

Red Alert: Russian Focus Might Save Trump's Hide

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The “historic” appearances of James Comey Chameleon and Jefferson Davis Andersonville Sessions before a Senate committee have come and gone, leaving us ... pretty much where we were before.

Trump was made to look stupid and thuggish (not exactly front-page news); his GOP apologists and enablers employed even more ludicrous justifications for said stupidity and thuggery (“Hey, the kid is still green, he didn’t know he was doing anything wrong — not that he did do anything wrong, mind you.”); media outlets reaped tons of ad revenue; twitterity was rampant on every side. We all had a jolly good time. But as for the ostensible object of the exercise — learning more about possible Russian interference in the electoral process, and any part Trump’s gang might have had in colluding with this and/or covering it up — there was not a whole lotta shaking going on.

That’s to be expected. For I don’t believe we are ever going to see confirmable proof of direct collusion between the Trump gang and the Kremlin to skew the 2016 election. I don’t doubt there is a myriad of ties between Trump and nefarious Russian characters, all of whom will of necessity have some connection to Putin’s authoritarian regime. And there may well be underhanded Trump gang ties of corruption to the state itself. But I don’t think a “smoking gun” of direct collusion with Trump’s inner circle in vote tampering exists. If it did, it would be out by now. It’s obvious the intelligence services and FBI were all over the Trump campaign, looking into Russian ties from many angles.

I’m not saying the Russians didn’t try to tamper with the vote. (Although, as a patriotic American, I doubt they can tamper as well as we can.) I’m not saying it’s not important or not worth looking into. I’m just saying that if you put most of your focus and resources and political capital on the bet that you will find some smoking gun of direct collusion between Trump and his circle with the Russian state — evidence so direct and overwhelming that even the GOP extremists in Congress can’t overlook it — then you are going to be disappointed. You will not bring down Trump, who, despite mountains of dirt thrown on him, will still walk away and claim vindication.

Meanwhile, away from the “dramatic hearings” and the all-day permanent Red scare of the “Resistance,” the Trump White House and the Congressional extremists are quietly, methodically, relentlessly transforming the United States into a hideous oligarch-owned, burned-out, broken-down, looted-out, chaos-ridden, far-right dystopia. Right now, the Senate Republicans are trying to push through, in secret, a “health-care” bill that is scarcely less draconian than the universally hated House version, and like that bill, consists of two main parts: a gargantuan tax cut for the very rich and taking away healthcare coverage for millions upon millions of ordinary citizens, including the most vulnerable people in the

nation.

And what did we hear Monday from Democratic staffers? That the Senate Democrats are NOT going to wage a fight to the death to prevent this monstrosity from being inflicted on the people; they're not "going nuclear," using every possible tactic and procedural rule to derail the Trumpcare bill, or at least stall it long enough to raise a public outcry against it. And why not? Why, because the Republicans have promised that no sanctions will be removed on Russia without the Democrats getting a chance to vote on it in the Senate. This is the kind of misplaced priority I'm talking about.



Ousted Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi shortly before he was murdered on Oct. 20, 2011. (Source: credits to the owner of the photo)

I won't even get into the fact that progressives and liberals now venerate the intelligence services they used to rightly condemn for decades of lies and deceit and misinformation and covert murder and, yes, manipulation of our electoral process (not to mention those of other nations.) And let's put aside how every "anonymous leak" from an "intelligence source" is now treated as gospel — even though it comes from the same "intelligence sources" that anonymously leaked all that "credible" evidence of Saddam's WMD way back in caveman times. And told us that Gadafy was about to unleash genocide on his people and was sending in rape squads jacked up on Viagra, etc., only to sheepishly admit later these claims had been all false ... after Gadafy had been sodomized and murdered in the street by NATO-backed Islamic extremists, even as Hillary Clinton laughed out loud and declared,

"We came, we saw, he DIED!"



Let's put aside the fact that former head of the FBI — who has spent years waging war on

Black Lives Matter and concocting fake terrorist plots to entrap mentally ill loners in order to garner good PR for himself — is now a liberal hero, even a “sex symbol,” because he was fired by a lunatic fascist that no one with a shred of honor should have been working for in the first place. Let’s put aside that former CIA honcho James Clapper — who has lied under oath to Congress about the CIA’s Putin-style hacking of the US Senate to stop release of reports on, er, CIA torture, who lied repeatedly about Saddam’s non-existent WMD when he was a key player under George W. Bush, and who is now repeatedly saying that Russians have some kind of genetic defect that makes them inherent, unredeemable scheming lowlifes — has also become a much-lauded liberal hero. Let’s put aside the abandonment of principle and common sense the “Resistance” has shown toward the bankrupt morality and demonstrable mendacity of these men and their institutions. And how anyone who expresses the same skepticism toward these “organs” that they have been expressing for decades — no matter who is in power — is now regarded as a Putin apologist, a Kremlin stooge or, more and more often, an outright, active traitor.

Let’s put aside all this for now, disheartening as it is, and focus on this: if the intent is to bring down Trump, then there is ample material just lying there for the taking — evidence of blatant criminality and corruption that could be taken up right now, keeping Trump and his whole sick crew tied up in prosecutions, investigations, special committees and independent prosecutors out the wazoo. The man had known Mafia figures with him at his New Year’s celebration in Mar-a-Lago just months ago, for God’s sake. You don’t have to pry piss-tapes from the Kremlin to bring down a mook like Trump.

