

"A BRAVE AND INTRIGUING ANALYSIS."

RAHEEM KASSAM, AUTHOR OF *ENOCH WAS RIGHT*

THE RUSSIA LIE

HOW THE MILITARY INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX TARGETED TRUMP

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INTRODUCTION

Washington D.C. is one of the wealthiest regions in America. It does not produce cars or computers or software. It produces public policy, for a price, on behalf of national and international clients. *The Russia Lie* is the story of how federal agencies, pundits, lobbyists, big money donors, and politicians crossed party lines to defend themselves against an outsider: Donald J. Trump.

The sordid mess is difficult to describe in full detail, partly because in the expensive inquiry that followed, the important details were largely hidden.

Ridiculously, as can only happen in clique like Washington, the investigation merged into the political operation that caused the investigation in the first place. Enough has been ferreted out, though, that a complete picture is finally emerging.

In 2016, a Democratic Party-funded political research firm, Fusion GPS, hired a London-based, former British spy by the name of Christopher Steele to investigate Trump's connections with Russia. Steele produced a dossier that said Trump was working with Russian President Vladimir Putin to undermine candidate Hillary Clinton. The dossier suggested Putin's leverage on Trump was '*Komproimat*': Russian intelligence had secretly recorded Trump hiring prostitutes in a Moscow hotel and paying them to pee on a bed in which President Obama had once slept.

This schlock was sold to the FBI, which in turn opened an investigation into the Trump campaign and used the dossier to obtain warrants to go through sensitive emails. There were illegal leaks, and a false narrative was injected into

the election (and its aftermath) that Trump was a Manchurian candidate. That really happened.

In late July 2020, a redacted version of the FBI's interview with the Steele dossier's primary subsource (PSS) was released, and it was a game changer. The interviewing agents took pains to prop up the fan-fiction of Russian intrigue even as the [PSS was pretty much laughing it off](#). Completely missing from the interview, as always with the Russia hoax, was anything from inside the Kremlin.

Official Washington—including top Republicans—has accepted for years that the PSS was connected at the highest levels to Putin. Really, though, he was just an employee of Christopher Steele, spouting the company line. It has been confirmed that the [PSS is Igor Danchenko](#), a long-ago Russian immigrant who got his masters from the University of Louisville, after which he started doing some translation work for the stuffy, globalist DC-think tank, the Brookings Institution.

In his master's thesis he thanked Fiona Hill, who later would help him graduate to the position of senior researcher at Brookings, and co-author a [paper](#) with her about how Russian ambitions in Europe and Asia are bolstered by its energy exports. Hill is the British-American academic and self-confessed Russia-hawk who was Congressman Adam Schiff's [key impeachment witness](#) against President Trump.

When questioned by the FBI under a grant of immunity, Danchenko claimed that he had [no insider knowledge](#) and the dossier was just rumors that he heard third hand from people who couldn't know. He said that he had no connections to Putin or to Russian intelligence. He does, though, have a record for [drunk and disorderly](#) conduct and was himself [investigated by the FBI](#) in 2009 on suspicion of spying for Russia.

A more compromised source could not be imagined. It is as if they were trying to make a flop, but the audience got sucked in, a bumbling bureaucrat version of *The Producers*. Some pundits are now buying into the idea that Danchenko is a Russian spy. That's hard to believe. In his private and academic life, Danchenko has been anti-Putin, going so far as to accuse Russia's president of [plagiarism](#).

There is an [FBI report](#) that has him trying to recruit a researcher associated with the Obama administration to sell intelligence to “some people” for money in 2009. We know, though, from [WikiLeaks](#), that at the time Danchenko was picking up money on the side, selling insider analysis to the Texas based global intelligence company, Stratfor. That is a better explanation for “I know some people who will pay for intelligence” than Putin-did-it.

Let’s assume it is true, though. Then there is presently a Russian spy in Washington DC under a grant of immunity from the FBI hawking analyst work on [Linkedin](#) between shopping trips on the Metro. If it were not tragic, it would be comical.

The FBI has been in possession of this Russia-hoax-killing interview with Danchenko since February 2017. Yet the Justice Department still used the Steele dossier to get FISA warrants on Carter Page after that and as a predicate to appoint a special counsel to investigate President Trump.

THE SET-UP

Here's what the sudden appearance of a Brookings Institution researcher as the primary subsource means, big picture wise.

Back in 2014, before it [joined the #Resistance](#), when the *New York Times* still did some residual muckracking like a dead frog whose leg twitches, the Gray Lady saw fit to print a [story](#), “*Foreign Powers Buy Influence at Think Tanks.*” Among other wild things that in the present political climate would be dismissed as *Infowars* conspiracy theories, the article said:

[Joseph Sandler](#), a lawyer and expert on the statute that governs Americans lobbying for foreign governments, said the arrangements between the countries and think tanks “opened a whole new window into an aspect of the influence-buying in Washington that has not previously been exposed.”

“It is particularly egregious because with a law firm or lobbying firm, you expect them to be an advocate,” Mr. Sandler added. “Think tanks have this patina of academic neutrality and objectivity, and that is being compromised.”

The arrangements involve Washington's most influential think tanks, including the [Brookings Institution](#), the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#), and the [Atlantic Council](#). Each is a major recipient of overseas funds, producing policy papers, hosting forums and organizing private briefings for

senior United States government officials that typically align with the foreign governments' agendas.

Less than a year after that warning was published, the fledgling Trump campaign was getting unlikely traction among the Republican rank-and-file by questioning America's bellicose foreign policy toward Russia. Several times in the summer of 2015—after his June announcement that he would run for president—Trump cited his experience with the Miss Universe Pageant in Russia as providing foreign policy *bona fides* and, in the same interviews, he [spoke highly](#) of Vladimir Putin.

Such bombast enraged the huffy foreign policy establishment, but regular people got a kick out of it, partly because of the rage it caused among the self-important; which, in case you haven't figured it out yet, is one of the keys to Trump's rise.

Candidate Trump did not know it, but he was thumbing his nose at the West's most powerful syndicate, and there would be hell to pay.

In the days of *Leave it to Beaver*, the Cold War was waged on the premise of the domino theory. Russia was thought to be intent on spreading communist ideology by armed insurrection throughout the world. The Red Menace had to be stopped with blood and treasure in places like Vietnam and El Salvador lest entire regions be lost to communism.

The logic of the domino theory committed America to an unprecedented peacetime military build-up. In addition, the West created an intricate spy bureaucracy to discern Russia's evil designs at home and abroad. The [Five Eyes](#) agreement was a post-war alliance involving the United States, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to share intelligence. Under its terms, the Brits could spy on Americans suspected of helping Russia, and report their findings back to the CIA.

