

THE CHRISTIE OUSTER AND THE FLYNN HIRING

The Guardian has an excerpt from Michael Lewis' new book, *The Fifth Risk*, which happens to be the chapter focusing on Trump's transition team. On top of describing how Trump believed spending money, as required by law, to pay a transition team amounted to stealing his own money, the excerpt includes this account of Chris Christie's firing.

Not long after the people on TV announced that Trump had won Pennsylvania, Jared Kushner grabbed Christie anxiously and said: "We have to have a transition meeting tomorrow morning!" Even before that meeting, Christie had made sure that Trump knew the protocol for his discussions with foreign leaders. The transition team had prepared a document to let him know how these were meant to go. The first few calls were easy – the very first was always with the prime minister of Great Britain – but two dozen calls in you were talking to some kleptocrat and tiptoeing around sensitive security issues. Before any of the calls could be made, however, the president of Egypt called in to the switchboard at Trump Tower and somehow got the operator to put him straight through to Trump. "Trump was like ... *I love the Bangles! You know that song Walk Like an Egyptian?*" recalled one of his advisers on the scene.

That had been the first hint Christie had of trouble. He had asked Kushner what that was about, and Kushner had simply said, *Trump ran a very unconventional campaign, and he's not going to follow any of the protocols.*

[snip]

Christie was scheduled to brief the Trump children, Kushner and the other members of Trump's inner circle. He was surprised to find, suddenly included in this group, retired army lieutenant general Michael Flynn. Flynn was a jobseeker the transition team had found reasons to be extremely wary of. Now he wanted to be named Trump's national security adviser, which was maybe the most important job in the entire national security apparatus. The national security team inside the Trump transition – staffed with senior former military and intelligence officials – had thought that was an especially bad idea. Flynn's name was not on the list. But here he was, in the meeting to decide who would do what in the Trump administration, and Ivanka was asking him which job he would like to have.

Before Christie could intercede, Bannon grabbed him and asked to see him privately. Christie followed Bannon to his office impatiently. *Hey, this is going to have to be quick*, said Christie.

It's really quick, said Bannon. *You're out.*

Why? asked Christie, stunned.

We're making a change.

"OkayOK, what are we changing?"

You.

Why?

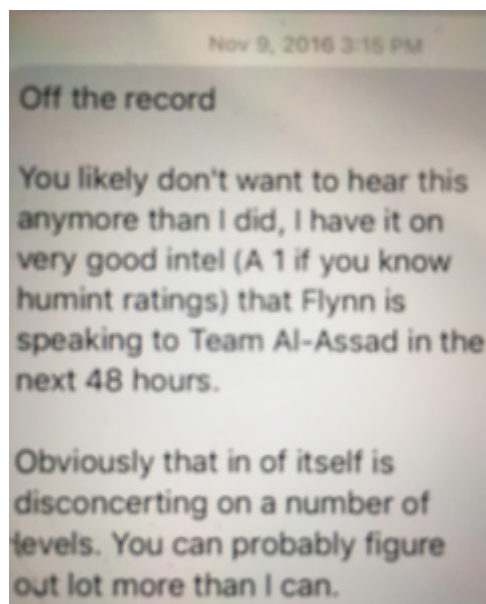
It's really not important.

A week after Christie, along with former HPSCI Chair Mike Rogers, got purged from the Transition Team, I wrote a post that concluded this way.

One of the first things Trump has done has been to ensure agreement in its national security team on this point: that by letting our Middle Eastern allies arm al Qaeda-allied fighters, the Obama Administration created the mess that is in Syria.

And unanimity on that point – accompanied by what is sure to be a very ugly campaign of recriminations against the Obama Administration for cooking intelligence (even aside from the merit of this claim, Flynn has been bitter about his firing for what he sees as objecting to this cooked intelligence) – will provide the basis for Trump to work with Putin on ending the civil war in Syria to Bashar al-Assad's advantage.

When I wrote that post, this text I received less than 15 hours after the polls closed, from someone I later came to conclude was involved in the election attack, was in my mind.



The text continued, in part, "clearly this confirms key role for Trump admin."

As I surmised two years ago, there was a close tie between the moment Christie and other Republican realists got fired and when Flynn got picked.

According to this Michael Lewis account, though, the tie is far more direct than I imagined. The moment that Flynn got hired is the moment that Chris Christie got fired.

As I disclosed in July, I provided information to the FBI on issues related to the Mueller investigation, so I'm going to include disclosure statements on Mueller investigation posts from here on out. I will include the disclosure whether or not the stuff I shared with the FBI pertains to the subject of the post.