Of course, part of the problem is that a genuinely wide-ranging and thorough investigation of Trump’s criminal corruption would doubtless expose the deep rot at the heart of our system, the incredibly complex entwining of the underworld and the “upper world”: the dirty deals, the tax dodges, the sweetheart contracts, the cut-outs to maintain “deniability,” the bribes, the “gifts,” the special arrangements, the corporate espionage, the interpenetration of state and corporate power at every level, even in warfare and diplomacy — in short, all of the “corrupted currents” that lay behind the gilded facade maintained by our bipartisan elites and their servitors in the political-media class. If you start to pull too hard on the stinking threads of Trump’s criminal entanglements, who knows what else might come undone, who else might be exposed?

We saw during the last campaign this reluctance to really go after Trump for the string of dodgy deals and frauds he’s left across a decades-long career. Every now and then there would be a quick jab, but even these would usually be obscured by Trump’s artful use of blathering idiocy on Twitter. Was he defrauding veterans and cancer patients with his patently fraudulent charities? “Look there! Trump just said McCain was a loser for being captured in Vietnam!” Didn’t Trump commit criminal fraud in scamming people out of millions with his fake Trump University? “Look there! Trump’s tweeting racist attacks on the judge!” And so off we’d go, fixing on the galling spectacle of Trump’s character, while the focus on actual crime and corruption would recede. This reluctance was evident in both the GOP primary and in the general election. I kept waiting for the gloves to come off on Trump’s dirty deals, but they never really did. The focus remained on his sleazy character, not his legal dangers; and Trump had long known that the spectacular sleaziness of his character was the mainspring of his popularity, both as a celebrity and candidate. (And yes, this sleaziness and corruption was well-known even when Bill and Hillary were wrapping their arms around Donald at his wedding years before.)

Be that as it may, there is still probably more than enough material on the surface for our

elites to bring Trump down without going too deep into the corrupted currents where their own murk might be stirred up. Heck, there might even be enough honest players in the political circus to lead a multi-front attack on Trump's corruption without worrying about themselves being exposed. If you really want to bring Trump down — and in that way, cripple or at least hamper the ravages of the extremists who are using him as their tool — then it seems to me this more straightforward approach would be far more likely to succeed than waiting for some spy to come in from the cold and put incontrovertible proof of direct collusion in our hands.

But I don't see any sign of this happening anytime soon, if ever. The focus will remain on the Russians, who despite being genetically inferior lowbrow swindlers are nevertheless capable of orchestrating practically every event in the world, including, I guess, the rise of Rupert Murdoch and the right-wing media machine, the politicised fundamentalist churches and the thousands of sinister ideological outfits bankrolled by weird billionaires, all of which have spawned an entire alternative universe in which millions of people now live, feeding on lies and smears and hatemongering that fuels their prejudices, their fears, their resentments and their anger, and corrodes their sense of commonality and community with their fellow citizens. I would venture to say that the deliberate cultivation of this vicious and violent alternative reality — along with the creation of the Electoral College in the 18th century, and the vote suppression laws passed by billionaire-funded extremists in state legislatures that disenfranchised millions of anti-Trump voters — had more to do with Trump's victory than any phishing expeditions or email leaking by the Russians.

Again, I'm not saying that the latter didn't happen; it may well be that the people who lied to our faces about yellow cake and aluminium tubes and vials of sarin and CIA torture, the people who wage drone wars on farmers and wedding parties, the people who persecute the mentally ill for their own aggrandizement while stirring up needless fear and hatred are now being honourable and truthful in every single thing they tell us. I genuinely hope so. If they produced that smoking gun from the Kremlin tomorrow and brought Trump down, I'd be over the moon. But I don't think that is going to happen. And I fear we will find that a great deal of ruin has been done — and many more promising avenues of attack have been ignored, perhaps for good — while we chase ghosts in the shadowlands of espionage.

But hey, don't listen to me. I not only write for a publication which was put on a McCarthyite list of "subversives" trumpeted in the Washington Post (before it had to backpedal), I actually even lived in Russia once, which as we know — in an age where Louise Mensch is regarded as a credible source by the "Resistance" and all things Russian are tainted — means I am obviously a Kremlin agent or a Putin fanboy trying to save Comrade Trump from the forces of righteousness. What's more, I know people who still live in Russia, some of whom are even — gasp! — genetically Russian. (Please don't tell liberal hero James Clapper!) So of course, all of these people must be Kremlin tools as well — even though they are putting their lives and livelihoods on the line every day fighting Putin's tyranny, with a courage I doubt we'll see from many of our "Resisters" when Trump finishes with Muslims, immigrants, African-Americans, the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the insulted and injured of every stripe and finally come for the "real" people who read the New York Times and watch Rachel Maddow. For these days it's simply impossible to be associated with Russia in any way, or to question the credibility of our security organs in the slightest, or to suggest possibly better alternatives for removing Trump's copious rump from the Oval Office, without being shunned by polite progressive society.

So take what I say with a pinch of bread and salt. (The traditional Russian offering of

welcome — oh damn, I gave myself away again!) But if the focus stays largely on Moscow, don't be surprised to see Trump sitting on the White House toilet playing with his tweeter four years from now while Steven Bannon and Richard Spencer plan his re-election campaign.

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