The Revenge of Putin II is an eye opening documentary covering the motivations, execution, and outcomes of Vladimir Putin’s meddling in the United States 2016 Presidential election. It begins with the Russian 2014 Winter Olympics that were backgrounded by American-backed protesters in Kiev, Ukraine. This was a major motivator for Putin to explicitly target Hillary Clinton. The film also covers the fall of Omar Gidhafi, the Libyan dictator allied with Russia. Putin took this as a personal threat from the USA. The documentary then breaks down the intricacies and fronts of Putin’s attacks on the 2016 election from his artful fracturing of the DNC to the carefully timed Access Hollywood leaks that had many American voters in wiplash over rapid fire scandals between each side. Finally, the film covers the effects of continued meddling by the Kremlin throughout the early days of the Trump presidency. It covers Trump’s reactions to the media lambasting him as a Russian sympathizer and Putin’s continued efforts to undermine American democracy.

For the past several decades, the USA has been a hegemon in world politics. It is dominant in economic and military capability when compared to almost any other state. However, recently states like Russia and non-state actors such as terrorist organizations have tried to challenge the USA in very specific areas. Terrorists challenge our military in localized areas of the middle east whereas Russia is looking to challenge the very fabric that holds our democracy together. Russia is constantly using the acquisition and strategic injection of misinformation. This has been extremely effective for Russia in the past 6 years. While it is not completely clear if Russia is responsible for Donald Trump being elected President over Hillary Clinton, Russia certainly had an effect on what should be a secure political process. This even calls into question a small part of this hegemon’s sovereignty. The USA has had difficulty responding strongly to Putin’s antics, as Russia has never claimed responsibility for these attacks on democracy. The US has mostly responded with sanctions and threats from President Obama. While I don’t believe there will be a power transition such that Russia reclaims it’s place next to the US in a bipolar power system, the disruption that Russia has and continues to cause could help stronger states such as China continue to gain more economic and military influence throughout the East.

Russia’s strategy in its assault against the USA is known as “Hybrid Warfare”. It mainly consists of cyber attacks mixed with the distribution of false information. This strategy allows Russia to remain anonymous on paper while continuing to attack the USA with relative impunity. While Russia does share in the United State’s plethora of natural resources, Russia is a shell of its former industrial and military might. However, Putin himself has proved cunning and makes a terrifyingly efficient adversary.

In conclusion, Russia will not be able to compete with the USA in the future purely off of Hybrid Warfare tactics. The United States’s capitalist economy still proves far too mighty for Russia’s still industrial and oil-based economy. However, enough distraction from these smaller state actors and the USA could certainly slip enough for China to continue its steady march towards hegemony. Russia lacks the strength to challenge our military so it’s unlikely that they challenge us for hegemony in the near future. I do worry about our elections going forward. Unless we find ways to stifle Russia’s influence on our elections and the public’s access to accurate information, we will likely struggle to maintain cohesion between our two primary parties. Even in the documentary, Republicans were content to view any attempt by the Obama administration to expose the Russian meddling as the Democrats trying to meddle with the Presidential election. They would rather be the beneficiaries of an ex-KGB agent and vengeful tyrant like Vladimir Putin than risk the Democrats winning an election.