The CIA could not do anything with the information because it was not permitted, generally, to conduct investigations on American soil. J. Edgar Hoover's FBI closed the legal loophole by expanding its mission to gather intelligence against Americans who might be Russian agents, under the auspices of "law enforcement." Now, the Brits could spy on Americans,

share the information with the CIA, and the FBI could be brought in to finish the job.

There were spectacular abuses. Hoover kept secret files on Martin Luther King, Jr., Hollywood stars and starlets, and politicians who were rivals to his power. The FBI's domestic intelligence gathering function caused understandable discomfort on the political left. There were whispers that President Nixon was misusing the FBI to smear undesirables like the [Smothers Brothers](#).

In response to Nixon's perceived overreach, liberal Idaho (before those words were an oxymoron) Senator Frank Church set up a commission to investigate domestic surveillance abuses. Technology, by then, permitted federal agencies to capture huge amounts of wire communications without disclosing their eavesdropping to Americans who were being surveilled.

Senator Church [stated his concerns](#) on an episode of *Meet the Press*:

If this government ever became a tyrant, if a dictator ever took charge in this country, the technological capacity that the intelligence community has given the government could enable it to impose total tyranny [against those who] combine together in resistance to the government.

The result of Senator Church's work was the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA). Under the new law, the FBI could not use its technological capacity to secretly gather intelligence against any American without first going to court with credible evidence that the citizen was a spy.

In the early 1990s, the Soviet Union disbanded, leaving an entire apparatus in the West built to fend off Soviet expansion. None of it was dismantled. Instead, intrusive devices meant to prevent World War III wound up in the hands of European bureaucrats and wannabee sophisticates of the American spy ranks. Together, they set out to invent Russian intrigue of the sort that let them keep using their cool gadgets.

Prominent among the spy pencil-pushers was none other than Christopher Steele. He built a distinguished life for himself by blaming Russia for stuff. It was Steele, as a member of MI6, who [determined](#) that Alexander Litvinenko's

poisoning was a Russian state hit. Nobody has seen the evidence that says Russia poisoned Litvinenko. We have to rely on Steele, and he can't tell us how he knows Putin did it because then he'd have to kill us. But, not to worry, Steele would never just make stuff up, right?

By such shadowy machinations, "Putin is a thug" replaced the domino theory as the *raison d'être* of the lucrative Western spy apparatus. How Putin poisoning political enemies justified complex intelligence gathering and expensive military bases originally designed to prevent Soviet incursions into Western Europe is not something you were supposed to ponder.

A priori, "Putin is a thug" means he wants to annex France. Think tanks like the Atlantic Council and the Brookings Institution give the "Putin-is-a-thug" mantra an official, silk-stocking, "former generals, major corporations, Senators, friendly foreign governments, and top academics agree" stature.

THE HOOK

Is Russia a threat to the West? That's complicated.

Under Putin, Russia projects a self-perceived cultural transcendence that is neither East nor West, but Russian and Orthodox. Putin looks to his East and he sees radical Islam as an existential threat to Russia. He looks to the West and also sees an existential threat: multiculturalism versus Russian culture.

Putin speaks freely of his own [baptism](#), his beliefs, and the positive role of [Christianity](#) in Russian history. He put a girl rock band, [Pussy Riot](#), in prison for desecrating an altar, a crime that has not been prosecuted since the days of Gregory the Great. The Patriarch of the Orthodox Church works in close cooperation with the government.

In 2013, the Kremlin imposed a [ban](#) on the advocacy of the [homosexual lifestyle](#) in the presence of children, [strictly limited](#) advertisements for abortions, and [prohibited](#) elective abortions later than 12 weeks after conception. The Sochi Olympics closing ceremonies in 2014 featured a [tribute](#) to Russian writers, including communism's most eloquent critic, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose books are required reading in Russian schools.

The transcendent Russian and Orthodox culture Putin has worked to restore appears superficially to resemble the left's worst nightmare of what would happen if Ted Cruz were elected president with solid Tea Party majorities in both houses of Congress. That would seem to make Putin a natural ally for the American right, but no. Instead, when discussing Putin, Republican politicians are quick to evoke images of Stalin and gulags.

Why is that? The great funding pipeline that makes Washington, D.C. the wealthiest region in America feeds mostly on military spending. [Politico reported](#) in 2015, “the United States still maintains nearly 800 military bases in more than 70 countries and territories abroad . . . Britain, France and Russia, by contrast, have about 30 foreign bases combined.” Republicans have been feeding at that trough for 75 years.

President Eisenhower—the furthest thing from a conspiracy theorist America has ever produced—famously warned in his farewell address to beware “the military-industrial complex.” He was speaking of the military branches and the arms industry forming a powerful backroom alliance to write self-serving public policy.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 by Western nations to provide a deterrent to the Soviet threat. When he assumed command of NATO in 1951, then General Eisenhower recognized its limited mission: “If in 10 years all American troops stationed in Europe for national defense purposes have not been returned to the United States, then this whole project will have failed.”

NATO still exists nearly thirty years after the Soviet Union disbanded because, well, places like the Brookings Institution and the Atlantic Council combine with posers like Christopher Steele to make Putin a threat. Importantly (for Cold War comparisons at least) there is no domino theory when it comes to Putin. Even his harshest critic would concede that he is trying to establish regional hegemony as opposed to world domination.

The Democrats, to their credit, have let go of the *Iron Curtain has descended yada yada* worldview, because they never really bought it to begin with. They look at Russia and see something that is equally objectionable. [Putin’s anti-immigration](#), anti-liberal, Christianity-sourced populism is anathema to them.

President Obama personally boycotted the Sochi Olympics and [sent](#) in his place a delegation of gay athletes to protest Russia’s laws against LGBT advocacy. It was a diplomatic breach of the sort that was carefully avoided during the Beijing Olympics, even though China has a far worse record on human rights.

Washington’s two diametrically opposed views of Russia could only exist in place driven by politics. H.L. Mencken [observed](#), “The whole aim

of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.” Republicans can portray Putin in fundraising emails as Stalin; even while the Democrats paint him as Jerry Falwell with an army. The contradiction is tolerated because Washington does not need to make sense.

The unintended consequence is that Putin is opposed at all points on the political spectrum. This means, in practice, that when someone suggests investigating a presidential campaign for ties to Russia, everyone in Washington says, “Great idea!”

Smack dab in the middle of this soupy mix of money, lobbying, and insanity is the country of Ukraine, which sits geographically between Europe and Russia. The Cold War view was that without Ukraine, Russia is an Eastern power, but *with* Ukraine it challenges Western interests. Since the 1990s, Ukraine has bounced back and forth between alignment with Russia and the West. Like a child in a bitter divorce, it has become a proxy in the battle between two mismatched parents: the parochial, nationalistic, religious preferences of Putin’s Russia; and the globalism of the EU.

