

# Democrats Escalate Anti-Russia Witch Hunt with Lawsuit Linking Trump and Assange as Russian Agents

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Global Research, April 22, 2018

[World Socialist Web Site](#) 21 April 2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#)

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*In a major escalation of the anti-Russia campaign targeting both Moscow and the Trump administration, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) on Friday filed a lawsuit charging the Russian government, the Trump election campaign and top Trump aides, and WikiLeaks and Julian Assange of conspiring to undermine the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton in order to secure the election of Donald Trump.*

The legal action essentially brands the US defendants as traitors.

The civil suit, seeking millions of dollars in damages, was filed in the US District Court in Manhattan. The Democratic Party's 66-page legal complaint contains no new information about alleged Russian hacking or Trump campaign collusion. It simply repackages the official narrative based on the report issued in early January, 2017 by the CIA, the FBI and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which provided no substantive evidence for its charges, with the addition of subsequent media revelations, such as reports on the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Trump campaign officials and Russian nationals.

The lawsuit repeats the absurd narrative that Clinton lost the election because of Russian interference. In fact, she lost because she ran a right-wing campaign as the candidate of the political and military/intelligence establishment and masses of workers were disgusted with the Democrats after eight years of Obama.

The legal filing and the accompanying statements by DNC Chairman Tom Perez have the stench of a McCarthyite-style witch hunt, with Russia substituted for the Soviet Union as the foreign enemy against whom all patriotic Americans must unite. The Democrats are resorting to the type of rhetoric that was the stock in trade in the 1950s of the John Birch Society, which denounced Eisenhower as a stooge of the Kremlin.

The Democratic Party, with this legal action, is suing Trump's closest associates for conspiring with a hostile foreign power against the United States. The fact that it names Assange as a co-conspirator makes it clear that the aim is not only to remove Trump from office and whip up a war atmosphere against Russia, but also to criminalize political opposition and impose strict censorship on the Internet.

The suit essentially endorses the denunciation of Assange and WikiLeaks by outgoing CIA Director and pending Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as "non-state intelligence agencies of a hostile foreign power."

The lawsuit underscores the militaristic and anti-democratic basis of the Democratic Party's opposition to Trump. The Democrats, who have become the party of choice of dominant factions within the military/intelligence complex as well as large sections of the corporate-financial elite, are not opposing the fascistic administration's brutal attacks on the working class, on immigrants, and on democratic rights. Rather, they are speaking for ruling class factions that demand a more aggressive military policy against Russia both in Syria and in Eastern Europe.

In a statement announcing the legal suit, DNC Chairman Perez declared,

"During the 2016 presidential campaign, Russia launched an all-out assault on our democracy, and it found a willing and active partner in Donald Trump's campaign. This constituted an act of unprecedented treachery: the campaign of a nominee for president of the United States in league with a hostile foreign power to bolster its own chance to win the presidency."

He added that the Democratic Party suit "is not partisan, it's patriotic."

This accusation of treason against the defendants is spelled out in the language of the filing. The following are excerpts:

"In the run-up to the 2016 election, Russia mounted a brazen attack on American democracy. The opening salvo was a cyber attack on the DNC, carried out on American soil... Russia then used this stolen information to advance its own interests: destabilizing the US political environment, denigrating the Democratic president nominee, and supporting the campaign of Donald J. Trump, whose policies would benefit the Kremlin."

"In the Trump campaign, Russia found a willing and active partner in this effort... Russian agents trespassed onto the DNC's computer network in the United States, as well as other email accounts, collected trade secrets and other private data, and then transmitted the data to Defendant WikiLeaks, whose founder, Assange, shared the defendants' common goal of damaging the Democratic party in advance of the election."

"The conspiracy constituted an act of previously unimaginable treachery... Under the laws of this nation, Russia and its co-conspirators must answer for these actions."

The suit does not name Trump himself, but it does list as defendants the Trump campaign, Trump's adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner, Trump's son Donald Trump, Jr., former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, Trump confidant Roger Stone, campaign adviser George Papadopolous, campaign aide Richard Gates, Russian businessmen Aras Agalarov and his son Emin Agalarov, London-based professor Joseph Mifsud, WikiLeaks, Assange and 10 unnamed "John Does."

Manafort, Gates and Papadopolous have already been indicted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is heading up the Justice Department investigation into alleged Russian "meddling" and possible Trump campaign collusion. Gates and Papadopolous have pleaded guilty to perjury charges and agreed to cooperate with the Mueller probe. Manafort is contesting his indictment in court.

The politically filthy character of the Democratic anti-Russia campaign was underscored Friday by the publication in the *New York Times* of an op-ed piece by Republican Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado, an arch reactionary of the Birchite variety. In the column, Gardner calls for the State Department to place Russia on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, alongside Syria and Iran.

The filing of the lawsuit takes place one week after the US-British-French missile attack on Syria, carried out on the basis of fabricated charges of a gas attack by the Syrian regime on civilians in the Eastern Ghouta city of Douma. That criminal action has been followed by growing demands in the media and from politicians of both parties for a far wider war in Syria and a more aggressive military posture toward Russian and Iranian forces in the country.

New provocations and pretexts directed against Russia are emerging on virtually a daily basis to set the stage for a full-scale war in Syria and eventual military conflict with nuclear-armed Russia. This drive for war is propelled by the convergence of deepening economic and trade tensions, sharpening geo-political conflicts between the US and its nominal European allies, an intensification of the political warfare in Washington and a continuing rise in working class resistance to austerity and inequality, expressed in the ongoing wave of teachers' strikes.

The faction fight within the American ruling class and state has reached unprecedented proportions. Following the recent FBI raid on Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, which threatens the president with possible indictments over his corrupt business operations, the civil war between the White House and the chief federal police agency, the FBI, has grown more explosive.

James Comey, whom Trump fired as FBI director last May, is promoting his new book by giving interviews in which he denounces Trump as a liar, mafia-type figure and likely sexual pervert. On Friday, Comey's memos on his private meetings with Trump, in which he accuses Trump of pressuring him to drop investigations related to the Russia allegations, were leaked to the press.

Both sides are now denouncing their political opponents as criminals and threatening them with criminal prosecution and jail time. Trump has denounced Comey as a liar and a "slime ball" and called for him to be prosecuted. Former Deputy FBI Director Andrew McCabe, fired last month by Trump's attorney general, has been referred for possible criminal prosecution by the Justice Department inspector general.

Under these conditions, the Democratic lawsuit is aimed at furthering a policy of expanded war abroad and political repression at home, and, if necessary, replacing Trump with an equally reactionary but more competent and reliable chief executive of the American ruling class.

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