

“The CIA, As Organized Crime”, Douglas Valentine’s CIA vs. Donald Trump’s CIA

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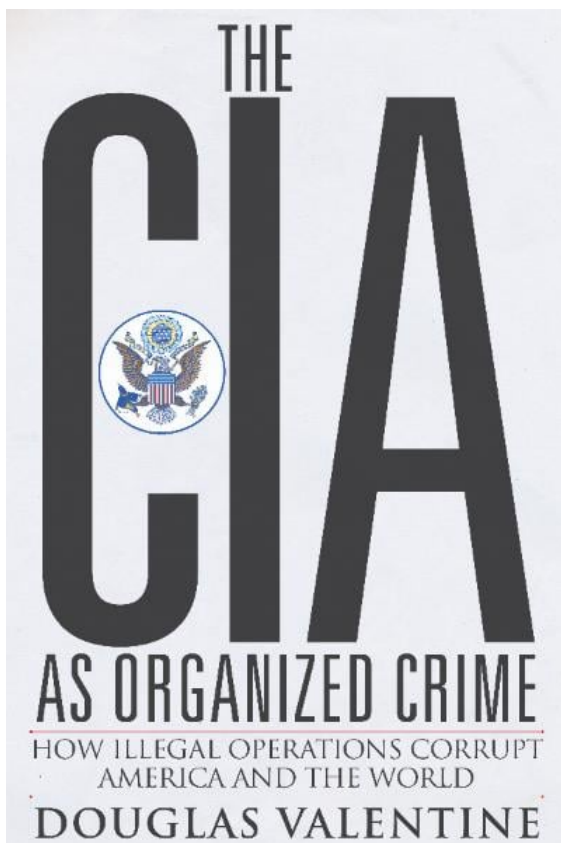
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Region: [USA](#)

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The firing of General Michael Flynn, Donald Trump’s former national security adviser, for ties to Russian intelligence has precipitated a certain chaos in the White House and Washington that could determine whether there will be more revelations that result in firings or whether we will see unparalleled control of intelligence agencies by the so-called President of the United States.

In an effort to battle the fallout from campaign advisors Paul Manafort, Roger Stone and Carter Page having been caught by the CIA and NSA for collusion with Russian intelligence officers, Trump has announced his intention to have billionaire Stephen Feinberg, co-founder of Cerberus Capital Management, oversee a broad review of this nation’s intelligence agencies. (Cerberus, appropriately, was in Greek mythology the multi-headed dog that guarded the gates of the Underworld to prevent the dead from leaving.)



Trump hopes to avoid further scrutiny regarding both his business dealings with Russia and connections to Vladimir Putin’s intelligence agents, using Feinberg, who has no national security background. He is a crony of chief

strategist Steve Bannon, formerly of Breitbart News and Jared Kushner, whose expertise is being the son-in-law of Trump. This is a crucial moment in US history, as Trump attempts to stop leaks from the intel gatherers he has frequently criticized.

One irony in the midst of what is clearly looming as a constitutional crisis is the public perception of the role of the Central Intelligence Agency. Steeped in a history of assassination, destabilization and infiltration of other governments, including working democracies, the Agency is now being counted upon by opponents of Trump's intel totalitarianism to be some kind of whistleblowing knight in shining armor.

To understand how unexpected the above scenario is, one needs to consider author Douglas Valentine's recent book *The CIA As Organized Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America and the World*. In it, he has laid out not only some of the most egregious acts of the Agency but also how it now dominates branches like the Drug Enforcement Agency and State Department.

Valentine's expansive, penetrating knowledge of the Central Intelligence Agency began with his book *The Phoenix Program*, the definitive work on the CIA-directed murder of between 25-40,000 civilians during the Vietnam War, suspected of affiliation with the Viet Cong, but without any kind of legal redress. These suspects, referred to as VCI or Viet Cong infrastructure, often accused via hearsay, could only be released by bribing local Vietnamese officials. As Valentine reports, CIA officer Lucien Conein called the Phoenix Program "the greatest blackmail scheme ever invented. If you don't do what I want, you're a VC."

In addition to summarizing the Phoenix Program in his book, Valentine takes us through a horrifying history of Agency abuses in the name of democracy. From Southeast Asia, where the CIA funneled money to Laotian Hmong leader Vang Pao to fight North Vietnam, with opium as a financial benefit to the Agency, Valentine moves on to the CIA in the 80s. Here, he illuminates how the Agency "coerced law enforcement agencies into 'looking away' in regard to both cocaine smuggling by the Nicaraguan Contra terrorists and heroin trafficking by the Northern Alliance warlords fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan."

Valentine contemporizes the moral relativity of CIA operations, the lesser-of-two-evils paradigm that historically morphs into the creation of newer and more potent enemies of the US. After the CIA used an early al-Qaeda to fight in Chechnya, Bosnia, Kosovo and other locations, our support of Hamid Karzai and his trafficking in opium led to an al-Qaeda committed to American destruction. "This same scenario," Valentine writes, "has been playing out in Afghanistan for the last 15 years, largely through the DEA's Special Operations Division (SOD), whose sole purpose is to provide cover for CIA operations worldwide."

And connecting the CIA's geopolitical relativism to even more current affairs, Valentine explores the recent failed support of the rebels in Bashar al-Assad's Syria. Valentine emphasizes that "Iran publicly backs Assad, as does Russia, and that Iran seeks to help Assad defeat the rebels, many of whom are foreign mercenaries trained and financed by the CIA, Israel, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia." Never have CIA loyalties been more confused

and counterintuitive, Valentine asserts, than in a world where factions of our sworn enemies al-Qaeda and ISIS aid us in our failed attempt to depose Assad.

Now, FBI and Congressional investigations probe Trump's connections to Russia, which must include the previous oil and gas business dealings of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Yet there is serious doubt about how deeply they will dig. The FBI's James Comey was willing to sit on evidence about Michael Flynn presented by then acting Attorney General Sally Yates. The Republican controlled Congress and current Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who worked on the Trump campaign, have no commitment to actual revelations that would embarrass their own party, even if those facts revealed treasonous actions.

Thus, the CIA of old, who Douglas Valentine rightfully excoriates for its illegalities in the name of American national interests, has an unexpected and rare opportunity to remake its own image at this point in history. Whether it is done in the name of preserving CIA independence from Trump and people like Stephen Feinberg or in the name of preserving democracy, it seems the CIA, NSA and our intelligence partners around the world are now the only source of enlightenment about Trump's true relationship to Putin's Russia.

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