In 2010, pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovich was elected as president of Ukraine, in part due to the services of an American political consultant, Paul Manafort. *Politico* [has called](#) Manafort’s relationship to Yanukovich “a political love connection.” Powerful forces in the West suspected that Vladimir Putin was putting anti-EU ideas into peoples’ heads—with Manafort’s help.

Therein lies the chewy center of *The Russia Lie*: Western-intellectuals have a condescending view of the *hoi polloi* who vote against their globalist projects, regarding the huddled masses as easily manipulated, *Pygmalion*-like, by smarter people. They assume Putin is playing Professor Henry Higgins to the flower girls who reject the EU, because that’s how they see the world. This simple prejudice makes Russian collusion a first principle with no need for supporting evidence.

In 2014, Yanukovich would make the “mistake” of not signing an association agreement with the European Union. John McCain [flew to Kiev](#) to rally support for the EU. McCain [reported](#) to the Atlantic Council about his trip. There followed a successful *coup d’état* that replaced the pro-Russia government with a Western puppet. President Obama later [told](#) CNN’s Fareed

Zakaria that he had “brokered a deal to transition power in Ukraine.” The word “brokered” suggests that the Obama administration successfully replaced a government half a world away at the behest of Washington’s smart people.

In September 2015, Putin made a [speech at the UN](#) in New York harshly critical of NATO expansion and Western meddling on Russia’s borders, citing “the bloc thinking of the times of the Cold War” that was having devastating effects in places like Ukraine.

Trump would appear on *The O’Reilly Factor* on FOX the next day and [say](#), “I will tell you that I think in terms of leadership, [Putin] is getting an ‘A,’ and our president is not doing so well. They did not look good together.” Trump spent the next few months distinguishing himself from all other Republican candidates by [praising Putin](#) and even [questioning](#) the Russian president’s role in the Litvinenko poisoning: “In all fairness to Putin, you’re saying he killed people. I haven’t seen that. I don’t know that he has. Have you been able to prove that?”

Christopher Steele could not have been pleased. Republicans, too, did not like the Putin rapprochement. Around the time of Putin’s UN speech, Fusion GPS put out a feeler to Republican interests, offering to find dirt on Trump. The *Washington Free Beacon*, a neoconservative website funded by the hedge-fund billionaire Paul Singer, [hired Fusion GPS](#). At the time, Singer was [backing Marco Rubio](#) for the Republican nomination.

Alexandra Chalupa, a Ukrainian-American operative, also began doing [opposition research](#) for the DNC about Trump and Russia in late 2015. The Ukrainian embassy representing the government whose rule President Obama had “brokered” worked closely with Chalupa. Chalupa’s efforts were so successful in creating a phony Russian cloud around Trump that on October 24, 2016, reporter Michael Isikoff [portrayed her work as pivotal](#) in a premature victory lap for the Clinton campaign at *Yahoo News*.

Like the mismatched fellow travelers in the comedy classic, *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, lots of powerful Washingtonians were suddenly trying to connect Trump to Russia.

On January 16, 2016, The Atlantic Council issued a [dispatch](#) under the banner headline: “*US Intelligence Agencies to Investigate Russia’s Infiltration of European Political Parties.*” The lede was concise: “American intelligence

agencies are to conduct a major investigation into how the Kremlin is infiltrating political parties in Europe, it can be revealed.” There followed a series of pull quotes from an article that appeared in the *The Telegraph*, including that “James Clapper, the US Director of National Intelligence” was investigating whether right wing political movements in Europe were sourced in “Russian meddling.”

The dispatch spoke of “A dossier” that revealed “Russian influence operations” in Europe. This was the first time trippy words like “Russian meddling” and “dossier” would appear together in the American lexicon.

Senator Frank Church must have been rolling in his grave. A progressive democratic president was spying on European political parties to uncover connections to Russia. Wow. This meant, [almost necessarily under the Five Eyes Agreement](#), that foreign agents were returning the favor and spying on the Trump campaign and sharing their “intelligence” with John Brennan at the CIA, who was shucking it off to James Comey at the FBI.

One of the international men of mystery spying on European political parties was the ubiquitous Christopher Steele. A March 5, 2018 [piece](#) in *The New Yorker* about Steele describes the connection:

Even before Steele became involved in the U.S. Presidential campaign, he was convinced that the Kremlin was interfering in Western elections. In April of 2016, not long before he took on the Fusion assignment, he finished a secret investigation, which he called Project Charlemagne, for a private client. It involved a survey of Russian interference in the politics of four members of the European Union—France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany—along with Turkey, a candidate for membership. The report chronicles persistent, aggressive political interference by the Kremlin: social-media warfare aimed at inflaming fear and prejudice, and “opaque financial support” given to favored politicians in the form of bank loans, gifts, and other kinds of support. The report.... suggests that Russian aid was likely given to lesser-known right-wing nationalists in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The Kremlin’s long-term aim, the report concludes, was to boost extremist groups and politicians at the expense of

Europe's liberal democracies. The more immediate goal was to "destroy" the E.U., in order to end the punishing economic sanctions that the E.U. and the U.S. had imposed on Russia after its 2014 political and military interference in Ukraine.

At roughly the same time Steele worked on Project Charlemagne, he hired Fusion GPS to do research on Paul Manafort. Glenn Simpson [detailed](#) this in his book: "Weeks before Trump tapped Manafort to run his campaign, Christopher Steele had hired Fusion for help investigating Manafort." Manafort was then working as an advisor to Trump's campaign, and he had not yet ascended to campaign manager. His one-time business partner, Rick Davis, had managed John McCain's campaign, and Manafort was tapped as a level-headed insider who could possibly bring some ballast to Trump.

The perfect storm that became *The Russia Lie* looked like this in March 2016:

Steele was investigating Putin's influence in European politics. Manafort had been helpful in electing the pro-Putin candidate in Ukraine, and he started to work for Trump. Steele hired Fusion GPS to investigate Manafort. Then Fusion GPS hired Steele to help them. Cozy, huh? Oblivious to it all, Trump continued to poke the bear, [wondering out loud](#) about NATO's continued relevance and questioning America's foreign policy in Ukraine. The Atlantic Council was in high alert, [defending NATO against Trump's heresy](#).

There were whispers of "Putin's candidate," but they were only that. It probably would have remained innuendo and rumors parroted occasionally on the campaign trail. But then something extraordinary happened.

THE WIRE

On March 19, 2016, Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman, John Podesta, surrendered his emails to an unknown entity in a “spear phishing” scam. This has been called a “hack,” but it was not. Instead, it was the sort of flim-flam hustle that happens to gullible dupes on the internet. The content of the emails was beyond embarrassing. They [showed](#) election fraud and coordination with the media against the candidacy of Bernie Sanders. The DNC and the Clinton campaign needed a cover story.

