



Connecting the Dots of Corruption

by Richard W. Rahn

You may have noticed that there have been a number of people in the top ranks of the FBI and Justice Department — like Robert Mueller, James Comey and Andrew McCabe — who have had powerful jobs regardless of whether the administration is Democratic (Clinton/Obama) or Republican (Bushes). They are put there, in part, to protect the financial interests of the Washington establishment. The U.S. government dispenses tens of billions of dollars to foreign governments and entities each year, and Washington interests receive billions from foreign countries.

President Trump was an outsider who appeared to be willing to take on the corrupt status quo; so, in the minds of those on the international gravy train, he must be eliminated. Hence, the phony Mueller Russian-collusion investigation. There are dozens of examples, but the following three are illustrative.

The Obama administration was adamant about doing the Iranian deal, which many objective observers believed would never have prevented Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. You may recall that President Obama, as part of the deal, oddly gave the Iranians a physical cash payment in a number of currencies of \$1.7 billion, plus as much as another \$150 billion. How much of that money made its way back to Washington for the benefit of the lobbyists and others who facilitated the deal?

Twelve years ago, former FBI Agent Robert Levinson was captured in Kish Island, Iran. Mr. Levinson went to Iran as a private investigator on a CIA contract to investigate a multi-

billion dollar money-laundering ring run by former Iranian President Rafsanjani. Former senior U.S. intelligence officers I have spoken to believe he is still alive despite being in ill health (they have been able to obtain photos and blood samples in the last two years).

Following the money trail from Iran to U.S. persons of influence (in both political parties), these former intelligence officers have shown how the Iranians used a series of foreign influence operations to change U.S. foreign policy, including the best explanation of why the FBI, State Department and Treasury Department continue to obstruct efforts to recover Bob Levinson. The U.S. government has had several opportunities to get Mr. Levinson back, particularly during the Obama Iran deal negotiations. What are they afraid Mr. Levinson might know and say?

There is overwhelming evidence that over the last decade the Russians have been indirectly lobbying against U.S. oil and gas development and particularly “fracking.” They have done this, in part, by funneling money from offshore entities to U.S. environmental groups that are allied with the Democratic Party and opposed to U.S. oil and gas development. Russia is a major oil and gas exporter and so it is rational for the Russians to try to limit or destroy competition by any means necessary.

Some members of Congress have been frustrated by the lack of action by the last two administrations in protecting the United States from this real Russian political influence. Almost two years ago, Congressman Lamar Smith, chairman of the Committee on Science, Space and Technology, wrote Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin requesting an investigation. “The Russian government and complicit parties have executed a political agenda with little or no paper trail. This scheme allows money originating from foreign countries like Russia to funnel through Bermuda-based shell companies to environmental groups in the United States with the aim of disrupting the U.S. energy industry.”

And then there was the famous “Uranium One” deal whereby the Obama administration approved the sale of a significant portion of U.S. uranium resources to the

Russians when Hillary Clinton was secretary of State. The Clinton Foundation had received contributions from Russian interests, and Bill Clinton had received enormous speaking fees from the Russians, clearly intended to foster goodwill — or more.

The timing of these events was such that there may have been in fact little linkage as the Clintons argued. What is not in dispute is that the FBI was well aware that some Russian nuclear industry officials were engaged in nefarious dealings, which included extortion, bribery and kickbacks, and money laundering as reported in The Hill in 2017. The Obama administration claimed that no one at the FBI alerted them (before the deal was approved) about the illegal activities of some of the Russians involved. James Conca, in an article in Forbes in December 2018, noted that “evidence of wrongdoing” was provided by the conviction of Vadim Mikerin, “the Russian official overseeing Putin’s nuclear expansion in the U.S.”

Robert Mueller or James Comey were heads of the FBI when all of the above matters occurred. Other high-ranking FBI and Justice officials, including Andrew McCabe, Andrew Weitzmann (Mr. Mueller’s deputy), Bruce Ohr, etc., were almost certainly aware of the influence peddling by Russia and Iran in these and other matters. They also had to be clearly aware that the infamous “Steele dossier,” given to the FISA court as the excuse for the investigation of the Trump campaign, was phony.

If you read the career histories and interview people who know many of those who were running the FBI, Justice and the CIA, in recent years, one is struck by the many repeated instances of bad judgment and even corrupt behavior. They may be ethically challenged and incompetent, but bright enough to know there are many “on the information or financial take” who can make or break them. Success in Washington is the ability to target your friends’ enemies.

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