

"With Him, All Roads Lead to Putin"

Posted On: December 31, 1969

When our Intelligence Community revealed that Putin was offering bounties to Taliban fighters in Afghanistan for murdering US and NATO soldiers, President Trump called it "Fake News." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was shocked at this reaction. Trump's response to this horrifying attack on this country was to phone Putin and tell him that he was trying to get him back into the G7, from which he had been expelled after Putin grabbed a neighboring state's territory (the Crimea).

Even before his election, there were all sorts of suspicious actions of Trump toward this long-time enemy of the US. His and his chosen subordinates roused the suspicion of the FBI and CIA that they were in some sort of collusion with Vladimir Putin and his circle. This country has never before had to wonder if their president was an agent of an enemy state. The Mueller Investigation began.

It is now almost four years later, and the horrifying reality that Putin has something on this president, some sort of blackmail, is even clearer. The only other explanation for Trump's apparent subservience to Putin is that Trump admires (and envies) dictators who have powers that Trump does not have in a democracy. But that does not explain the long list of how Putin has received his payout from Trump.

While we struggle to get Trump's financial dealings (tax reports) made public, we already know that businessman Trump was no longer able to get American bank loans after all his bankruptcies. Only the Russians (and a few times, the Saudis) were willing to give him money with strings attached. Below are twelve ways that Putin received his payout: all actions by Trump that supported Putin's long-range policy aims. NY Times investigative reporters provided the list, each item well known through other sources.

Putin: Weaken and divide the transatlantic alliance. Trump: From the beginning of his term has undermined US relationships with European allies and insults NATO.

Putin: Degrade the European Union and foster pro-Russian political movements. (This policy is a century old.) Trump attacks the EU and actively supports anti-EU, Kremlin-backed parties.

Putin: Disrupt American leadership and dominance of the global economic order. Trump is eagerly pushing for an all-out trade war with Europe.

Putin: Build global resentment and distrust towards the US and stoke anti-American sentiment (Cold War game too). America's closest allies are explicitly suspicious and distrust the US because of Trump's rhetoric and actions.

Putin: Drop US sanctions on Russia, sanctions placed by Congress because of Russia's bad behavior. Trump tries to roll back, impede, and blunt the sanctions, so far unsuccessfully.

Putin: Legitimize his regime in the eyes of the world. Trump repeatedly praises and defends Putin, lending the credibility of the US presidency to Putin's standing.

Putin: Revive Russia's status as a great power and gain international recognition for its illegal seizure of Crimea. Trump publicly says that Crimea is part of Russia, scorning Europe's sanctions.

Putin: Soften America's adversarial stance toward Russia. Trump corrupts traditional Republican hostility toward Russia.

Putin: Destabilize US institutions from within, provoking divisive politics and eroding democratic norms. Trump has attacked every political norm and worsens already existing class resentments.

Putin: Advance the Kremlin's narrative to shape global perceptions. Trump repeatedly parrots Putin's positions on everything. He publicly believes Putin over our own Intelligence Community.

Putin: Undermines international norms and democratic values abroad. Trump obliges by ignoring human rights violations and creating a permissive environment for autocrats to crack down.

The pattern is clear: Putin has received---and continues to receive---a good payout

on his investment in Trump\222s campaign.

Most serious of all is Trump\222s supporting Putin\222s policy of interfering in our elections. Putin uses social media to inflame racial conflicts, to promote conspiracy theories, and plants suspicion over our voting system.

Trump\222s rabid attack on mail-in-voting is an attempt to claim his loss in the upcoming election will be fraudulent. If Trump can convince the gullible that our elections are rigged, was his 2016 election to office illegitimate too? Will his name as president have an asterisk?

Next week: Putin\222s Own Problems.

683 words. Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman is a historian, lecturer, and author of "How Do You Know That? Contact her at Lfarhat102@aol.com or www.globalthink.net.