Blaming Russia would be a handy way to deal with the Podesta emails. There was already an existing Russia operation that could easily be retrofitted to this purpose. The problem was that it was nearly impossible to identify the perpetrator in a phishing scheme using computer forensic tools. The only way to associate Putin with the emails was circumstantially.

The DNC retained a company that called itself “CrowdStrike” to provide assistance. CrowdStrike’s chief technology officer and co-founder, Dmitri Alperovitch, is an anti-Putin, Russian expat and a [senior fellow at the Atlantic Council](#).

With the Atlantic Council in 2016, all roads led to Ukraine. The Atlantic Council’s list of significant contributors [includes](#) Ukrainian billionaire Victor Pinchuk. The Ukrainian energy company that was paying millions to an entity that was funneling large amounts to Hunter Biden months after he was dishonorably discharged from the US Navy for drug use, Burisma, also appears prominently on the Atlantic Council’s donor list. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the

Western puppet installed in Ukraine, [visited](#) the Atlantic Council's Washington offices to make a speech weeks after the coup.

Pinchuk was also a [big donor](#) (between \$10 million and \$20 million) to the Clinton Foundation. Back in '15, the *Wall Street Journal* published an [investigative piece](#), "*Clinton Charity Tapped Foreign Friends*." The piece was about how Ukraine was attempting to influence Clinton by making huge donations through Pinchuk. Foreign interference, anyone?

On June 12, 2016, WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange [announced](#): "We have upcoming leaks in relation to Hillary Clinton . . . We have emails pending publication." Two days later, CrowdStrike fed the *Washington Post* a [story](#), headlined, "Russian government hackers penetrated DNC, stole opposition research on Trump." The improbable tale was that the Russians had hacked the DNC computer servers and got away with some opposition research on Trump. The article quoted Alperovitch.

The next day, a new blog—[Guccifer 2.0](#)—appeared on the internet and announced:

Worldwide known cyber security company CrowdStrike announced that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) servers had been hacked by "sophisticated" hacker groups.

I'm very pleased the company appreciated my skills so highly))) But in fact, it was easy, very easy.

Guccifer may have been the first one who penetrated Hillary Clinton's and other Democrats' mail servers. But he certainly wasn't the last. No wonder any other hacker could easily get access to the DNC's servers.

Shame on CrowdStrike: Do you think I've been in the DNC's networks for almost a year and saved only 2 documents? Do you really believe it?

Here are just a few docs from many thousands I extracted when hacking into DNC's network.

Guccifer 2.0 posted hundreds of pages of Trump opposition research allegedly hacked from the DNC and emailed copies to *Gawker* and *The Smoking*

Gun. In raw form, the opposition research was one of the documents obtained in the Podesta emails, with a notable difference: It was widely reported the document now contained “[Russian fingerprints](#).”

The document had been cut and pasted into a separate Russian Word template that [yielded an abundance of Russian “error “messages](#). The [document’s metadata](#) included the name of the Russian secret police founder, Felix Dzerzhinsky, written in the Russian language. The three-parenthesis formulation from the original post “)))” is the Russian version of a [smiley face](#) used commonly on social media. In addition, the blog’s author [deliberately used a Russian VPN](#) service visible in its emails even though there would have been many options to hide any national affiliation.

Under the circumstances, the FBI should have analyzed the DNC computers to confirm the Guccifer hack. Incredibly, though, the inspection was done by CrowdStrike, the same Atlantic Council-connected private contractor paid by the DNC that had already concluded in *The Washington Post* that there had been a hack and Putin was behind it.

CrowdStrike would declare the “hack” to be the work of sophisticated Russian spies. Alperovitch described it as, “[skilled operational tradecraft](#).” There is nothing skilled, though, in ham-handedly disclosing a Russian identity when trying to hide it. The more reasonable inference is that this was a set-up. It certainly looks like Guccifer 2.0 suddenly appeared in coordination with the *Washington Post*’s article that appeared the previous day.

FBI Director James Comey [confirmed](#) in testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee in January 2017 that the FBI’s failure to inspect the computers was unusual to say the least. “We’d always prefer to have access hands-on ourselves if that’s possible,” he said. But the DNC rebuffed the FBI’s request to inspect the hardware. Comey added that the DNC’s hand-picked investigator, CrowdStrike, is “a highly respected private company.”

What he did not reveal was that CrowdStrike never corroborated a hack by forensic analysis. In testimony released in 2020, it was revealed that CrowdStrike [admitted](#) to Congressional investigators as early as 2017 that it had no direct evidence of Russian hacking. CrowdStrike’s president Shawn Henry testified, “There’s not evidence that [documents and emails] were actually exfiltrated

[from the DNC servers]. There's circumstantial evidence but no evidence that they were actually exfiltrated." The circumstantial evidence was Guccifer 2.0.

This was a crucial revelation because the thousand ships of Russiagate launched upon the positive assertion that CrowdStrike had definitely proven a Russian hack. The testimony that there was no direct evidence of a hack was kept from the American public for more than three years.

The reasonable inference is that the DNC was trying to frame Russia and the FBI and intelligence agencies were going along with the scheme because of political pressure. Lending weight to the frame-up theory: at the same time CrowdStrike was raising a false Russian flag over the hack, the [DNC also hired Fusion GPS](#) to create Russian dirt on Trump. The law firm, Perkins Coie, [was used as a cut out to hire both](#), so that the DNC's involvement would not be immediately visible.

There were huge conflicts of interest.

To give the hit job a veneer of credibility, Fusion GPS recruited its client, Steele, for whom it was investigating Paul Manafort. But Steele at the time had already investigated Putin's supposed involvement in European politics, in Project Charlemagne. Finding that Russia colluded with Trump would at least be an act of confirmation bias.

Steele couldn't tap anyone actually connected to Putin to provide Trump *kompromat*. Instead, he dipped into Washington's ready pool of earnest role players and got the Putin dirt from low level policy researcher with connections to the Brookings Institution, Danchenko, who would later disclaim the substance of the dossier to the FBI.

Disclaiming the substance of the dossier in his FBI interview was a stunning admission by the so-called primary subsource that, somehow, did not stop Trump's own Justice Department from ratcheting up the inquiry and getting a special counsel appointed.

While CrowdStrike and Fusion GPS were creating false Russian flags over the Trump campaign, the CIA finally managed to get the FBI to open its own domestic spy investigation. John Brennan [was asked](#) in his February 4, 2018 appearance on *Meet the Press* about the role of the *Five Eyes Agreement* in investigating the Trump campaign, and he made a blunt admission:

Now I'm not going to get into details about how it was acquired. But the FBI has a very close relationship with its British counterparts. And so the FBI had visibility into a number of things that were going on involving some individuals who may have had some affiliation with the Trump campaign. And so the intelligence that we collected was pulsed against that. And I thought it would have been derelict if the FBI did not pull the threads, investigative threads, on American persons who might have been involved with Russia and working on their behalf either wittingly or unwittingly.

