

THE VERY GLOBALIZED FORCES MANIPULATING THE ANTI-GLOBALIST PRESIDENT

I want to consider three stories related to the conspiracies that got Trump elected and have influenced his policy decisions.

Cambridge Analytica and Facebook privatizes intelligence sources and methods behind “democratic” elections

First, there’s the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Here are some of the most scandalous tidbits:

Likelihood Facebook failed to abide by a 2011 FTC consent decree and certainty that Cambridge Analytica and Facebook failed to abide by British and EU privacy law, respectively. While Facebook and other big tech companies have sometimes publicly bowed to the onerous restrictions of more repressive regimes and have secretly bowed to the invasive demands of American spies, the public efforts to rein in big tech have had limited success in Europe and virtually none in the US.

In the US in particular, weak government agencies have done little more than ask consumers to trust big tech.

As privacy advocates have long argued, big tech can’t be trusted. Nor can big tech regulate itself.

Cambridge Analytica used legally suspect means – the same kind of illegal means intelligence agencies employ – to help its customers. Channel 4 reported that Cambridge Analytica at least

promised they could set honey traps and other means to compromise politicians. The Guardian reported that Cambridge Analytica acted as a cut-out to share hacked emails in Nigerian and a Nevis/St. Kitts elections. Thus far, the most problematic claim made about Cambridge Analytica's activities in the US are the aforementioned illegal use of data shared for research purposes, visa fraud to allow foreign (British) citizens to work on US elections, and possibly the illegal coordination between Rebekah Mercer's PAC with the campaign.

Internet Research Agency used the same kind of methods advertising and marketing firms use, but to create grassroots. The IRA indictment laid out how a private company in Russia used Facebook (and other tech giants') networking and advertising services to create fake grassroots enthusiasm here in the US.

All of these means undermine the democratic process. They're all means nation-state intelligence services use. By privatizing them, such services became available to foreign agents and oligarchical interests more easily, with easy ways (many, but not all, broadly acceptable corporate accounting methods) to hide the financial trail.

Russia buys the network behind Joseph Mifsud

Then there's the Beeb piece advancing the story of Joseph Mifsud (ignore the repetitive annoying music and John Schindler presence). It provides details on the role played by German born Swiss financier and lawyer Stephan Roh. Roh has three ties to Mifsud. In 2014, Roh started lecturing at the London Academy of Diplomacy where Mifsud worked. In the same year, he bought the Roman institution Mifsud helped manage. And then, in 2016, when George Papadopoulos was being targeted, Roh was on a panel with Papadopoulos' two handlers.

That same month, Mifsud was in Moscow on a panel run by the Kremlin-backed Valdai Club with Timofeev and the third man, Dr Stephan Roh, a German multi-millionaire.

Mifsud and Roh interlock: in 2014, Roh became a visiting lecturer at the London Academy of Diplomacy. Roh bought Link Campus University, a private institution in Rome where Mifsud was part of the management and Mifsud became a consultant at Roh's legal firm.

The Beeb piece goes on to describe how Roh bought a British nuclear consultancy too. When the British scientist behind it balked at cozying up to Russia, he was fired, but it appears to still be used as a cut-out.

Again, none of this is new: Russia just spent a lot of money to set up some fronts. The amount of money floating around and the ability to buy into a title by buying an old castle do make it easier, however.

George Nader purchases US foreign policy for the Saudis and Emirates

Then there's NYT's confirmation of something that was obvious from the first reports that the FBI whisked George Nader away from Dulles Airport before he could meet Donald Trump at Mar a Lago earlier this year. Nader got an immunity deal and has been cooperating with Mueller's team to describe how he brokered US foreign policy decisions (most notably, and anti-Qatari stance). He did so by cultivating GOP fundraiser Elliott Broidy, turning him into both an asset and front for foreign influence. Those activities included:

- Securing hundreds of millions of dollars of

contracts for Broidy's private security firm, Circinus, with the Saudis and Emirates, and offering several times more.

- Working with Broidy to scuttle the nomination of Anne Patterson to DOD and to orchestrate the firing, last week, of Rex Tillerson, in both cases because they were deemed too supportive of diplomacy towards Iran.
- Offering financial support for a \$12.7 million Washington lobbying and public relations campaign, drafted by a third party, targeting both Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Paying Broidy \$2.7 million to fund conferences at both Hudson Institute and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies attacking Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood; Broidy provided a necessary American cut-out for the two think tanks because their fundraising rules prohibit donations from undemocratic regimes or foreign countries, respectively. The payment was laundered through an "Emirati-based company [Nader] controlled, GS

Investments, to an obscure firm based in Vancouver, British Columbia, controlled by Mr. Broidy, Xieman International.”

- Unsuccessfully pitching a private meeting, away from the White House, between Trump and Emirates Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.
- Obtaining a picture of Nader with Trump, effectively showing the president in the company of a foreign agent and convicted pedophile.

Effectively, Nader provides Mueller what Mueller has been getting from Rick Gates: details of how a foreign country purchased American policy support via cutouts in our easily manipulated campaign finance system.

Nader brings two more elements of what I pointed to last May: what is ultimately a Jared Kushner backed “peace” “plan” that is instead the money laundered wish of a bunch of foreign interests. While we’ve seen the Russian, Saudi, and Emirate money behind this plan, we’re still missing full details on how Mueller is obtaining the Israeli side, though I’m sure he’s getting that too.

Note, Broidy has claimed the details behind his work with Nader were hacked by Qatari hackers. That may be the case; there have also been a slew of presumably hacked documents from Emirates Ambassador to the US, Yousef al Otaiba, floating around. So while this is important reporting, it relies on the same kind of illicitly obtained intelligence that was used against Hillary in 2016.

Importantly, the Nader story generalizes this. Nader has worked with both the Clinton and the Dick Cheney Administrations, and the laundering

of foreign funds to US think tanks has long been tolerated (in some cases, such as Brookings, the think tank doesn't even bother with the money laundering and accepts the foreign money directly). Democrats are not immune from this kind of influence peddling, in the least. It's just that Trump, because of his greater narcissism, his ignorance of real foreign policy doctrine, and his debt and multinational business make Trump far more vulnerable to such cultivation. Given Cheney's ties to Halliburton and the Clinton Foundation, it's a matter of degree and competence, not principle.

Globalism is just another word for fighting over which oligarchs will benefit from globalization

Which brings us to Trump's claim (orchestrated by Steven Bannon, paid for by the Mercers) to oppose "globalists," a racialized term to demonize the downsides of globalization without actually addressing the forces of globalization in an effective way. Little Trump is doing (up to and including the trade war with China he's rolling out today) will help the white people who made him president (the demonization of immigrants will have benefits and drawbacks).

What it will do is foster greater authoritarianism in this country, making it easier both to make Trump's white voters less secure even while channeling the resultant anger by making racism even more of an official policy.

And it will also shift somewhat which oligarchs – both traditionally well-loved ones, like the Saudis, and adversaries, like the Russians – will benefit as a result.

Importantly, it is being accomplished using the

tools of globalization, from poorly overseen global tech companies, easily manipulated global finance system, and a global network of influence peddling that can also easily be bought and paid for.