Son in China brought the issue to the fore in those few outlying media and social media outlets that didn't seek to deep-six the story. I don't mean to suggest that Russia does not attempt to interfere in US elections or other national concerns but rather to note that CCP influence and interference attempts go largely unremarked upon or are otherwise dismissed while having no less if not more significant implications, especially where free information exchange and expression on Google and social media platforms are concerned.

Likewise, it is worthwhile to consider the differences between the objectives of these respective state-driven domains. As National Security scholars Michael Clarke, Jennifer S. Hunt, and Matthew Sussex argue:

For the Russian Federation, which has emerged as the West's chief spoiler, the goal has to been to exacerbate existing social divisions in liberal democracies, to undermine public trust in key institutions, and to boost narratives around a host of statist themes: anti-immigration movements, the "alt-right," and trade protectionism. In this way, Moscow has played the role of a wrecker, seeking to destroy the liberal order rather than replace it. It has utilized diaspora communities, fringe media, and political activists on the margins of political discourse as proxies, and has facilitated the leaking of compromising information to promote false narratives and conspiracy theories. China, on the other hand, has pursued an arguably more sophisticated approach given that it seeks gradually to supplant the Western order rather than simply undermine it. Its efforts therefore have been geared primarily around obtaining longer-term leverage through multiple channels of influence among elites in politics, business, and society.

Of the many tactics it uses to advance its agenda of actively shaping foreign perceptions and behaviors, China practices what Victor Cha of the Center for Strategic and International Studies called "[predatory liberalism](#)." China "leverages the vulnerabilities of market interdependence to exert power over others in pursuit of political goals." China flexes its economic muscle to spread its ideology and guard its reputation. Examples include [pressuring Apple](#) to remove its HKmap.live app from iPhones sold in China due to pressure by Beijing because the app enabled "illegal behavior," as protesters used it "to target and ambush police" and to "threaten public safety," or so China claimed. Another involved the NBA. When Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey tweeted on October 4, 2019, in support of the Hong Kong protesters, he was [pressured](#) to delete his post and apologize for "offense" caused to the Chinese people. Serving as a proxy for the CCP, the NBA in turn precluded any economic damage to its Chinese market that such a rhetorical breach might have caused.

Big digital platforms including Google, Facebook, and Twitter not only support the extension of domestic statism, they serve the expansion of foreign state ideology and power as well. While propaganda, censorship, and surveillance have turned social media into instruments of totalitarianism in China, China has invested millions into propaganda campaigns on social media and beyond its borders to extend its influence. Buying and usurping user accounts on Twitter and creating fake accounts on Facebook, for example, China seeks to influence the perception of the regime as well as promoting its agenda. Although Google's [Project Dragonfly](#) was [canceled](#) and it is unlikely that Google will establish a search engine operative in China any time soon, Google nevertheless maintains offices and employees in China and sells cloud, AI, and other services there.

In accommodating their state customers and ideological

sponsors, the dominant search and social media platforms have come to resemble the governments that they effectively serve and reproduce. This is especially true where China is concerned. Google, Facebook, and Twitter have adopted the CCP's penchant for the regulation of speech, the dissemination of propaganda, and the suppression of dissident views. A few examples of direct interventions in search-related and social media control should suffice:

- Facebook blocked posts that referenced a Chinese virologist whose research traced the SARS-2 virus to a Wuhan lab.
- Six Chinese nationals now work on Facebook's "Hate-Speech Engineering" team to produce algorithms that rank, and block content deemed too conservative, among other tasks.
- Twitter purged tens of thousands of accounts critical of the Chinese government just days ahead of the thirtieth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 2019.
- Twitter employees train Chinese officials to amplify their pro-China messaging.
- YouTube has deleted comments critical of the Chinese Communist Party due to "error."
- In a case of contradictory non-fact-checking, Twitter allowed over ninety thousand tweets from the beginning of April through May 2020 from two hundred diplomatic and state-run media accounts that suggested that the coronavirus originated in the US or the US military, among other claims casting doubt on its Chinese origin.

These are but a few of the examples of influence campaigns and tactics employed by China, and they do not represent the most egregious cases of the censorship and propaganda we're encountering. Most of the censorship and propaganda is domestically oriented and produced. My point is more about shared ideological commitments and tactics than anything else.

5. Trump or Not-Trump

How does all this figure into the election? It's clear that this presidential election has not been a contest between Trump and Joe Biden *per se*, but between Trump and not-Trump. It has been a contest between a boorish, rambling, irreverent, and politically incorrect gatecrasher versus a corrupt veteran of the political class. The "resistance"—which includes the mainstream media, the social media and "globalist" oligarchy, the neocons, the better part of the intelligence community, and an assortment of leftist political activists and radicals—has aimed at destroying the prior and supporting the latter. The political establishment has shown its sheer cynicism by propping up an enfeebled, high-stakes influence peddler and having him taken seriously.

I've considered the possibility that the anti-Trump fervor has been based largely on aesthetic revulsion. Indeed, aesthetic revulsion has been cultivated and promoted by the sponsors of the resistance. But the sponsors of the resistance don't hate Trump merely because he fails to reflect the image of the effete intelligentsia. After all, look at how they've rehabilitated George W. Bush. No, there's more to it.

Trump is a rogue parvenu who threatens (or threatened) the political establishment, not because he has [or had the potential to "drain the swamp," an insurmountable task for any president or administration, but rather because he is unpredictable and might have stumbled upon and exposed "deep state" secrets and crimes. Trump has been an interloper, a nuisance, a thorn in the side of an elite cozy with elements that Trump has deemed inimical to American interests.

Further, Trump's brand of nationalism interferes (or interfered) with the global interests of those who do business with our new Cold War opposition, and not only the kind we saw recently exposed in the case of the [Joe Biden Swindling Company](#).

Finally, and most importantly, Trump has represented a line of defense, however tenuous and thin, of American liberties, liberties that stand in the way of a global governmental and extragovernmental order that thrives on lockdowns, masking, muzzling, banning, blacklisting, down ranking, memory holing, gaslighting, deleting, canceling, censoring, precensoring, and obliterating dissent and dissenters.

Concluding Remarks

Regardless of the election outcome, however, repressive and propagandistic governmentalities—including academia, cultural institutions, culture industries, information and intelligence technologies, mass media, political movements, social media, woke corporations, and more—are combining to effect a totalitarian creep under which its subjects are complicit in their own subjugation and hellbent to impose it on others.

Whether Trump or not-Trump is finally declared the winner of the [2020 US presidential election](#), we are in for the battle of our lives. A constellation of state and state-extended apparatuses has openly declared war on liberty, on us. We are all thought criminals now. Risk aversion will not do. What we risk by being risk averse is everything that makes human life worth living. In the face of an enemy that brazenly revels in its totalitarian character, it is time to put everything on the line for liberty.

First published at the