There is no way to read his answer except to infer that he prodded the FBI investigation into Trump with the help of “British counterparts”, and he’s proud of it.

By then, Trump had made an unlikely and inexplicable run at the Republican nomination on a nationalist agenda. The Brits were dealing with their own unlikely and inexplicable political event. Tens of millions of working-class voters had done the unthinkable: reject rule by the EU.

It was the time of the Brexit vote and a wave of nationalism was sweeping the UK. On July 13, 2016, British academic Dr. Andrew Foxall penned an [op-ed](#) in the *New York Times*, “Why Putin Loves Brexit.” Foxall blamed Russia for the previous month’s Brexit vote, adding in a little-noted aside that spies were looking into it:

The United States is so concerned over Moscow's determination to exploit European disunity that in January, James R. Clapper Jr., the director of national intelligence, began a review of Russia's clandestine funding of European parties.

Whatever their motivation, British intelligence agencies were imagining Putin under mattresses, and they were in full spy-mode about it. Minor members of the Trump campaign, including Carter Page and George Papadopoulos, were invited to London to talk to Cambridge professor Stefan Halper, who burrowed in on Trump and Russia. Unless U.S. intelligence agencies were freestyling in Great Britain, MI6 was spying on the Trump campaign.

Halper is inferentially a British spy or at least a double agent. The alternative is that he was an American spy conducting rogue operations from England. At the time, Halper was an FBI [confidential human source](#) being paid by American tax dollars.

After Papadopoulos hooked on as a minor underling in the Trump campaign, he ran into a person by the name of Josef Mifsud while traveling in Europe. Mifsud either did or didn't bring up something about Hillary Clinton's emails, depending on who you believe: Papadopoulos or Andrew Downer, an Australian diplomat connected to the Clinton Foundation who gratuitously inserted himself into these events right as the FBI was looking for a pretext to start an official investigation.

James Comey has [called Mifsud](#) a Russian agent. But Mifsud has [documented connections](#) to British spy agencies. He traveled to the United States in early February 2017 as a guest of the State Department, an accommodation not ordinarily made to Russian operatives who just stole an election. [Joseph Mifsud](#) walks, quacks and acts like a Western asset. The alternative is that he somehow showed up in the middle of a [honeypot operation](#) against George Papadopoulos as a real Russian spy to play the part of a Russian spy.

The FBI would officially launch its investigation into the Trump campaign, Crossfire Hurricane, on July 31, 2016. A few days later, the agent who opened the investigation—Peter Strzok—would [text](#) his lover, “We’ll stop” Trump. By then, the DNC, its paid contractors CrowdStrike and Fusion GPS, the CIA, foreign intelligence services, and the FBI were engaging in a joint operation to stop Trump that was being run out of Washington’s silk stocking, foreign-funded think tanks.

THE STING

The first business they had to deal with was the release of the Podesta emails. The contents were beyond embarrassing. The emails show Clinton and the Democratic Party fixing the primaries against Bernie Sanders. The chair of the DNC, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, was forced to [resign](#) on the eve of the Democratic Convention in late July for her role in the dirty tricks.

You would think the media would have celebrated the email leak for speaking truth to power. The Podesta emails were exactly the kind of political dirt Woodward and Bernstein got from [Deep Throat](#) in that parking garage. This time, though, *The Washington Post* intervened firmly on the side of the cover-up. By August, the media was running with the Clinton campaign's Russia smear operation.

Trump was placed on the defensive for email leaks that showed his opponent fixing the primaries. His campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, resigned because a [fake ledger](#) suddenly appeared out of Ukraine connecting him to Russia.

Trump protested by stating the obvious: the federal government has “no idea” who was behind the hacks. The FBI and CIA called him a liar, issuing a “[Joint Statement](#)” that cited Guccifer 2.0, suggesting 17 intelligence agencies agree that it was the Russians. Hillary Clinton took advantage of this “intelligence assessment” in the October debate to portray Trump as Putin's stooge.

She [said](#):

We have 17, 17 intelligence agencies, civilian and military who have all concluded that these espionage attacks, these cyber-attacks, come from the highest levels of the Kremlin. And they are designed to influence our election. I find that deeply disturbing.

The media's fact checkers [excoriated](#) Trump for lying. This was the ultimate campaign dirty trick: a tag team by the intelligence agencies and the media against a political candidate. It has since been learned that the "17 intelligence agencies" claptrap was always [false](#).

Somehow, Trump won anyway.

Those who assert that it is a "conspiracy theory" to say that CrowdStrike would fabricate the results of computer forensic testing to create a false Russian flag should know that it was caught doing exactly that around the time it was inspecting the DNC computers.

On Dec. 22, 2016, CrowdStrike caused an international stir when it claimed to have uncovered evidence that Russians hacked into a Ukrainian artillery computer app to help pro-Russian separatists. *Voice of America* later determined the [claim was false](#), and CrowdStrike retracted its finding. Ukraine's Ministry of Defense was forced to eat crow and admit that the hacking never happened.

If you wanted a computer testing firm to fabricate a Russian hack for political reasons in 2016, CrowdStrike was who you went out and hired.

In a piece first published on January 11, 2017, headlined "Ukrainian Efforts to Sabotage Trump Backfire," [Politico reported](#) that Ukraine tried to help Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election: "The Ukrainian efforts had an impact in the race, helping to force Manafort's resignation and advancing the narrative that Trump's campaign was deeply connected to Ukraine's foe to the east, Russia." Ukraine has [apologized and admitted its interference](#).

In the end, Trump was falsely linked to Russia by three distinct items of DNC opposition research, all connected to the Western puppet government in Ukraine: (1) dirt on Paul Manafort; (2) the Steele dossier; and (3) the supposed hack of the DNC computers.

In emails that Fusion GPS's Nellie Ohr forwarded to her husband Bruce Ohr, [Ukrainian officials informed the FBI](#) of a “black ledger,” registering off-the-book payments to Manafort.

It turned out to be a fabrication, but it did serve the purpose of disrupting the Trump campaign within weeks of the election, causing the campaign chairman to resign. It is plausible to conclude the Steele dossier, like Nellie Ohr's report about Manafort, was based on disinformation provided by Ukrainians that was passed to Steele by his Fusion GPS researchers. The only source Nellie Ohr has identified [in testimony](#) is Ukrainian.

President Trump would eventually mention “CrowdStrike” and the number they did on the DNC servers to the next President of Ukraine, a comedian who was elected by Ukrainians in 2019 partly as a protest to Western meddling in their country. Trump was impeached for encouraging Ukraine to investigate Western shenanigans based on a “whistleblower complaint” from a bureaucrat who ran the Ukraine desk at the NSC in the Obama administration.

