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THE KUSHNER-FLYNN “BACKCHANNEL” LINK TO PUTIN AND HIS RUSSIAN COHORTS WAS PART OF THE PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING, NOT THE PRODUCT OF SOME NAÏVE IMPULSE OR “CRAZY IDEA”

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US.lalay.com

Some commentators have concluded that the extraordinary proposal by Jared Kushner and Michael Flynn to Russian Ambassador Kislyak made on December 1 or 2, 2016 at Trump Towers must have been either “naïve” or “just a crazy idea.” It was neither.

The proposal hatched by Kushner and Flynn – to establish a backchannel communications network with Moscow using the secure facilities at the Russian embassy or consulate -- was part of a carefully thought out plan that Flynn had been working on for months, and with which Kushner was in full agreement.

Both Kushner and Flynn viewed the U.S. intelligence community – and indeed all U.S. law enforcement agencies and virtually the entire federal government – with deep suspicion, if not animosity. Conversely, they both viewed Russia as their friend and ally, not as a hostile foreign power. They each had their own different personal, ideological and business reasons that led them to this same startling conclusion, but they both ended up in the same place nonetheless: in a room with the Russian Ambassador discussing a scheme to deceive and circumvent the entire U.S. intelligence/law enforcement apparatus.

President Obama had fired Flynn as the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) after Flynn had shown an alarming degree of coziness with Russian intelligence services, particularly the FSB, for the ostensible reason of trying to enlist Russian cooperation in the fight against ISIS in Syria and elsewhere. Flynn spent a day at FSB headquarters in Moscow and otherwise started to act as if the Russians were our closest friends, not a hostile power on which we had imposed highly restrictive sanctions after carving off a large slice of Ukraine for itself otherwise threatening the peace and tranquility of most of Eastern Europe. Flynn just didn’t get it, and so he had to be sacked.

Unrepentant, Flynn flouted the law by accepting a paid speaking engagement at a Russian dinner sponsored by RT (Russia Today), Russia’s primary state-sponsored propaganda outlet,

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and dining with Putin himself. He also accepted fees from at least one other Russian company within Putin's inner orbit, without getting prior approval from the U.S. Defense Department, as was required for any retired U.S. military personnel.

But it wasn't just about the money for Flynn, although the Russian cash was a nice supplement to his modest military pension. One way or the other, Flynn had come to the world view that Russia, as a primarily Christian nation, was America's greatest potential ally in what he considered to be the developing apocalyptic battle with radical Islamic terrorism, and with Islam itself. When America finally woke up from its stupor and realized that its true enemy was Islam, not Russia, Flynn would be ready to help lead the country back to the true path – the protector of Western Civilization itself -- and onward to its ultimate destiny.

Jared Kushner's affinity for Russia, and suspicion of the FBI and federal law enforcement in general, was not ideologically based, but it was equally strong. As a young man of 23 he had suffered the indelible trauma of seeing his beloved father arrested, prosecuted, convicted and imprisoned on what he believed to be bogus charges. The conspiracy theory on which the federal prosecutors (under then U.S. Attorney Chris Christie's leadership) convicted the senior Kushner involved lurid details of hired prostitutes and family intrigue that provided almost daily fodder for the New Jersey and national press.

Jared had suffered the embarrassment and disgrace of seeing his father sentenced to federal prison in Alabama, young Jared was forced to take over the reins of his family's real estate empire, while dutifully flying down to Alabama each weekend to visit with his father. Even after his father's release from prison, Jared continued to bear the emotional and psychological scars, viewing the U.S. government as basically a hostile adversary to be kept at arms-length whenever possible, especially when it came to family matters. With his marriage to Ivanka, the Kushner and the Trump organizations came together very neatly, much as if two Mafia families had forged an alliance through marriage.

Jared's affinity for all things Russian was for commercial reasons, not psychological. He had seen that Russian money had come "pouring in" (in the words of Donald Trump, Jr.) to the Trump Organization just when it was in danger of collapsing after four successive casino bankruptcies in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The major banks financing the Trump casinos had taken a major financial bath as a result, and had lost their appetite for further financing of Trump's ill-conceived ventures.

Fortunately for Trump and his organization, Russian, Ukrainian and Central Asian oligarchs had billions of dollars looking for safe havens in the West to park their money, and Russian organized crime was always looking for friendly real estate developers to help them launder their ill-gotten gains. The Trump Organization was more than willing to accommodate them. Many of the original purchasers of condos in Trump Tower and other Trump projects hailed from Russia and other former Soviet countries, and Trump entered into a close working relationship with Felix Sater and his Bayrock organization, which had direct ties to Putin's inner circle and Russian organized crime, which by that time had largely merged into one large state-sponsored criminal political organization.

