



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 2, 2017

## Washington Post Corrects Story of Russian Hack of Vermont Utility

Assuming that the story was true — that Russian hackers had gained access to a Vermont utility's software — members of the mainstream media piped its echoes across the Internet:

*ABC News:* Russian Hacking Malware Found on Vermont Utility Computer

*International Business Times:* Vermont Electric Grid Targeted by Russian Hackers

*Chicago Tribune:* Russian hack of Vermont utility shows risk to power grid



Each of these stories is now between one and two days old, with no follow-up once the *Washington Post* [edited its original article](#):

An earlier version of this story incorrectly said that Russian hackers had penetrated the U.S. electric grid. Authorities say there is no indication of that so far. The computer at Burlington Electric that was hacked *was not attached to the grid*. [Emphasis added.]

But the reaction the original article evoked was something to behold. Vermont's Democrat Governor Peter Shumlin called on federal officials "to conduct a full and complete investigation of this incident and undertake remedies to ensure that this never happens again." He made things worse by adding:

Vermonters and all Americans should be both alarmed and outraged that one of the world's leading thugs, Vladimir Putin, has been attempting to hack our electric grid, which we rely on to support our quality of life, economy, health, and safety.

This episode should highlight the urgent need for our federal government to vigorously pursue and put an end to this sort of Russian meddling.

Vermont's Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy weighed in:

This is beyond hackers having electronic joy rides — this is now about trying to access utilities to potentially manipulate the grid and shut it down in the middle of winter.

That is a direct threat and we do not take it lightly.

Vermont's Democratic House member Peter Welch was similarly outraged, creating a sound byte in the process:

It's systemic, relentless, predatory! They will hack everywhere, even Vermont, in pursuit of opportunities to disrupt our country.

We must remain vigilant, which is why I support President Obama's sanctions against Russia and its attacks on our country and what it stands for.

The article, skillfully crafted to create the impression of having something important to say where there was nothing, invoked unnamed officials who said "they were not yet sure what the intentions of the



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Russians might have been” but they were bad, bad, bad. Another unnamed U.S. official asked, “Are they [the Russians] in other systems and what was [their] intent?”

The *Post*’s authors referred to a “joint analysis report” posted on Thursday by the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, saying that the Russian activity “is part of an ongoing campaign of cyber-enabled operations directed at the U.S. government and its citizens.”

The authors even managed to get in a slam on Donald Trump over the matter who, they noted, had the audacity to question the veracity of U.S. intelligence that allegedly pointed to Russian hacking designed somehow to influence the election. Why, the man even “has spoken highly of Russian President Vladimir Putin, despite President Obama’s suggestion [suggestion, mind you] that the approval for that hacking effort came from the highest levels of the Kremlin.”

In an effort to expand the article (filler is what it’s called in the trade) the authors reached into history to remind the folks that “Russia has been accused in the past of launching a cyberattack on Ukraine’s electrical grid” and that “since at least 2009, U.S authorities have tracked efforts by China, Russia and other countries to implant malicious software inside computers by U.S. utilities.”

Nothing whatever appeared in the original article, however, of efforts by the U.S. government to infect Iranian software running some of their nuclear facilities. (Skeptics may Google *Stuxnet* for the details.)

Once the “correction” of the original article was made, the matter has all but disappeared from the mainstream media.

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