Republicans have too easily gone along with The Russia Lie because they do not like outsiders ruining their insider game, and “Russia-bad” is what they've always told their supporters at the Rotary Club to keep the gravy train rolling.

The Steele dossier as Russian disinformation is a little far-fetched. It was paid for by the DNC, and democrats do not need Putin to lie about Trump. They can do it all by themselves. The dossier is by necessary inference DNC disinformation. Given all that has been learned, Republicans should be careful not to give the plotters a “Putin made us do it” out.

Steele had not been to Russia for at least 10 years. He spent his professional life as an anti-Russia gadfly. Fatuous claims are made on his behalf that Putin had [ordered him to be poisoned](#). If Christopher Steele was the ex-spy our vaunted intelligence services relied on to explore whether Putin had *kompromat* on Trump—that's really incompetent.

The bigger problem with any Russian disinformation scenario is for the dossier to affect the succession of power in America even slightly, the FBI would have to make a series of sloppy mistakes, all inuring to the benefit of Hillary Clinton and against Trump. Unless his name was Ras-Putin, there is no way Putin could have divined that such a wild story would be treated with a seriousness it never deserved.

Steele testified that he got the dirt on Trump and Putin from the primary subsource. Glenn Simpson of Fusion GPS had said that the primary subsource himself got the information from Sergio Millian, whom Simpson libeled as a Russian agent.

According to the Inspector General's report, Danchenko said Millian conveyed the Trump-Russia information to him in an [anonymous 15-minute telephone](#) call where the caller did not identify himself. Danchenko claimed that he later concluded it was Millian after hearing Millian's voice on a YouTube recording. Millian has [produced evidence](#) that Danchenko tried to contact him, but he never responded.

It was all an absurd, poorly executed set-up. Millian certainly is [not a Russian agent](#). Instead, he was a Belarusian immigrant who had the misfortune of being mildly connected to Trump at a time when political dirty tricksters were looking for people to frame as Russian spies in his midst.

There is also a logical contradiction to the Russian disinformation trope: If the Steele dossier tapped Russian sources to reveal a Putin plot to harm Hillary, why did it primarily include crazy stuff that hurt Trump? And if it was created to smear Trump, why did the intelligence community rely on it to conclude that Putin was out to get Hillary?

Read closely, the [dossier](#) tells you who fabricated it beginning on its first page, and it was not the Russians:

Source B asserted that the TRUMP operation was both supported and directed by Russian President Vladimir PUTIN. Its aim was to sow discord and disunity within the US itself, but more especially within the Transatlantic alliance which was viewed as inimical to Russia's interests. Source C, a senior Russian financial official said that the TRUMP operation should be seen in terms of PUTIN's desire to return to Nineteenth Century 'Great Power' politics anchored upon countries' interests rather than ideals-based international order established after World War Two. S/ he had heard PUTIN talking in this way to close associates on several occasions.

The key is the word trans-“Atlantic” in describing Putin’s ambitions. That is a Washington insider word. It is the “A” in NATO. It is the “Atlantic” in Atlantic Council. Unless Vladimir Putin goes around the Kremlin talking like a NATO lobbyist, he never said any of those things. An [ideals-based Transatlantic alliance that defies the rabble](#) who prefer governance based on national interest is, instead, the sort of psycho-fantasy that foreign governments pay Washington think tanks to hawk.

If there weren’t places like the Brookings Institution and the Atlantic Council funded by foreign governments with a pecuniary interest in keeping NATO bases in their countries, this operation never would have gotten off the ground.

THE COVER-UP

After the election, the Washington insiders who had together orchestrated the Russia hoax switched into a cover-up, hide-the-evidence, continue-to-harm-Trump operation. Trump had been elected with the promise that he would appoint General Michael Flynn as his National Security Advisor. Flynn had publicly favored a rapprochement with Russia.

Once behind the desk with access to the government's top-secret files, Flynn certainly would have figured out that the FBI and CIA combined with the DNC and members of the Obama administration to play political dirty tricks against Trump. The plotters' first order of business was to sideline Flynn.

In their meeting two days after the election, President Obama [forcefully told Trump](#) not to give Flynn a role in his administration. Trump was taken aback but he did not listen and made General Flynn his National Security Advisor. In that role during the transition, Flynn would contact foreign dignitaries and make introductions on behalf of the incoming Trump administration.

The Obama Administration needed a Plan B: Invent an international incident to entrap Flynn.

On December 27, 2016, the Obama administration expelled [35 Russian diplomats](#)—including gardeners and chauffeurs—for interfering in the election. Flynn had a conversation with the Russian ambassador the next day and the plotters listened in *via* wiretap. The Obama administration wanted to see if Flynn signaled to the Russians that the Trump administration would have a different approach to foreign policy.

Under American law, it is perfectly okay for an incoming administration to communicate its foreign policy preferences during a transition even if they differ from the lame duck administration. That is one of the purposes of a presidential transition. Flynn could have said, “President-elect Trump believes this Russian interference thing is a fantasy and these sanctions will be lifted on his first day in office.”

Given the soupy mix of conspiracy theories at the time, though, it is unlikely the Trump administration would have survived such an act of diplomatic common sense. These scoundrels were hoping to get Flynn on tape making that sort of accommodation to the Russians. The promise to lift the ridiculous sanctions would then be cited to suggest a *quid pro quo* that proved the nonexistent collusion.

Instead, Flynn was noncommittal in his wiretapped conversation. Drat! The plotters did have a transcript of what he said, though. This is where the tin-pot dictator behavior of FBI Director James Comey is fully displayed. He invited Flynn to be interviewed by the FBI, supposedly about Russian collusion to steal the election. If you’re Flynn, you say, “Sure, I want to tell you 15 different ways that there was no collusion and when do you want to meet.” What Flynn did not know was that the purpose of the interview had nothing to do with the election. It would be a test pitting Flynn’s memory against the transcript.

Think about that for a moment. Comey did not need to ask Flynn what was said in the conversation with the ambassador—he had a transcript. The only reason to ask Flynn about it was to cross him up. The inescapable conclusion is that the FBI set a trap for the incoming national security advisor to affect the foreign policy of the newly elected president.

Flynn perhaps was not completely clear about what he had discussed with the ambassador. In his defense, he did not believe he was sitting there to tell the FBI how the Trump administration was dealing with Russia going forward. The conversation was supposed to be about the election. He certainly did not think the FBI would unmask his comments and compare them to his answers. That would be illegal.

Only the most wild-eyed conspiracy theorist would have suggested during the FISA debate back in 1978 that an outgoing administration could

use a wiretap to interfere with his successor's transition. Yet that is what happened here.

Flynn was forced to resign. The conspirators had successfully eliminated the one person with the experience and gumption to discover their dirty tricks and go after them for it. Once Flynn had been successfully sidelined, insiders combined with the media to gaslight a phony Russia narrative that called into question Trump's legitimacy.