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For Trump and his son-in-law Jared, therefore, Russia was actually the savior of their real estate empire, and Russian money was the lifeblood that kept their luxury real estate projects going, one after the other. The model was simple: build a luxury condominium complex in New York or South Florida and they will come, with their hundreds of millions. When Trump built his Sunny Isles Florida towers just north of Miami, the business plan was to market the condos directly in Moscow, St. Petersburg, the French Riviera and other locales where the Russian super-rich congregated. A virtually impenetrable labyrinth of LLCs and shell companies was formed to disguise the identities of the true owners, who could then purchase the units with millions of dollars in cash of unknown or questionable origin – no questions asked.

The effusive warmth that Trump showered on Putin and all things Russian during the campaign may have been surprising to many, but not to Kushner, Flynn and those who knew that the financial fate of the Trump Organization was largely in the hands of the Russians, and that if Putin directed that Russian financing be pulled out, the Trump ship would quickly founder and then sink, virtually without a trace. Trump's destiny was inextricably linked with that of Putin, and Trump was intent from the beginning that Putin know that he would be a loyal and faithful ally of Russia in the unlikely event that he were to be elected as President, and that the crippling sanctions imposed by the U.S. and its Western European allies would quickly be lifted.



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At first, Flynn and Manafort were the primary conduits between Russians and the Trump Campaign, and they delivered a tangible reassurance to the Russians by ensuring that the plank in the Republican National Platform be watered down, so that it omitted any reference to a U.S. intention to provide defensive military equipment to Ukraine, which had suffered the annexation of Crimea and was being pressed by pro-Russian separatist and Russian special forces in eastern Ukraine and desperately needed military equipment and spare parts from the U.S.

Then came the tightening of U.S. sanctions by the Obama Administration, at least in part due to the growing conviction by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia was actively trying to interfere with the 2016 Presidential elections through a sophisticated propaganda and data analytics campaign, which flooded Facebook and other social media platforms with disinformation and fake news stories that were both directed at undercutting the Clinton campaign and promoting Candidate Trump. This effort was closely coordinated with Julian Assange and WikiLeaks, which by then was little more than an arm of the Russian intelligence services for the purpose of the strategic release of tens of thousands of pages of documents hacked from the DNC, the Clinton Campaign, and other sources designed to inflict the maximum damage on Clinton and the Democrats.

Flynn was quickly dispatched by the Trump Campaign to assure Kislyak and the Russians that the anti-Russian tide would shift if Trump were to be elected, and that sanctions would be quickly lifted. In response, Putin and the Russians showed remarkable restraint in response to the

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expulsion of 35 of their spies operating in the U.S. under diplomatic cover and the further tightening of U.S. sanctions. They uncharacteristically announced that they would wait until after the election before deciding on a response. In other words, if Putin's nemesis Hillary Clinton were to be elected as President, then Russian would retaliate in kind. If Donald Trump were to be elected, they would wait and see if he made good on his promises –conveyed through Flynn, Manafort (and to a lesser extent by Carter Page) – that U.S. would be lifted.



The Real Deal.com

Jared Kushner also played a key – but heretofore lesser known role – in the successful Russian/Trump collaboration that essentially turned over the keys to the White House to a hostile power for the first time in American history.

Jared had dabbled in data analytics and “micro-targeting” efforts in the marketing of his family’s luxury condominiums, and he became the point man in the Trump Campaign for merging the campaign’s relatively anemic outreach efforts on social media with the sophisticated data analytic techniques of Cambridge Analytica (CA). CA, a Robert Mercer-owned company that originally worked for the Presidential campaign of Senator Ted Cruz until Mercer moved his considerable hedge fund resources in favor of Trump, had developed an approach that succeeded in “weaponizing” social media political efforts with the use of individually-based psychological profiling of voters that made the pro-Trump or anti-Hillary messaging virtually irresistible. Cambridge Analytica’s parent company in the U.K. – Strategic Communications Laboratories (SCL) -- had helped engineer the upset vote in favor of Brexit that led the UK out of the European Union.

