

ROGER STONE'S REMARKABLE INTEREST IN DONALD TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY

On April 22, 2016, Maggie Haberman broke the news that Donald Trump would give a foreign policy speech. As she reported, the speech was scheduled to be held at the National Press Club and would be hosted by the Center for National Interest, a group that once had ties to the Richard Nixon Library.

Donald J. Trump will deliver his first foreign policy address at the National Press Club in Washington next week, his campaign said, at an event hosted by an organization founded by President Richard M. Nixon.

The speech, planned for lunchtime on Wednesday, will be Mr. Trump's first major policy address since a national security speech last fall.

The speech will be hosted by the Center for the National Interest, formerly known as the Nixon Center, and the magazine it publishes, The National Interest, according to a news release provided by the Trump campaign.

The group, which left the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in 2011 to become a nonprofit, says on its website that it was founded by the former president to be a voice to promote "strategic realism in U.S. foreign policy." Its associates include Henry A. Kissinger, the secretary of state under Nixon, as well as Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama and a senior adviser to Mr. Trump. Roger Stone, a sometime adviser of Mr. Trump, is a former Nixon aide.

That night, according to texts released during his trial, Roger Stone wrote Rick Gates, furious that he had not been consulted about the details of the speech first – though Gates explained that he leaked it to Haberman so Stone would find out. “I cannot learn about a foreign policy speech from the media,” Trump’s rat-fucker said. “This is personally embarrassing. I’m out,” said the advisor who had supposedly quit the campaign almost a year earlier.

RG-RS1	4/23/2016	12:26:22 AM	Roger Stone	Rick Gates [REDACTED]	I cannot learn about a foreign policy speech from the media . This is personally embarrassing. I'm out . Good luck
RG-RS1	4/23/2016	12:27:59 AM	Rick Gates [REDACTED]	Roger Stone	I called Maggie to leak it. You gave me her number last night. Remember?
RG-RS1	4/23/2016	1:31:11 AM	Roger Stone	Rick Gates [REDACTED]	No detail on venue and no input into content-no follow thru with carefully selected reporters while PJM meets with reporters who have fucked us and are close to Corey - I can go on but why? I am having no impact. Won't be treated this way
RG-RS1	4/23/2016	2:19:41 AM	Roger Stone	Rick Gates [REDACTED]	Just blowing off steam -.wont bail out but damned pissed off-going to have a drink-talk in the morning-
RG-RS1	4/23/2016	2:26:46 AM	Rick Gates [REDACTED]	Roger Stone	Stay focused. We have a long way to go.

Among the things Stone bitched about learning from a leak to Maggie Haberman made partly for his benefit was about the venue. “No detail on venue and no input on content.”

It turns out, the night before the speech, the campaign announced a venue change, to the Mayflower Hotel, a decision that has attracted a great deal of scrutiny since because of the way the venue set up an opportunity (among other things) for the Russian Ambassador to hob-nob with Trump’s people.

The Mueller Report describes that Jared Kushner directed CNI to change the venue and reveals that the actual venue change was made on April 25, two days after Stone’s angry texts.

Kushner later requested that the event be moved to the Mayflower Hotel, which was another venue that Simes had mentioned during initial discussions with the Campaign, in order to address concerns about security and capacity.⁶¹⁸

[snip]

On April 25, 2016, Saunders booked event rooms at the Mayflower to host both the speech and a VIP reception that was to be held beforehand.⁶¹⁹ Saunders understood that the reception at which

invitees would have the chance to meet candidate Trump—would be a small event.⁶²⁰ Saunders decided who would attend by looking at the list of CNI's invitees to the speech itself and then choosing a subset for the reception.⁶²¹ CNI's invitees to the reception included Sessions and Kislyak.⁶²² The week before the speech Simes had informed Kislyak that he would be invited to the speech, and that he would have the opportunity to meet Trump.⁶²³

616 Simes 3/8/18 302, at 13; Saunders 2/15/18 302, at 7-8.

619 Saunders 2/15/18 302, at 11-12; C00006651-57 (Mayflower Group Sales Agreement).

620 Saunders 2/15/18 302, at 12-13.

621 Saunders 2/15/18 302, at 12.

622 C00002575 (Attendee List); C00008536 (4/25/16 Email, Simes to Kushner (4:53:45 p.m.)).

623 Simes 3/8/18 302, at 19-20.

But the interviews explaining why Kushner asked for the change and how the Mayflower got booked remain heavily redacted in the 302s released under the BuzzFeed FOIA, even after part of one got reprocessed.

The texts and the timing at least suggest that Stone may have had some influence over the change – and, since he complained about the content of the speech, even the content.