Republicans played leading roles ginning up Russia hysteria during the transition. Trump appointed Exxon chairman Rex Tillerson as his Secretary of State. He had received the Order of Friendship from Vladimir Putin in 2013, for his work on the Arctic Exploration Pact with Russia's state-owned oil company, Rosneft. Tillerson drew the ire of Marco Rubio, a prominent Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, who tweeted, "Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a #SecretaryOfState—MR."

Sen. John McCain expressed opposition to Tillerson's appointment. McCain went on TV to declare that "Vladimir Putin is a thug, and a murderer, and a killer...and a KGB agent." Trump's attorney general, Sen. Jeff Sessions, ridiculously recused himself from the Russia probe because of minor contacts with the Russian ambassador at the Senate, which somehow placed him under investigation for collusion.

All of Washington—Republicans and Democrats—were now playing the same Russia game. Everyone knew their role.

FBI Director James Comey attended a meeting before Trump's inauguration, during which President Obama [posited](#) that "we cannot share information fully as it relates to Russia" with the new president. Comey had an obligation to say, "Mr. President, with all due respect, the FBI gathers intelligence for the president, and once you're out the door and the new guy is in here, I have an obligation to share everything with him, even embarrassing facts that show we were using the FBI to improperly surveil his campaign."

Instead, Comey—who was up to his neck in the political operation at this point—saluted and said, "Yes sir." When Trump took office, information meant to assist him in making intelligent decisions as Commander in Chief was kept from him. For that alone, Comey should be locked in an iron mask

and set adrift in a rudderless skiff upon an edict that he may never again hear news of his country.

Moments after the inauguration, as the Obama administration's last official act in office, Susan Rice sent a CYA email clumsily stating that President Obama had said during the earlier meeting that everyone should do everything by-the-book. Ambassador Rice wrote:

President Obama began the conversation by stressing his continued commitment to ensuring that every aspect of this issue is handled by the Intelligence and law enforcement communities 'by the book'. The President stressed that he is not asking about, initiating or instructing anything from a law enforcement perspective. He reiterated that our law enforcement team needs to proceed as it normally would by the book.

These people knew exactly what they were doing.

Early in his administration, Trump met with Comey on several occasions asking him to make public what he had told the president privately: that the president was not a target. Comey refused, and Trump fired him. Comey then leaked notes of his meetings with Trump, [he claimed under oath](#), to get a special counsel appointed. He did not say what he knew behind the scenes about the inner workings of Washington that convinced him his notes would yield that result.

Because of the Sessions recusal, the special counsel decision devolved to the second in command at the Justice Department, Rod Rosenstein, a Washington insider who had been recommended to Trump by Republican leaders. Without any evidence that showed a possible crime, Rosenstein appointed Robert Mueller to investigate, “any links and/or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump.”

Take it from a practicing lawyer: the “or” is never a throw in. The “and” is the bait, and the “or” is the switch. This investigation was never about the “and”—nobody ever thought that Russia coordinated with Trump to steal Podesta's emails. This has been an inquisition from the start, to probe

“links... between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign”—Paul Manafort.

Mueller had been Obama’s director of the FBI until 2013. He had previously explored Manafort’s advocacy on behalf of Yanukovych in Ukraine. Manafort may or may not have violated tax and banking laws in 2010. Given the twisted and arcane nature of those laws, who knows? What we do know is that Manafort was first investigated for breaking those laws way back then. A discretionary decision was made then not to prosecute.

Nevertheless, in 2017, the Office of Special Counsel in the Russia probe indicted Manafort for hiding from the IRS income that he received in 2010 from Ukraine. Mueller essentially dusted off some old files from when he ran the FBI and indicted Trump’s one-time campaign manager.

Mueller also indicted underlings in the Trump campaign for process crimes, inanities like—in the case of George Papadopoulos—not correctly stating the date when he officially joined the campaign, which the media then portrayed as “an indictment for lying to the FBI in the Russia probe.” They also went after Flynn for lying to the FBI in an interview that was itself a set-up.

In 2020, the Justice Department admitted Flynn really didn’t lie and is now in court trying to get his indictment dismissed, which is proving to be unusually difficult. Because, you see, federal judges also protect the racket.

The Roger Stone prosecution was emblematic of the through-the-looking-glass world of the Mueller probe. Stone had been a Trump-friend and confidante for years. He claimed in 2016—falsely it turns out—that he had a connection to Wikileaks, and therefore could speculate with credibility about Clinton email contents and their drop date.

When questioned after the election as part of a Congressional investigation, he said his backchannel to WikiLeaks was comedian and radio talk show host Randy Credico. Credico admitted that at the time he was leading Stone to believe he had an in with Julian Assange, who had been on his radio show. He wrote an email to Stone on September 18, 2016: “that batch probably coming out in the next drop... I can’t ask them favors every other day. I asked one of his lawyers... they have major legal headaches riggt [sic] now... relax.”

Stone did not tell investigators that when he failed to get insider knowledge from Credico, he had a colleague, Jerome Corsi, also try to contact Wikileaks. Corsi was unsuccessful in those attempts. In America, apparently, if your name is not James Comey or John Brennan, failure to disclose to Congress something you consider immaterial can get you indicted for perjury.

Any unbiased investigator would have looked at these facts and said, “Who cares?”

Stone certainly had reason to believe Credico was a backchannel and he had email evidence to prove it. Moreover, if Trump’s people really needed a backchannel to contact Wikileaks to inquire when the emails were being released, that means they did not have direct contact when the emails were obtained.

Once the Mueller team found out that Trump confidantes could not even get hold of Assange, it was time to end the inquiry over whether Trump conspired with Assange.

Stone emailed Credico after talking to investigators and said, basically, you better not lie to them like you lied to me or I’ll kill your therapy dog. That sort of bluster was not unusual in their relationship. Stone had once [joked](#) on social media that Credico had died of a drug overdose.

For his gag about killing the dog, Stone was also prosecuted for witness tampering, even though Credico himself admitted that he never felt threatened and considered it a joke. The prosecution of Roger Stone (before a [tainted jury](#)) was a misuse of the legal process for political ends. It was designed to generate a month’s worth of misleading headlines, each some variant of “Trump Advisor Found Guilty of Lying About Wikileaks.”

Stone was convicted and President Trump was forced, by the rules of fairness, to commute his sentence and incur unneeded controversy in an election year among voters who were purposely beguiled by the ridiculous prosecution.

The only actual Russians Mueller indicted were associated with an internet troll farm that, the indictment suggested, Putin had used to influence the 2016 election for Trump. The troll farm, the Internet Research Agency (IRA), had purchased \$100,000 worth of Facebook ads, more than half of them [after the](#)

[election](#), and only a small percentage having anything to do with the candidates themselves.