Under the watchful eye of Jared Kushner, and with the assistance of Steve Bannon, who moved over to the Trump Campaign from Breitbart News, another Mercer-owned entity, Cambridge Analytica developed a sophisticated marketing strategy that closely paralleled – and indeed mimicked – the already established efforts of hundreds of Russian-financed “trolls” (computer operators) who were flooding American social media platforms with fake sites posing as “grassroots organizations” spewing Russian disinformation and fake news stories plucked from Breitbart News, Alex Jones’ Infowars or other alt-right media outlets. Both the Russian-backed operators and their parallel U.S.-based allies within the Trump Organization and its data analytical contractors –such as CA – were able to micro-target voters in key voting precincts in key battleground states (e.g. Michigan) with laser precision because they had available to them huge databases of publicly available information on virtually every man, woman and child in the U.S., as well as critical voter rolls that had been hacked by the Russians and – possibly – shared

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with the Trump Campaign to help them micro-target their efforts to reach voters in key precincts that would prove to provide the decisive edge on election day.

When the Washington Post and other news organizations recently reported that Jared Kushner was a “person of interest” with regard to the FBI’s investigation of possible collusion between the Trump Team and the Russians, most of the focus was on the aborted plan to open a back channel line of communication with the Russians. However, the much more significant activities that Kushner engaged in had to do with the significant – and possibly decisive – coordination between the Trump Campaign’s social media campaign and that of their Russian counterparts. Of particular interest to the FBI is the uncanny speed with which the Trump Campaign was able to capitalize on the WikiLeaks data dumps of thousands of pages of DNC/Clinton Campaign documents, raising the suspicion – if not probability – that the Trump Campaign had been given advance copies of the key documents or their metadata, so that these purloined documents could be utilized almost instantaneously once the Russians/WikiLeaks publicly released them. Indeed, some of the “chatter” that the FBI is undoubtedly looking into is that one of the biggest fears that the Trump Campaign had was that someone would “jump the gun,” and that information from the WikiLeaks documents would be used by campaign operatives *before* the official release date by WikiLeaks.

Jared Kushner should thus be questioned under oath by the Senate Intelligence Committee and by the FBI on a wide range of subjects, not just his inexplicable omission of reference to his Kislyak meetings on his security clearance forms. During the Transition, Kushner also apparently had undisclosed meetings with Putin-crony Serge Gorkov, the head of the Russian state-owned Vnesheconombank (VEB) and former deputy chairman of Sberbank, Russia’s largest state-controlled bank.

Since Kushner (like Flynn) was still a private citizen during the transition period, he is subject to criminal prosecution under the Logan Act (1 Stat. 613, 18 U.S.C. § 953), which prohibits an unauthorized United States citizen from negotiating with foreign governments having a dispute with the United States. He may be also liable under the Espionage Act, which the Obama Administration aggressively used – to the general applause of Republicans – for the leaking of national security secrets by Chelsea/Bradley Manning, NSA operative Eric Snowden and others.

Kushner must also account for his role as the chief coordinator of the Trump Campaign’s data analytics and social media campaign, and how it came about that it so closely mimicked and paralleled the Russian-backed political efforts that were virtually choreographed with the WikiLeaks disclosures of illegally-hacked documents.

In the meantime, Kushner’s top-secret security clearance should be suspended pending further investigation. Many U.S. intelligence operatives and officials have had their clearances suspended for completely inadvertent omissions from their security clearance forms of meetings that they had with government officials from friendly and even allied foreign governments, or the omission of personal financial information.

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In Kushner's case (as well as that of Flynn), the failure to make the necessary disclosures was far more serious – and indeed sinister – since it is impossible to believe that such omissions were “inadvertent.” It is unreasonable to believe that Kushner somehow “forgot” to disclose highly sensitive meetings with the Russian Ambassador or a chief Russian banker about highly significant matters, whether it be about the lifting of sanctions, possible Russian loans to the Kushner/Trump real estate empire, the establishment of an unprecedented backchannel communications line with the Kremlin, or other matters. No matter what was discussed, such contacts with Russian officials should have been disclosed, and the failure to do so is strong evidence of an intent to deceive U.S. law enforcement/intelligence officials, and evidence of a guilty mind.

The smell of Treason is truly in the air, and all appropriate steps must be quickly taken to deprive Kushner of any further access to America's secrets pending further investigation, and to ensure that the wheels of justice swiftly turn. Never before in American history has the White House been potentially infested by collaborators with a hostile foreign power, and never since General Benedict Arnold secretly swore allegiance to the Crown and became a British spy has the Republic been so threatened.