That's not the only moment when Roger Stone, far better known for his domestic rat-fucking and policy interest in racism and decriminalization, tried to play a direct role in Trump's foreign policy stance.

The SSCI Report provides a really remarkable description that – during the key period when

Stone was pitching Manafort on what was happening with further releases of stolen documents in July and August 2016 – Stone was scripting pro-Russian Tweets for the candidate.

(U) On Sunday July 31, at 9:15 p.m., the day after speaking at length with Manafort, Stone called Gates.¹⁵⁵⁰ Ten minutes later, Stone had two phone calls with Trump that lasted over ten minutes.¹⁵⁵¹ Stone then emailed Jessica Macchia, one of Trump's assistants, eight draft tweets for Trump, under the subject line "Tweets Mr. Trump requested last night."¹⁵⁵² Many of the draft tweets attacked Clinton for her adversarial posture toward Russia and mentioned a new peace deal with Putin, such as "I want a new detente with Russia under Putin."¹⁵⁵³

(U) At 10:45 p.m. that same evening, Stone emailed Corsi again with the subject line "Call me MON[day]" and writing that "Malloch should see Assange."¹⁵⁵⁴

(U) The next morning, August 1, Stone again spoke twice with Trump. ¹⁵⁵⁵ Stone later informed Gates of these calls. ¹⁵⁵⁶ According to an email that morning from Stone to Macchia, Trump had "asked [Stone] for some other things" that Stone said he was "writing now."¹⁵⁵⁷

Four days after Trump appeared to *ad lib* a request for Russia to dump more emails, "Russia are you listening?" Trump's rat-fucker left a digital trail showing himself scripting tweets for Trump to adopt a pro-Russian stance.

While most witnesses couldn't explain why Trump asked Russia to find Hillary's emails, Gates said in very ambiguous testimony the most damning part of which remains redacted that knowledge *that* Russia was behind the hack might have come from Stone (which is far different

than actually scripting Trump's comments).

Senior Campaign officials believed that the statement was unscripted. 1518 However, Gates also recalled Stone mentioning that Russia was probably the source of the materials, and Gates also acknowledged there were public indications at the time that Russia was responsible. 1519

1518 (U) See FBI, FD-302, Gates 4/11/2018; FBI, FD-302, Manafort 9/13/2018; Bannon Tr., pp. 173-174. 1519

(U) FBI, FD-302, Gates, 10/25/2018.

The SSCI Report is silent about whether Trump actually used any of those draft tweets, though the three Russian or Ukrainian tweets Trump did post in this period (one, two, three) were clean-up from the "Russia are you listening" comment, suggesting that Trump did not use what Stone drafted.

Stone, however, appears to have used the tweets he drafted himself. On July 27 (after Trump's "Russia are you listening" comment), he affirmed that,

Of course the Russians hacked @HillaryClinton's e-mail- Putin doesn't want the WAR with Russia neo-con Hillary's donors have paid for

And Stone sent three tweets that appear similar, if not identical, to the ones he drafted for Trump to send out (he appears to have posted them before sending them to Trump's assistant).

HYPOCRISY ! @HillaryClinton attacks Trump for non-relationship with Putin when she and Bill have taken millions from Russians oligarchs

Trump wants to end the cold war and defuse out tensions with Russia. Hillary ,neocon wants war. Putin gets it.

@smerconish @realDonaldTrump

,@realDonaldTrump wants to end new cold war tensions with Russia-thru tough negotiation- #detente #NYTimes

Days later, Stone would flip-flop on the certainty, expressed on July 27, that Russia had hacked Hillary, linking to an Assange denial made to RT and repackaged at Breitbart and two different versions of his post claiming that Guccifer 2.0 was not Russian.

Aug 5, 2016 09:18:08 PMHillary lies about Russian Involvement in DNC hack - Julian Assange is a hero.
<https://t.co/0oxP32I3Fz> [Twitter Web Client]

Aug 6, 2016 10:17:07 AMRussians had nothing to do with Hillary Hack
<https://t.co/OHQvbKrxBt>

Aug 6, 2016 10:55:14 PMRoger Stone shows Russians didn't hack Hillary
<https://t.co/o3WfbQFPwH>
<https://t.co/bkqgEjvXMC>

Aug 8, 2016 12:43:27 AM.@Hillaryclinton lies about Russians hacking DNC e-mail
<https://t.co/OHQvbKrxBt>

At two key moments in Trump's first election campaign, a guy with no known foreign policy chops sure seemed to have an acute interest in dictating the candidate's foreign policy views.