The Mueller Report concluded that “[t]he Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion.” They did it by “a social media campaign that favored presidential candidate Donald J. Trump and disparaged presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.”

The Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee commissioned two reports, from the University of Oxford’s [Computational Propaganda Research Project](#) and the firm [New Knowledge](#), that also concluded that the IRA had influenced the election by social media posts.

The posts uncovered by the Senate and the Special Counsel, though, were beyond strange. Most had nothing to do with the election. Below is a representative sampling.



You’ve probably never seen these because the media does not want you to know how stupid the idea of Russian interference really is. The Senate and the Special Counsel certainly want people to believe that Putin interfered. Wonder why?

Hilariously, Mueller tried to prove his case against the troll farm in court. The IRA unexpectedly hired lawyers to mount a defense instead of suffering an

empty, unenforceable conviction by default. Turns out, nobody could connect even the minor trolling to Putin.

US District Judge Dabney Friedrich, who presided over the trial, [noted](#) the indictment in the case “does not link the [IRA] to the Russian government” and alleged “only private conduct by private actors.” The judge [prohibited prosecutors](#) from publicly claiming that the troll farm was sponsored by the Russian government, because there was no evidence of that.

The Justice Department was forced to slink away in shame and dismiss the indictment.

As a final, desperation play, the Senate Intelligence Committee recently issued yet another report, this one defying the findings of the Mueller probe and suggesting that Trump colluded with Putin during the 2016 election when Paul Manafort sent some polling data to Ukrainian-based Konstantin Kilimnik. There is [no evidence](#) that Kilimnik was a Russian agent or that the not-too-secret and otherwise available polling data could possibly be used to influence an election.

Instead, by all accounts (even Mueller’s), Manafort was just trying to impress a possible consulting client who had previously worked closely with the Obama administration (way more closely than with the Trump campaign). That the US Senate is willing to lab-engineer the Russian interference virus into a strain that even Mueller rejected shows how much Washington wants this phony political operation to continue into the 2020 election.

In the final analysis, though, after tens of millions of dollars in investigations, and countless words spilled in the media alluding to a Russian conspiracy to steal the election, there was nothing there. Forget collusion, it’s time to admit that there is no real evidence of Russian interference, either.

This scandal is huge, much bigger than Watergate, and compromising in its resolution is destructive. If Republicans continue to stupidly concede [phony Russian intrigue](#), the [plotters will say](#) they were justified to investigate it. The disclosure of a Brookings Institution researcher as the primary subsource should remove any doubt: This was a rank political operation and indicting a few FBI agents is not going to resolve anything.

Attorney General William Barr has dispatched U.S. Attorney John Durham to investigate the origins of the Russia probe. Durham has obtained [one guilty](#) plea so far. Turns out, FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith fabricated evidence to get a FISA warrant on Carter page. Go figure.

Otherwise, the Spycgate conspirators have escaped prosecution and, instead, are smiling smugly on the sets of their lucrative CNN gigs. How can that be? Well, hate to say it, but once Republicans conceded that Vladimir Putin meddled in the election, it gave the bad guys an airtight alibi.

This is their story, and they're sticking with it:

John Brennan, James Comey, James Clapper *et al.* will say that whatever they did to stop the Red Menace from interfering in our democracy makes them American heroes. When he was interviewed, Brennan probably told U.S. Attorney John Durham that President Obama became concerned about Russian interference way back in 2015 and instructed the CIA to use all intelligence tools at its disposal to get to the bottom of it.

Guaranteed, that caused Durham to tug at his beard and ask, "How do you indict high ranking officials for protecting America?"

It remains to be seen whether Durham will go the next step and call this operation what it is: a Washington power grab against an outsider using false Russian flags. He would have to cross lots of powerful Republicans and Democrats to take his investigation to its natural conclusion.

CONCLUSION

“Putin is a thug” is a mantra dressed as a tautology that funds think tanks and embellishes the hero’s journey of many of Washington’s most notable Republicans. It is sourced less in fact than in constant repetition. How is Russia worse than Saudi Arabia, to which we supply F-15s and military training?

When President Trump finally met with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in July 2018, he expressed skepticism about the Putin-did-it racket. At a joint press conference with the Russian president, Trump was asked about allegations of Russian election meddling and [he responded](#), “President Putin says it’s not Russia. I don’t see any reason why it would be.”

He added, “I would rather take a political risk in pursuit of peace than to risk peace in pursuit of politics,” signaling that he believed Russian interference was primarily an invention of his political enemies.

Trump even dared to [bring up](#) the FBI’s failure to test the DNC servers: “You have groups that are wondering why the FBI never took the server—haven’t they taken the server,” he noted. “Why was the FBI told to leave the office of the Democratic National Committee?”

The Western media predictably went nuts. But the frenzy scuttled upon the rocks of public opinion, as usually happens with Trump. [The Washington Post](#) could not figure out the polling numbers Trump received after publicly rejecting the Russia meddled canard:

[P]ublic reaction nationally [to the Helsinki summit] appears more muted than in Washington, where Trump faced withering bipartisan criticism for appearing to side with Putin over U.S. intelligence agencies at a July 16 news conference in Helsinki.

The lesson? Standing against swamp politics to reestablish friendly relations with an armed nuclear state is not something that upsets ordinary Americans.

One has to admire, I guess, the pure audacity of the plotters and their friends in the media for pulling this one off. For the first two and a half years of Trump's presidency, they constructed an exquisite trap where if he denied that Russia interfered in the election it meant he himself was colluding in it.

Not only was Russian collusion a hoax, there was no Russian interference either. The Republican establishment's slavish acceptance of Washington's Putin-did-it lie perfectly illustrates why it regularly loses political battles. Gifted with undeserved victory in a generational realignment that they were dragged to kicking and screaming, they proceeded to question its source and validity.

Because if Trump was a product of KGB-esque intrigue, then Hillary was a victim of meddling. Trump was a hapless beneficiary. The basket of deplorables were not only racist losers, they were also Putin's unwitting stooges.

In the end, the political class wanted Russian interference to be true because being involved in tectonic events is why they chose politics in the first place. It struck at their delusions of grandeur when working-class voters defied their polls and chose someone with scant political background to be president.

The evil geniuses behind this operation baited the hook with a Putin lure knowing that the Republican establishment (*see, e.g.* Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney, NeverTrump) would not be able to resist. "Russia v. America the Rematch" would make America 1985 again, and Republican insiders threatened by Trump's insurgency would reclaim their petty little thrones and dominions.

The Russia hysteria proves, more than anything, that America is not a democracy. It is an insider-ocracy run by [lobbyists and think tanks](#) even against the choices of American voters. Eisenhower warned to beware the military industrial complex, and that remains a fair description of the great amorphous beast.

How big is the beast? It is more powerful than the President. It can investigate him, but he can't investigate it. That a great nation could be made to list upon such shallow waves is the story of our time.

