



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 19, 2016

Obama Administration Plotting to Usurp Control Over Elections

Under the guise of providing increased “security” for “[critical infrastructure](#),” the Obama administration is plotting to insert itself and the federal government into the American elections process. While voting is constitutionally the responsibility of state and local officials, Obama’s Homeland Security Secretary, Jeh Johnson, pointed to the alleged threat of cyberattacks to justify the latest proposed usurpation of power. The controversial scheme was floated amid growing national concerns, fueled in part by GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump’s warnings of a “rigged” election, that America’s electoral system might be vulnerable to major manipulation. Critics and experts, though, warned that the White House scheming may be a first step toward illegally nationalizing the electoral process — with all the dangers that would entail.



Homeland Security boss Johnson, a leading luminary behind Obama’s illegal amnesty plot, has said repeatedly in recent weeks that the administration was thinking of issuing a decree declaring elections to be “critical infrastructure” in need of supposed federal oversight and “protection.” “We should carefully consider whether our election system, our election process is critical infrastructure, like the financial sector, like the power grid,” Johnson told reporters in Washington earlier this month. “There’s a vital national interest in our electoral process.” In a phone call with state officials, he reiterated those comments, offering “help” with elections.

Details about what, exactly, an Obama designation as “critical infrastructure” would mean for elections remain hazy — probably deliberately, with Johnson’s DHS also declining to comment on what specifically the scheme would entail. But, ironically, if the plan were to standardize or centralize the elections process, it would make the elections much easier to manipulate at the national level. Instead of clarifying, Johnson simply said that designating elections as “critical infrastructure” would raise “several implications” that would make the election system “very much a part of our focus.” One thing is sure: Such a designation would result in more federal spending and control over the process.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest did not add much additional light to the proposed takeover of elections. “I know this is an idea that other members of the president’s national security team have also discussed,” Earnest said, as if the “president’s national security team” was all powerful. “The president has confidence in the integrity of our electoral process and everybody else should, too.” Earnest also suggested that the fact that each state has its own systems makes the job for hackers more difficult, because “it’s difficult to identify a common vulnerability.” Perhaps by declaring it “critical



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infrastructure,” Johnson and Obama can change that — if not legally or constitutionally, at least practically.

Hans von Spakovsky, a senior legal fellow at the Heritage Foundation and former member of the Federal Election Commission (FEC), [blasted](#) the proposed scheme. First of all, there is “no credible threat of a successful cyberattack on our voting and ballot-counting process because of the way our current election system is organized,” said von Spakovsky, who also served at the U.S. Justice Department as an elections expert and manages Election Law Reform Initiative at Heritage. Citing unnamed sources, he added that DHS boss Johnson had admitted as much to state officials.

“But designating the nation’s election system as ‘critical infrastructure’ under a post 9/11 federal statute may be a way for the administration to get Justice Department lawyers, the FBI, and DHS staff into polling places they would otherwise have no legal right to access,” von Spakovsky continued. And that, he said, would “enable them to interfere with election administration procedures around the country.” Despite acknowledging some areas in which security could be improved, von Spakovsky painted a picture of a decentralized system that would be very difficult, if not impossible, for hackers to interfere with in any meaningful way.

However, if the Obama administration were to declare elections systems to be “critical infrastructure” under a 2001 statute and a revised “Presidential Policy Directive” issued by Obama in 2013, federal officials would try to insert themselves into state and local elections. “If Jeh Johnson designates our election system as ‘critical infrastructure,’ then according to this directive, the Justice Department is given the authority to ‘investigate, disrupt, prosecute, and otherwise reduce’ threats to that infrastructure,” von Spakovsky said. “DHS will ‘coordinate the overall Federal effort to promote the security and resilience of’ the infrastructure.”

The former federal elections official goes on to suggest that designating elections “critical infrastructure” would allow Johnson and the notoriously lawless Obama Justice Department to access any and every election and voting location they consider “threatened.” That would allow the out-of-control Obama administration to “demand changes be made to election and voting systems regardless of the views of local officials,” explained von Spakovsky, noting that Obama’s attorney general has already expressed anger over a court ruling banning DOJ operatives from polling places without permission of local officials. “That must be very frustrating to the partisans who inhabit parts of the Justice Department these days and want their staff out there making sure their political friends get elected.”

This may be the beginning of a takeover. “The realistic fear is that this is the first step towards nationalizing election administration,” the ex-DOJ official concluded. “Federal officials who have already shown they will not hesitate to use their power to tilt public policy in favor of their own personal political agenda could bring that same bias to decisions that affect the very integrity of our election process.” He also noted that there is a much greater chance of misbehavior surrounding non-citizen voting or absentee ballot fraud than any “hacker” manipulating the system — Russian or otherwise. “But just like in The Wizard of Oz, this administration wants you to pay no attention to that particular man in the corner while it launches its election Trojan horse.”

Apparently, state officials have already been pushing back on the Obama administration’s proposed takeover of the elections system. There are currently almost 10,000 separate state and local jurisdictions that oversee, manage and administer America’s electoral system. While there is some overlap, each state has its own set of procedures, systems, security protocols, and more. That makes



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national elections much more secure than if they were all controlled from the top down by notoriously corrupt and radical Obama officials, who [brag openly about lying to Americans to pursue their agenda](#).

But fears over election integrity are growing. Pointing to hacked DNC e-mails showing shady tricks to get Hillary Clinton the Democrat nomination at the expense of Senator Bernie Sanders — scandals that led to Democrat boss Debbie Wasserman-Schultz's resignation — Trump suggested similar tactics might be used in the general election. "I'm afraid the election is going to be rigged, I have to be honest," Trump said at a rally in Ohio. He echoed those comments later in interviews with the media. "I wouldn't be surprised if the election ... there's a lot of dirty pool played at the election, meaning the election is rigged," Trump said. "I would not be surprised."

To deal with the possibility, Trump is taking pro-active measures to ensure the integrity of the election. Among other efforts, the campaign is working to recruit a nationwide team of elections monitors to help "stop Crooked Hillary from rigging this election," his website says. "They will help ensure lawful voters can vote," said a spokesman for the Trump campaign. "What we're advocating are open, fair and honest elections." The GOP itself is also reportedly working on a nationwide effort to stop voter fraud by placing hundreds of observers at polling places.

After Trump argued that the election could be rigged, an apparently outraged Obama hit back, calling the comments "ridiculous" and "conspiracy theories." "Of course the elections will not be rigged. What does that mean?" Obama [asked](#), suggesting a rigged election was impossible because local and state governments oversee elections, rather than the federal government. "If Mr. Trump is suggesting that there is a conspiracy theory that is being propagated across the country — including in places like Texas, where typically it's not Democrats who are in charge of voting booths — that's ridiculous, that doesn't make any sense, and I don't think anyone should take that seriously."

Allowing the Obama administration and the federal government to usurp control of America's elections under the guise of protecting "critical infrastructure" is a terrible idea on every level. First of all, it is unconstitutional. Elections are a state and local responsibility that was never delegated to the feds. Secondly, centralized control is almost always a recipe for disaster — especially as it relates to elections. Where there are genuine concerns about election integrity, those can and should be dealt with at the state and local level. Americans and their elected representatives must demand that the White House be kept out of the nation's elections.

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